

Surveillance

Dell EMC Storage with Milestone XProtect Corporate

Reference Architecture

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REV 1.2



The Open Platform Company

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CONTENTS

Chapter 1	Overview	5
	Document purpose.....	6
	Solution purpose.....	6
	Business challenge.....	6
	Technology solution.....	7
Chapter 2	Executive summary	9
	Solution overview.....	10
	Key results.....	10
Chapter 3	Architectural overview of Milestone XProtect Corporate	11
	Overview.....	12
	Milestone XProtect Corporate architecture.....	12
	XProtect Corporate servers and services.....	13
Chapter 4	Dell EMC storage considerations for Milestone XProtect Corporate	15
	Overview.....	16
	Video flow.....	16
	Live DB.....	17
	Archive DB.....	17
	Live DB and Archive DB considerations and recommendations.....	18
	Isilon SmartConnect.....	18
	Isilon SmartQuotas.....	18
	Retention periods.....	19
Chapter 5	Conclusion	21
	Summary.....	22
	Findings.....	22
Chapter 6	References	23
	References.....	24

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

Overview

- [Document purpose](#)..... 6
- [Solution purpose](#)..... 6
- [Business challenge](#)..... 6
- [Technology solution](#)..... 7

Document purpose

This document describes the reference architecture of a Dell EMC video storage infrastructure solution for Milestone XProtect Corporate. It defines the supported Dell EMC storage platforms, their purpose in the solution design, and supported protocols.

The document is intended to be used in conjunction with *Technical Notes: Dell EMC Storage for Milestone XProtect Corporate-EMC VNX and Dell EMC Isilon*, which provides information about system design, sizing, and configuration.

Solution purpose

The purpose of this reference architecture is to demonstrate the functionality, multitier architecture, and scalability offered by the following Dell EMC storage platforms with Milestone XProtect Corporate: EMC VNX™ and Dell EMC Isilon.

- Fibre Channel (FC) and iSCSI block-based storage for the XProtect Live database (Live DB) and Archive database (Archive DB), provided by the VNX series for small and remote offices.
- Dell EMC Isilon storage, via SMB2¹, for the Archive DB when using direct-attached storage (DAS), FC, and iSCSI environments for the Live DB. Dell EMC Isilon scale-out storage enables dynamic scalability and ease of use for Archive DB video storage.

The reference architecture validates the performance of the solution and provides guidelines for building similar solutions. The document is not a comprehensive guide to every aspect of this solution.

Business challenge

Video surveillance storage requirements can vary significantly, especially in highly distributed environments. The smallest installations can be satisfied by internal server storage or by lower capacity arrays like EMC VNXe™. Larger centralized installations can benefit from the use of virtualization for consolidation purposes. For large-scale multi-petabyte requirements, Isilon scale-out storage can offer high scalability and storage density for XProtect archiving.

For this solution, we² tested various storage scenarios, including FC, iSCSI, and SMB2, to determine the Dell EMC storage platforms and associated network protocols best suited to each XProtect video database tier.

Because video surveillance is a constant write application, we performed additional validation and testing to determine best practices and provide configuration guidelines for partners and field sales teams. This validation and testing accounts for normal application processes, planned storage maintenance, and unplanned storage array component failures.

This Reference Architecture document discusses:

- The available storage protocols and which are appropriate for each storage tier
- Dell EMC storage array positioning, with XProtect configured as a multitier video storage solution based on Milestone best practices

1. The Server Message Block (SMB) Protocol Versions 2 and 3, referred to as SMB2 in this document, is an extension of the original SMB Version 1.0 Protocol, which defines extensions to the Common Internet File System (CIFS) Protocol.
2. In this guide, "we" refers to the Dell EMC Surveillance Lab team that validated the solution.

The companion Technical Notes, , discusses the validation and testing in more detail, including system design, sizing, and configuration.

Technology solution

This solution demonstrates how to use Dell EMC storage platforms to provide the storage resources for a multitier XProtect video surveillance implementation.

Although not Milestone best practice, a single tier solution may be implemented.

Planning and designing the storage infrastructure is a critical step due to the XProtect requirement for both Live DB and Archive DB tiers for video surveillance data. Each network-attached (NAS) storage tier must be able to accommodate large amounts of large block sequential data, even during times when storage paths are crippled (for example, during disk rebuilds, network issues, and maintenance). Otherwise, loss of video will occur.

To provide predictable performance for each tier of the XProtect video storage infrastructure, the storage must be able to handle sustained, high-bandwidth video feeds from servers without dropping video frames or introducing high response times for users reviewing the video. Designing for this workload includes deploying Live DB storage (Tier-1 storage) on Dell EMC FC or iSCSI arrays or, for smaller environments, DAS (internal server storage). The Live DB read performance is also a design consideration for moving the video data from the Live DB to the Archive DB (Tier-2 storage).

CHAPTER 2

Executive summary

- [Solution overview](#)..... 10
- [Key results](#)..... 10

Solution overview

This solution uses EMC VNX and Dell EMC Isilon storage platforms with Milestone XProtect Corporate release video management software (VMS).

This Technical Notes document provides guidelines and recommendations for storage platform positioning and system sizing. The document focuses particularly on these storage design considerations:

- Storage bandwidth
- Maximum number of recording servers per storage array or cluster

This document is a companion paper to the *Dell EMC Storage for Milestone XProtect Corporate-EMC VNX and Dell EMC Isilon Reference Architecture*, which describes the solution architecture and discusses the available storage protocols for each storage tier in multitier XProtect environments.

Key results

This Technical Notes document addresses these key results from the solution testing:

- Maximum Milestone XProtect 2013 recording server bandwidth with the Live database (Live DB) on VNX storage
- Maximum Milestone XProtect 2013 R2 recording server bandwidth with the Live database (Live DB) and Archive database(Archive DB) implemented on the same EMC VNX5800™™ storage array
- Maximum bandwidth per Isilon X400 and Isilon NL400 node for the Archive database (Archive DB)
- Isilon X400 and Isilon NL400 configuration options, including SmartConnect™ and SmartQuotas™
- XProtect recording server configuration recommendations

CHAPTER 3

Architectual overview of Milestone XProtect Corporate

- [Overview](#) 12
- [Milestone XProtect Corporate architecture](#) 12
- [XProtect Corporate servers and services](#) 13

Overview

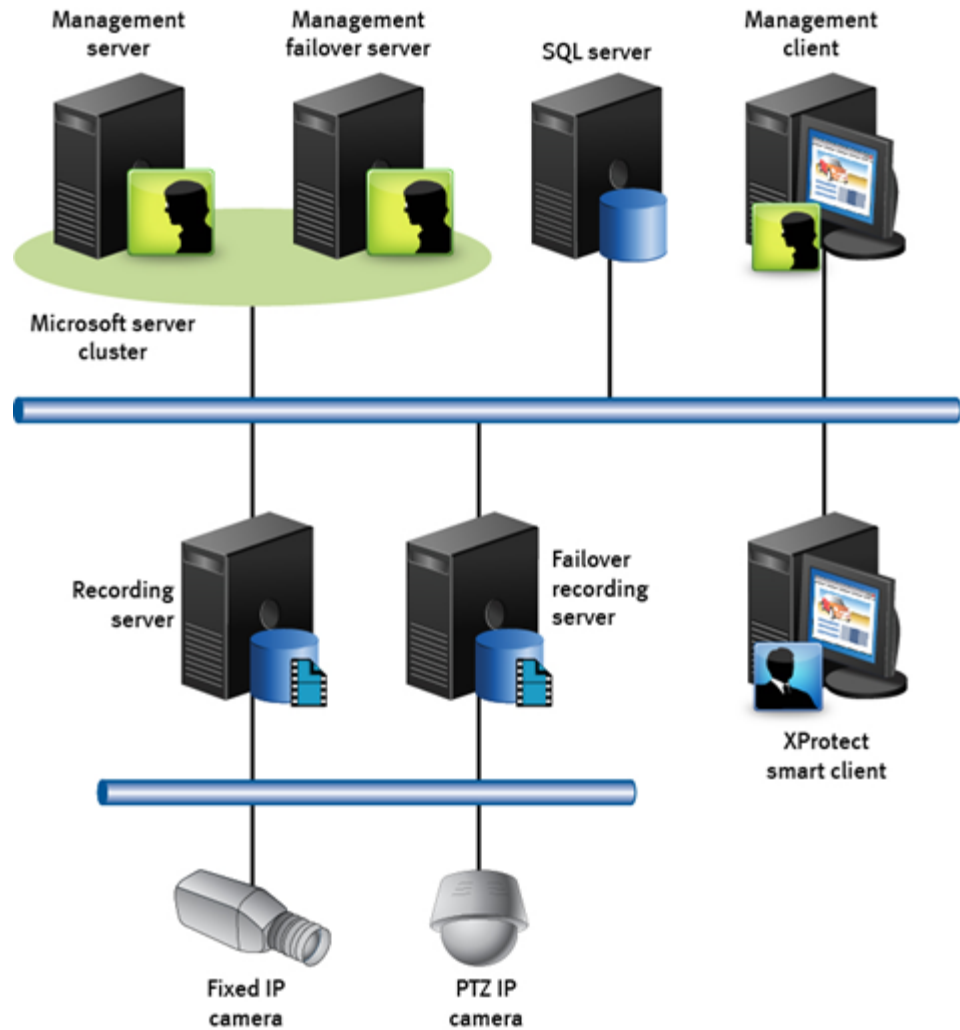
Milestone XProtect Corporate uses a distributed architecture with a management server as the core server. The management server can be centrally located or distributed to multiple sites and connected using the Milestone Federated Architecture. The number of recording servers is unlimited.

Milestone XProtect Corporate architecture

You can achieve scaling by expanding the number of servers in each site in addition to combining many sites into a federated architecture.

The following figure shows a simple Milestone XProtect Corporate architecture.

Figure 1 Milestone XProtect Corporate architecture



XProtect Corporate servers and services

The following table lists XProtect Corporate servers, services, and their functions.

Table 1 XProtect Corporate servers and services

XProtect server/service	Functions
Smart Client	Full-featured remote client, which provides these daily functions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simultaneous live view and playback of 100 cameras • Intelligent Pan Tilt Zoom (PTZ) camera control • Advanced search capabilities • Export of evidence material
Remote Client	Provides live view and playback of up to 16 cameras and performs most daily operations.
Matrix	Enables up to four live video streams to be sent to an XProtect Smart Client computer.
Recording/failover server	Provides the following functions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage and retrieval of video and audio from MJPEG, MPEG4, MxPEG, and H264 devices • Standby for a single or a group of recording servers, when configured as a failover server • Edge Storage capability, which enables cameras to write to an Edge Storage device if the recording server is unreachable • Processing events, alerts, and actions
Management server	The Management Application is the XProtect Corporate user interface to the management server and provides the following functions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing recording servers, users, and devices • System configuration wizards, automated device discovery, smart bulk configuration, event/alarm configuration, and management of user access privileges • Multi-stage storage schemes, which enable video migrations from the Live DB to the Archive DB • Hosting and controlling access from XProtect clients • Logging

CHAPTER 4

Dell EMC storage considerations for Milestone XProtect Corporate

- [Overview](#) 16
- [Video flow](#) 16
- [Live DB](#) 17
- [Archive DB](#) 17
- [Live DB and Archive DB considerations and recommendations](#) 18

Overview

To successfully design and implement a Milestone XProtect Corporate system, you need to consider many aspects of the system, including networks, cameras, storage, and more. This section presents storage considerations and recommendations you should take into account when deploying a Milestone XProtect Corporate system on Dell EMC storage platforms.

This reference architecture includes EMC VNX and VNX-VSS100 storage platforms. You can integrate Dell EMC storage platforms and array sizes with Milestone XProtect to provide a physical security solution to meet the requirements of applications of any size.

EMC VNX supports unified storage solutions. Unified storage topologies include FC, iSCSI, and SMBx (CIFS). The VNX can be configured as block storage only (FC and iSCSI) or unified storage to include SMB protocols.

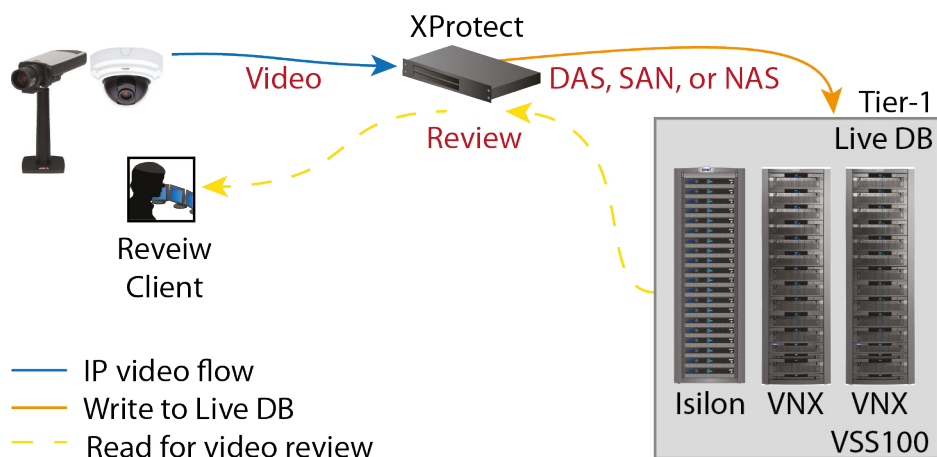
The VNX-VSS100 is a purpose built Video Surveillance Storage platform. This is an enterprise-class, block-only array supporting FC and iSCSI built on the proven VNX platform. As a low cost, high performance and highly available array it is ideally suited for remote locations or smaller centralized sites.

Video flow

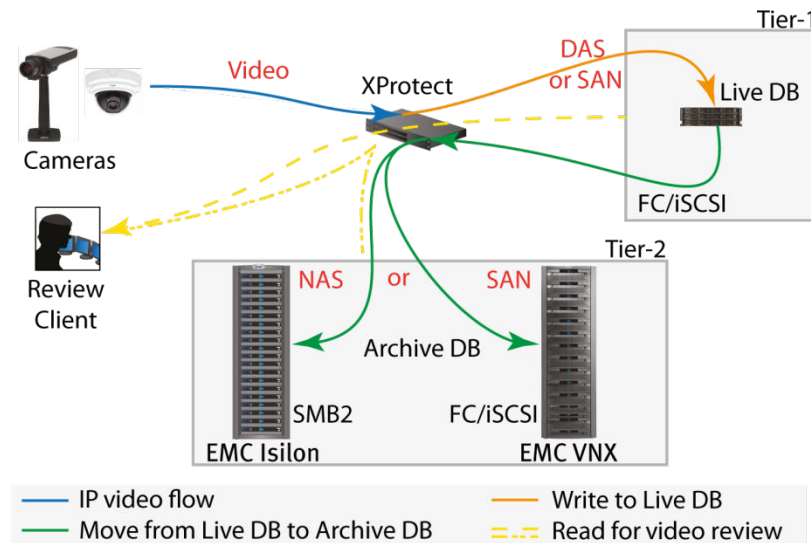
There are many Dell EMC storage platform options for each storage tier. The Live DB can be DAS, FC or iSCSI block storage. The single tier implementation is the simplest implementation and uses only the Live DB.

The following figure shows the LiveDB-only implementation using a VNX or VNX-VSS100 array. The Live DB can be DAS if the storage requirement is minimum. As the video storage requirements increase, the Live DB should be placed on a VNX or VNX-VSS100.

Figure 2 Video flow Live DB



The following figure shows a two-tier implementation where the video traffic flow is using DAS or SAN, and NAS. The Live DB is on DAS or SAN, and the Archive DB is on Isilon NAS or VNX.

Figure 3 Video flow Tiered Storage

Video is initiated at the camera and XProtect initially places that video in the Live DB. Milestone recommends a retention period of 2 hours to 24 hours for video in the Live DB, as outlined in

XProtect moves video files at rest from the Live DB storage tier to the Archive DB storage tier at regular intervals. The Archive DB stores each video file until that file's full retention time has expired.

For Archive DB the Dell EMC Isilon Scale-Out storage provides enterprise class network attached storage (NAS) for centralized or decentralized enterprise requirements. An Isilon cluster is modularly scalable from terabytes to petabytes of storage.

Live DB

In a multitier implementation, the XProtect Live DB read rate is greater than 50 percent read and less than 50 percent write. The Live DB works best with the server's internal DAS or using external FC or iSCSI storage arrays, such as the VNX series.

Internal DAS storage is ideal for small implementations with a few servers. As an installation grows, the need to optimize storage for reliability, scalability, manageability, and rack space increases. In larger environments, and in virtualized server environments, VNX arrays in a SAN (FC or iSCSI) configuration are more practical for the Live DB.

Archive DB

The Archive DB is the long-term storage for XProtect and typically constitutes the majority of the storage capacity requirement. Moving video from the Live DB to the Archive DB involves many activities, including optimizing index files for the larger video repository, and moving the files.

For Archive DB, XProtect Corporate 2013 and later supports DAS, SAN, and NAS storage. In releases prior to XProtect Corporate 2013, the Archive DB is restricted to DAS or SAN (FC or iSCSI) storage. Changes incorporated into XProtect Corporate 2013 expand the Archive DB storage protocol options to include NAS.

Live DB and Archive DB considerations and recommendations

The Live DB can be a VNX or VNX-VSS100 storage array in a SAN configuration. The Archive DB can be an Isilon scale-out cluster in a NAS configuration or a VNX or VNXVSS100 storage array in a SAN configuration.

- With the VNX, the Archive DB is not required. If tiered storage is required, both the Live DB and Archive DB can use either FC or iSCSI protocols. For iSCSI, you can use GbE or 10 GB NICs.
- When using smaller VNX arrays with iSCSI, we recommend that the Live DB and Archive DB reside on different arrays.
- When using FC, Live DB and an FC Archive DB can co-exist on the same VNX array.
- Arrays such as the VNX5800 can be used with iSCSI for both the Live DB and Archive DB.
- VNX storage can be used for:
 - Live DB only
 - Live DB as the first tier in a tiered implementation
 - Archive DB as the second tier in a tiered implementation
- For Isilon scale-out storage, NAS (SMB2 protocol) can be used with Isilon OneFS 7.0 or later. The OneFS protection scheme should be +2:1 (or greater) for installations up to 10 nodes, N+2 for up to 20 nodes, and N+3 for more than 20 nodes. We tested +2:1 on our five-node clusters.
- You can use GigE or 10 GB network interface cards (NICs). Test results for this solution are based on both GigE and 10 GB interfaces on the Isilon cluster. XProtect by default moves video from the Live DB to the Archive DB using a single thread. With NAS (SMB2 protocol), the Archive DB thread count can be increased to enable parallel video file moves within the archive process.
- Dell EMC recommends that you avoid using Isilon storage for the LiveDB storage tier.
- Although it is possible to use the NFS datastores for the Milestone boot drive in a VMware environment, this configuration with Milestone XProtect has not been tested in the Dell EMC Surveillance Lab.

Isilon SmartConnect

You can configure Isilon SmartConnect to provide load balancing of recording servers across nodes in an Isilon cluster. With SMB2, the load balancing occurs at connection initiation with the Isilon cluster.

Isilon SmartQuotas

When using the Isilon cluster, Dell EMC recommends that you use SmartQuotas to protect the storage from a runaway application or misconfigured recording server. When configuring SmartQuotas, you must use a Hard Quota. SmartQuotas also presents to each Milestone XProtect Corporate server the utilization information based on its assigned quota and not the entire file system.

SmartQuotas allows administrators to limit the storage used for each recording server and presents to the server a view of available storage based on the assigned quota.

SmartQuotas allows each recording server to calculate its available disk space and react correctly. Without SmartQuotas, the Security Center administrator must anticipate the total write rate to the cluster and adjust Min Free Space on each recording server accordingly. A miscalculation could result in lost video. SmartQuotas resolves the issues caused by manual calculations.

Retention periods

In a multitier implementation, Milestone recommends that the Live DB retention period is limited to no more than 24 hours, with a higher frequency preferred. Milestone recommends a minimum retention period of two hours for the Live DB, although one hour is the minimum supported.

The Archive DB retention period depends on business requirements and can range from a few weeks to many months. The archived video index files are not verified upon recording server restart, so server restart is not a consideration for the Archive DB.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

- [Summary](#).....22
- [Findings](#).....22

Summary

We performed comprehensive testing with Milestone XProtect Corporate 2013 beta to benchmark the application performance in a Milestone tiered storage environment. Milestone engineering confirmed that the test results achieved are consistent with the GA version released in May 2013.

Testing focused on the Archive DB enhancements of XProtect Corporate 2013 that allow the use of Isilon clusters running OneFS 7.0 or later. The archive process, when writing to an Isilon cluster, easily handled all video accumulated between archive process executions. In addition, various forced Isilon failures did not affect the Live DB to Archive DB process.

When using an Isilon cluster for the Archive DB, only two modifications to the XProtect Corporate configuration are necessary: increase the number of archive process threads; and increase the write block size to the Archive DB.

We also tested an FC- and iSCSI-attached VNX for the both the Live DB and Archive DB. The results for this configuration represent the maximum tested, not the array maximum.

For both FC- and iSCSI-attached storage, formatting with 8,192 KB blocks for Live DB and 64 KB blocks for Archive DB is required.

Findings

Testing and validation of this solution produced these key findings:

- FC- or iSCSI-attached VNX can be used in place of internal server storage for both Live DB and Archive DB video storage.
- NAS-attached Isilon clusters can be used with XProtect 2013 as Archive DB video storage.
- One NFS2 share per XProtect recording server is required.
- Bandwidth to the Isilon clusters and VNX arrays for the Archive DB was not affected during numerous forced failures on the cluster.

CHAPTER 6

References

- [References](#).....24

References

Dell EMC documentation

For additional information, see the following Dell EMC documents:

- *Dell EMC Storage for Milestone XProtect Corporate-EMC VNX and Dell EMC Isilon Reference Architecture*
- *Introduction to the EMC VNX Series-A Detailed Review White Paper*

Other documentation

For additional information on related topics, see the following Milestone documents:

- *XProtect Corporate Administrator's Getting Started Guide*
- *XProtect Corporate Administrator's Manual*
- *XProtect Smart Client User's Manual*