

FlashDisk® OpenRAID Offers Rapid Access to Salt Lake Property Records

The massive database of real estate records maintained by counties throughout the United States is vital for our economy and our way of life in a free and open society. Public access to these records is essential, for they give American citizens the opportunity not only to buy and sell property but also to obtain mortgages to make home ownership possible.

These records need to be accurate, secure and readily available to the public. With this in mind, many counties are being driven to introduce modern electronic digital data storage techniques and rapid public access through on-line services into their operations for recording and accessing property records.

Leading the Way in Offering Online Access

Salt Lake County, the largest county in Utah and one of the fastest growing counties in the nation, has pioneered the use of digital technology and the Internet to make the services of the Recorder's Office available to the public. On-line access to documents, including indexes, and maps of all parcels, is possible within hours after recording. The convenience of on-line data service access is obvious. It saves users a trip to the

Recorder's Office and it is fast, easy and inexpensive to retrieve information. Moreover, it has been found that the document images are sharp and clear. "Our county is really booming," said Andy Harper, the technology administrator of the Salt Lake County Recorder's Office, "We have 300,000 parcels of property and add 1,500 to 3,000 new documents every day in digital form."



As part of the system to access each document, the Recorder's Office has built a comprehensive road map to every document on file. Using multiple indices, documents can be located by the name of the seller, the buyer, the address, the legal description, the parcel number, the entry number, and various other attributes. Furthermore, Utah is the only state in the country to include a Tract Index that traces the genealogy of each parcel.

Need for More Storage Capacity and Faster Access

Salt Lake County began using digital systems routinely four years ago with a Hewlett-Packard jukebox as the storage medium, but the county quickly realized that it would have to move to a larger capacity storage system with much faster access.

Harper researched various storage devices using evaluations in trade magazines, as well as articles published by Oracle and Sun. He then submitted bid specifications for a RAID-based storage system paying particular attention to access speed. He received bids from Sun, HP and Winchester Systems. He found that the FlashDisk OpenRAID array not only gave the best performance but was also the most affordable.

Today, Salt Lake County uses a Winchester Systems rackmounted FlashDisk array in RAID 5. This system allows up to 1.4 terabytes of total storage in a 7-inch high enclosure when supplied with 181 gigabyte disk drives. The disk array is interfaced to a UNIX Sun server through a SCSI connector, although the county is now upgrading by moving to Fibre Channel. This change is very easy to implement because FlashDisk RAID arrays

have ports for both SCSI and Fibre Channel.

Harper found the ease of installing the Winchester Systems' arrays particularly gratifying. The Recorder's Office has physically placed the unit in the IS Department because the Recorder's Office didn't have even the small space needed for the disk array in his office. Harper describes the installation: "The IS Department had purchased a competitive system that required five technicians working on that thing for, I'll bet two weeks, before they had it up and running. Winchester Systems came in here after everything was delivered, and it was basically a done deal in half a day. Moreover, we haven't had

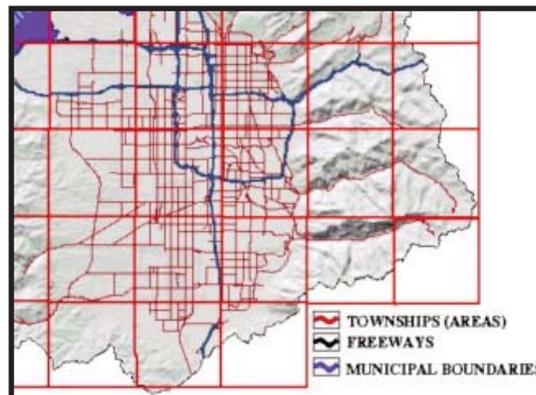
"...the difference in access speed (with FlashDisk) is like night and day..."

Andy Harper,
Technology Administrator
Salt Lake County Recorder's Office

one bit of trouble with it since. Working with Winchester Systems is great. As we were moving things off the jukebox, I called them a few times, and a real person answered, and they always got back to me within the hour with the answers I needed." The difference in access speed between the old HP jukebox and the Winchester Systems FlashDisk array was, as Harper said, "Like night and day."

Looking to the Future

In addition to switching to fibre channel, the Salt Lake Recorder's Office is planning to scan its entire record of eight million pages, much of it on microfiche, onto Winchester Systems FlashDisk arrays. With its multiple indices, this will enable anyone, anywhere to easily and quickly access and trace every piece of property in the county.



FlashDisk is an integral part of securely storing over 8 million documents for 300,000 parcels of land.