

Adaptec RAID Adapters Take Center Stage in CacheIO Flash Arrays for Media and Entertainment Solutions



Introduction

New Hampshire-based CacheIO develops all-flash storage systems, including all-flash cache and all-flash array. Combining patent-pending flash optimization software with commodity hardware, CacheIO has demonstrated unprecedented performance and cost per gigabyte for bandwidth-intensive applications.

CacheIO serves companies in the media and entertainment industries that push their storage networks to the limit during content generation, post-production, video and audio streaming, and content archiving. These companies need affordable, ultradense, and scalable storage solutions that enable users to store large amounts of media content with maximum bandwidth and minimal latency.

The CacheIO FA140 Flash Array delivers 140Gb/s bandwidth from a compact 2U platform. The platform is powered by the fastest and widest interconnect available between application and storage — 18 8G Fibre Channel links and 48 6G SAS links. The FA140 also boasts the highest SSD density with 48 SSDs, and scales storage capacity from 3TB to 48TB.

Storage in the Spotlight

One of the biggest challenges facing storage providers who serve the media and entertainment industries is developing optimized solutions that support media workflows with no performance drop-off.

When producing a movie, for example, the footage undergoes many different processes in the production pipeline, from editing to adding special effects and color correction. Moving and manipulating these extremely large files, which can be 5TB or larger in size, requires high-performance storage systems that allow everyone to access the data as they need it, without a long transfer process.

The need for affordable, high-capacity, high-bandwidth, low-latency storage solutions is becoming especially prevalent as media production moves to 4K and 8K frame rates, which are 4x and 8x higher resolution, respectively, than current high-definition standards.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CHALLENGE

The low-profile RAID adapters used in the CacheIO FA140 Flash Array maxed out at 8 ports each and took up six of nine available PCIe slots to connect 48 SSDs, leaving only three slots to use with Fibre Channel cards.

SOLUTION

Replace six competing 8-port adapters with three low-profile 16-port Adaptec RAID 71605 adapters, freeing up three additional PCIe slots to be filled with Fibre Channel cards.

RESULT

By doubling the number of Fibre Channel cards from three to six, the FA140 Flash Array's bandwidth has also doubled, from 9GB/s to 18GB/s.



"The low-profile adapters from our last RAID vendor maxed out at 8 ports, which took up six of nine PCIe slots in our FA140 Flash Array. Adaptec's low-profile 16-port RAID adapters have freed up three additional slots that we can use with Fibre Channel cards to double overall system performance."

— Bang Chang, CEO of CacheIO

Typical “best of class” storage systems can support two 4K streams but require hundreds of hard disk drives and can cost up to one million dollars. By contrast, the 2U CacheIO FA140 flash appliance with 48 1TB or 1.6TB SSDs can stream up to nine concurrent uncompressed 4K streams in real-time with no performance loss, making it the first viable storage solution for 4K and 8K media production.

The FA140 has nine PCIe slots, which are reserved for RAID adapters and quad 8GFC or dual 16GFC Fibre Channel cards.

Initially, the CacheIO FA140 used six low-profile 8-port RAID adapters from a competing vendor to connect 48 SSDs. This configuration, however, left only three PCIe slots available for Fibre Channel cards, and limited the appliance’s performance to just 9GB/s total bandwidth.



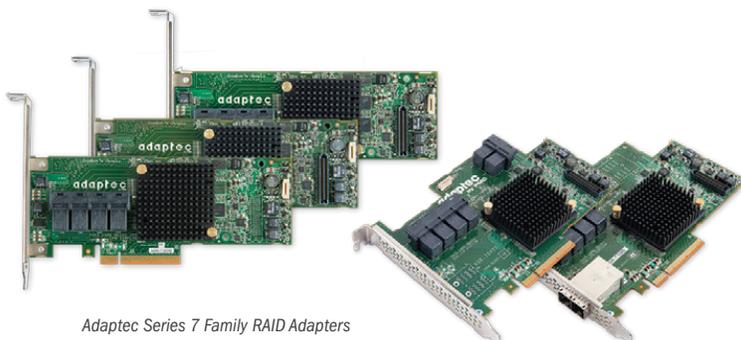
CacheIO recently switched to Adaptec RAID 71605 adapters, a low-profile 16-port count solution that uses half as many PCIe slots than competing 8-port offerings.

With the Adaptec RAID 71605, the FA140 needs only three adapters to connect 48 SSDs, thus freeing up an additional three PCIe slots to be used by Fibre Channel cards. Using six total Fibre Channel cards instead of three doubles the appliance’s performance to 18GB/s total bandwidth for media applications.

Starring Adaptec by PMC RAID adapters Adaptec RAID 71605

The Adaptec Series 7 SAS/SATA RAID adapter family features PMC’s 24-port RAID-on-Chip (ROC), which combines an x8 PCIe Gen3 interface with 6Gb/s SAS ports to enable high performance, high native port count RAID adapters that are unmatched by any other ROC in the industry.

The Adaptec by PMC 71605 SAS/SATA 6Gb/s PCIe Gen3 RAID adapter offers 16 internal ports in a low-profile/MD2 form-factor, and is ideal for entry-level servers to high-end server platforms and high-performance workstations.



Adaptec Series 7 Family RAID Adapters

Replacing competing 8-port adapters with 16-port Adaptec RAID 71605 adapters allowed CacheIO to double the bandwidth of its FA140 Flash Array.

SERIES 7 SPECIFICATIONS:

- 6 Gb/s throughput at each port
PMC 6Gb/s RoC
- Maximum performance for up to 24 SSDs (No expander needed)
- Optional flash backup — Adaptec Flash Module (AFM-700) for maintenance free cache protection
- mini SAS HD connectors and SAS HD cables — for fit and function in dense server configurations
- Auto configuration of Simple Volume and HBA modes — “set it and forget it”
- Support for up to 256 SAS and SATA devices
- Support for SSD, HDD, Autoloader, RBOD, Tape
- Intel EPSS THOL Certified
- PCIe® 3.0 Products now PCI-SIG® Compliant: ASR-72405 and ASR-71605

Series 7 adapters perform up to 83% better than competing RAID adapters in read and write throughput – 6.6 GB/s on sequential reads and up to 2.6 GB/s on sequential writes on parity RAID 5.

PCIe Gen3 RAID adapters with 8 native ports can only take advantage of a maximum throughput of 4.8 GB/s (8 x 6Gb/s AS ports). Adaptec Series 7 with 16 and 24 native ports take advantage of the full PCIe Gen 3 bandwidth capability of 9.6 GB/s (16 x 6Gb/s SAS ports).

The auto configuration capability in Series 7 allows users to operate the adapters in HBA mode (expose drives to the host directly) or Simple Volume mode (use fast DRAM cache to reduce latency and improve performance) without the need for setup tools.

Epilogue

In compact storage platforms, PCIe slots are valuable and scarce. The low-profile 16-port Adaptec 71605 RAID adapter allows system builders to do more with less by taking fewer PCIe slots than competing RAID adapters to connect the same number of storage devices.

Savvy builders like CacheIO take advantage of those open slots to improve system performance and gain an advantage over competing products on the market.

ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

New Hampshire-based CacheIO develops all-flash storage systems for the media and entertainment industries. The CacheIO FA140 Flash Array delivers 140Gb/s from a compact 2U platform. The platform is powered by the fastest and widest interconnect available between application and storage and also boasts the highest SSD density with 48 SSDs, and scales storage capacity from 3TB to 48TB.

[HTTP://WWW.CACHEIO.COM](http://www.cacheio.com)

RELATED INFORMATION

Adaptec Series 7 RAID adapter product page: <http://www.adaptec.com/en-us/products/series/7/>

Adaptec Series 7 data sheet: http://www.adaptec.com/nr/pdfs/Series7_ds.pdf

Adaptec Series 7 compatibility report: http://download.adaptec.com/pdfs/compatibility_report/arc-sas_cr_09-15-14_series7.pdf

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