



BROADCASTER

- **CLIENT**
FOX SPORTS (Australia)
- **CHALLENGE**
Move to a new purpose-built studio and production facility
Explosive data growth exceeds scope of existing infrastructure
- **SOLUTION**
Vblock Systems
- **RESULTS**
Reduced IT support calls by 75 percent
Achieved lower total cost of ownership compared to competing systems
Decreased system implementation time from 3-6 months to 45 days
Re-deployed administrators to new projects

SPORTS BROADCASTING COMPANY SCORES BIG WITH VBLOCK

FOX SPORTS DELIVERS INTERNAL PRIVATE CLOUD FOR ONLINE STORAGE OF LIVE HIGH DEFINITION CONTENT

[FOX SPORTS](#) is at the forefront of technology and innovation in sports broadcasting with a range of interactive applications that personalize the action for broadcasters and fans. The media company broadcasts average of 23 hours of live sport each day into 2.3 million Australian homes, with the Foxtel, Austar and Optus TV subscription services targeting over seven million potential viewers.

FOX SPORTS had a system that had grown quickly to meet rapid growth and projected expansion of its production and broadcasting business. With a move to new studio and production facilities, FOX SPORTS wanted to eliminate the risk involved in a traditional in-house IT approach to delivering new systems, and reduce deployment time. To meet its three-year business plans, improve the speed of the broadcast to its partners, and achieve a key objective of virtualization, FOX SPORTS created its own private cloud using VCE™ Vblock™ Systems.





“FOX SPORTS had grown organically from a startup business with one channel, to seven channels operating within a standard office space. **We needed a solid foundation from which to grow the business** so the decision was taken to rebuild the environment rather than migrate. I was looking for a path forward where I could use a best of breed approach to minimize my risk, reduce my cost and have an achievable outcome, all within the desired timeframe.”

— *Michael Tomkins, Chief Technology Officer at FOX SPORTS*

Challenge

An impending move to a new 14,000-square-meter office building within the Gore Hill business precinct project in Sydney meant FOX SPORTS was faced with a decision whether to migrate its existing infrastructure to the new [data center](#) or deploy a new system. Each live high-definition broadcast typically requires a storage capacity of 50 gigabytes per hour, which amounts to around 40 terabytes of data movement on weekdays and up to 70 terabytes on weekends across the system. Michael Tomkins, Chief Technology Officer at FOX SPORTS explains, “FOX SPORTS had grown organically from a startup business with one channel, to seven channels operating within a standard office space. We needed a solid foundation from which to grow the business so the decision was taken to rebuild the environment rather than migrate. I was looking for a path forward where I could use a best of breed approach to minimize my risk, reduce my cost and have an achievable outcome, all within the desired timeframe.”

FOX SPORTS was already running EMC® Isilon® NL-Series and X-Series storage solutions and had a long-term relationship with EMC. After evaluating solutions from a number of vendors, FOX SPORTS selected [Vblock Systems](#) from VCE for the new data center. Tomkins says, “As we started working through the different technologies, two key issues became apparent: the time to build and our in-house skills. The beauty of the Vblock System is that it minimized my risk while delivering in 45 days a system configuration that would take us three to six months internally to build. With this speed of delivery I had total control over exactly what I wanted.”

Prior to selecting the Vblock System, Tomkins and his team engaged with VCE in a design process to plan for the next three years, which provided the company with clear business drivers. “Two thirds of the work occurred during the planning phase and this level of detail gave me a total cost of ownership and helped provide a compelling business case for Vblock Systems. The investment in technical training and knowledge by VCE was substantial, which has paid off in the performance of the system,” says Tomkins.

Solution

At the new Gore Hill data center facility FOX SPORTS partnered with Certified VCE Partner Dimension Data to deploy a Vblock System 300. The company has combined the Vblock [converged IT infrastructure](#) with substantial media storage clusters based on pools of EMC Isilon NL and X400 nodes, which will provide a flexible, scalable and manageable foundation for the advanced corporate and media workflows being designed into FOX SPORTS' new studio, production and office facility. Tomkins says, "The implementation was nothing like I had ever seen from an IT vendor. At FOX SPORTS our cabling is extremely pristine. Everything within the Vblock System is cabled to such a high standard and in such a professional manner that I now use it as a reference for other projects. The Vblock System is the best cabled IT device I've ever seen; it matches our facilities — the standard is that high."

Results

FOX SPORTS has gained a number of business benefits through moving to an internal [private cloud](#) approach.

Lower total cost of ownership

The total cost of ownership for the Vblock System is forecast to less than existing IT systems. "The true reduction is shown through the decrease in our operational costs. I've moved system administrators to new projects focused on enhancing delivery to the business. Instead of spending three to six months building the system which would have required three people full-time, we completely eliminated that cost because it arrived 100 percent configured," says Tomkins.

IT support calls reduced by 75 percent

Calls to the IT help desk have reduced by 75 percent, enabling the company to re-deploy members of the IT team to new projects. This effectively reallocates resources that used to be dedicated to system support. Tomkins says, "Since deploying the Vblock System the quality of the service to the business has increased, the overall reporting has improved, the business systems are performing better than ever, and my support calls have reduced by 75 percent."

High-speed application delivery

All corporate applications now run on the Vblock System, including statistical APIs that support the broadcast and are sent to third parties. The delivery of these statistics to websites is now faster than the speed of cable, satellite and television distribution. "Using the Vblock System we can get the stats to sports websites in around three seconds. When you compare this to the seven seconds it takes to broadcast from the football ground to the Foxtel box in your house, consumers actually receive coverage faster through the Vblock System on the Internet than they do on their TV at home. While there are a range of factors involved in achieving this, our confidence in the performance of the Vblock System is extremely high," says Tomkins.





Supports move to internal private cloud

With a goal for the company to become virtualized, FOX SPORTS in Australia is able to meet this challenge. Tomkins says, “By deploying a Vblock System as an internal cloud we can meet our objective for virtualization. We’ve been able to virtualize many areas within our broadcast business that traditionally did not support virtualization, and proved that there is no impact on performance.”

Business shift to developing as-a-service offerings

The focus of the IT team has changed since moving to the Vblock System. “Working with a Vblock system demands a change in mindset. Our engineers have moved from being individuals that work with tin and storage, to people who focus on service as-an-offering. In using the extensive planning for the Vblock System, they are now looking at ways to use the forecasting and analytical approach with other systems to enhance the delivery to our users and business partners,” says Tomkins.

Access to strategic insights for business planning

Through its relationship with VCE, FOX SPORTS is now connected to a range of insights and innovations that inform strategic decision-making and help to drive its business forward. As Tomkins explains, “One of the highlights of implementing the Vblock System is that through our relationship with VCE we are now connected to several companies and have access to their product roadmaps and can see where we are aligned. You become part of a family with VCE where strategically important insights and information are readily shared.