

Animationsinstitut of Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg (FABW) Chooses Hammerspace as the Data Storage Platform for Students and Faculty Across Distributed Campus



FILMAKADEMIE
BADEN - WÜRTTEMBERG

CUSTOMER STORY

The Animationsinstitut is one of the world's leading institutions for Animation, Visual Effects, Technical Directing, Animation/Effects Producing and Interactive Media. It is part of Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg (FABW) in Ludwigsburg, Germany, which was founded in 1991 and is operated as a non-profit limited liability company (GmbH) with the state of Baden-Württemberg as its sole shareholder.

Since its foundation, Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg has successfully established itself as one of the leading international film schools. In 2010, The Hollywood Reporter included the Filmakademie as the only German institution on its list of the world's best film schools. The Filmakademie was featured again on this list from 2015 to 2017. To date, seven Student Oscars® for FABW productions emphasize the school's high-quality standards.

Approximately 500 students, 120 of which study at the Animationsinstitut, are supported by more than 300 lecturers. FABW manages between 200 and 250 projects per year, many of which are produced either at or in collaboration with the Animationsinstitut, that include requirements for high-performance data ingest and processing, as well as supporting multiple students collaborating on a single project.

Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg including the Animationsinstitut at-a-Glance

420

GUEST LECTURERS

130

EMPLOYEES

550

STUDENTS

20

INTERNATIONAL PARTNER
INSTITUTIONS

17

INTERNATIONAL
STUDY COURSES

250

FILMS AND PROJECTS
PER YEAR



The Need for a Higher Performance Data Storage Platform

Animationsinstitut has a number of storage solutions, but as file sizes and volumes grew, its primary storage system, a scale-out NAS, was hitting its performance limits, especially with applications that required several parallel read/writes and high IOPS.

In addition, Animationsinstitut was looking for a solution that could take its render workloads out of its on-premises server room into the cloud. Animationsinstitut owns about 60 render nodes, but because rendering needs are sporadic, moving rendering workloads to the cloud was a cost savings opportunity. Moving that data manually was not an option due to the volume of data, so Hammerspace's ability to move data to the cloud seamlessly with data orchestration proved to be a big value.

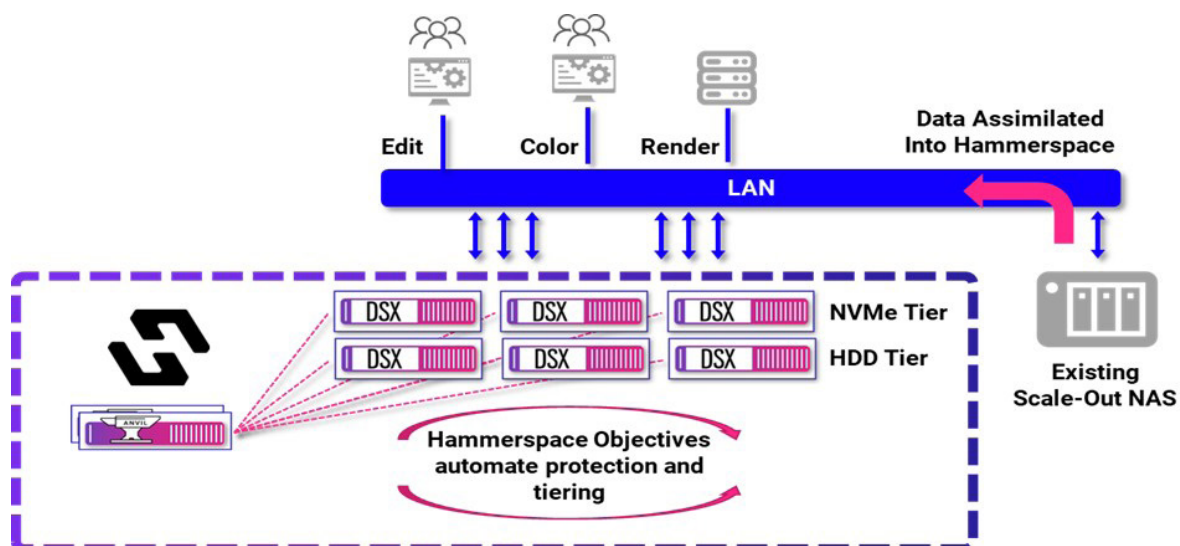
Lastly, it was important that Animationsinstitut be able to integrate its in-house workflow management program with Hammerspace via API, in order to automate allocation of IT resources for new projects, and automate portions of its workflows. Stefan Binggeser, Head of Technology at the Animationsinstitut, began looking for a new solution that would improve performance and meet the institute's other requirements when he discovered Hammerspace.

"It was very easy to understand that separating metadata from data will be the future," said Binggeser, when referring to the Hammerspace architecture. "So the benefits of Hammerspace were immediately clear to me."

Hammerspace Delivers High-Performance Data to Students and Faculty Across FABW

Animationsinstitut now has a 1.5 Petabyte Hammerspace cluster that delivers high-performance data to the students and researchers at the school, and supports post-processing and rendering workloads - all on a single platform. The architecture is based on NVMe storage servers acting as high-performance Tier 1 storage, and HDD storage servers acting as capacity Tier 2 storage.

Hammerspace Data Orchestration policies, called Objectives, automate the protection of data and the tiering of data across the environment:



Addressing Sustainability Requirements by Enabling the Reuse and Repurposing of Existing Hardware

Another critical aspect of the Hammerspace solution was the ability to “assimilate” data from the school’s existing scale-out NAS system and make that part of the Hammerspace data environment. This allowed Animationsinstitut to keep its scale-out NAS system in place, import that metadata into the Hammerspace metadata layer, and then reuse and repurpose that system for additional storage capacity.

Enabling Workflow Automation with Custom Metadata Tagging

A unique benefit of the Hammerspace software relates to custom metadata. Animationsinstitut plans to use custom metadata to automate portions of its workflow. By attaching custom metadata tags to its watch folders, new files written to those folders can inherit those metadata tags to trigger specific functions, allowing the data to then be tracked as it moves through the workflow.

A Modern Data Storage Platform for the Years Ahead

Hammerspace provides Animationsinstitut with a modern data platform that improves performance, enables the reuse and repurposing of existing hardware, and enables the school to automate portions of its workflow using custom metadata.

The organization achieved savings by going with off-the-shelf, standard hardware, and successfully extended the life of its existing storage systems, thereby eliminating the carbon footprint produced by ordering and shipping new hardware.

In the future, Hammerspace will enable Animationsinstitut to burst its rendering workloads to the cloud, delivering further cost savings and cloud agility.

“Decoupling the relationship between the data and the underlying storage is important because of the flexibility it allows,” said Binggeser. “And I’m excited to take full advantage of Hammerspace’s capabilities in the years ahead.”

Hammerspace Channel Partnership and Teamwork

This project was delivered in collaboration with Hammerspace’s channel partner DVEAS, whose commercial support helped streamline the procurement process. Hammerspace’s channel-first approach ensures strong collaboration with local partners to simplify execution and deliver value to customers. “DVEAS played a key role in ensuring the project was executed efficiently and aligned with the customer’s procurement requirements — helping to bring Hammerspace’s unique capabilities to FABW in record time,” said Kim Gardner, Regional Sales Director at Hammerspace.

