



Austin City Limits

Famed Music TV Program Ensures The Show Will Go On



Use Cases

Digital Preservation
Tape Archive Migration

Keywords

Content Distribution & Delivery
Data Recovery | Fireball

4+

Years of
Archived
Content
Preserved

Situation

Public television music program Austin City Limits had archived more than 4,000 hours of videotape including every episode, unaired songs, and alternate camera angles. These videotapes started to slowly deteriorate. Staff at producing station KLRU saw music history at risk, so they set out to restore, digitize, and preserve the video library within a constrained budget.

4K

Hours of
Historical Tape
Migrated
To Cloud

Solution

KLRU chose Backblaze B2 Cloud Storage as an effective, cost-efficient solution. The team's internet connection was too slow to support the task at hand on its desired timeline, so they used a Backblaze Fireball rapid data ingest tool to speed the effort—they loaded 40TB of media into the Fireball, from which it was quickly downloaded into their Backblaze B2 account.

Result

Backblaze B2 is now the safe, secure home to an accessible archive of performances by artists including Johnny Cash, The Foo Fighters, Stevie Ray Vaughan, and Coldplay. Staff need not fear any of their once-in-a-lifetime recordings will be lost. What's more, they now have the ability to restore and serve up higher-resolution files as needed.

40TB

Media
Transferred
Without Delay



KLRU-TV, Austin PBS created Austin City Limits in the 1970s and has produced it ever since. ACL is the longest-running music series in television history and remains the only TV series to be awarded the National Medal of Arts. It offers viewers unparalleled access to featured acts in an intimate setting while also providing a platform for artists to deliver inspired, memorable, full-length performances. The program is taped live from The Moody Theater in downtown Austin and distributed to PBS stations across the country and the world.



Famed Music TV Program Ensures The Show Will Go On

The pilot for Austin City Limits (ACL) was shot in 1974. Willie Nelson performed. The production was recorded in Studio 6A on the University of Texas campus, and the stark, no-frills environment became the ethos of the show. Just two SD cameras were used to shoot the entire show. Over time more cameras were added, and then HD cameras beginning in 2007. The final copy of each episode, along with countless hours of unaired songs and alternate camera angles, were then stored away.

As the Austin City Limits archive grew, the videotapes used to store programming and related content were slowly deteriorating.

Recovering, cataloging, and preserving this treasure trove of thousands of hours of one-of-a-kind musical performances for future generations was the challenge

facing Amanda Moore, James Cole, and the rest of the KLRU staff. Determined not to lose their unique archive, the station created an internal project to digitize, restore, and preserve the entire Austin City Limits video library from 1974 onward. As if this wasn't a feat unto itself, the team needed to accomplish this on the austere budget of a PBS station.

The archive consisted of more than 4,000 hours of video-tape, so the first step was to prioritize the content to be recovered. That was difficult, as who's to say if the 1992 Bela Fleck and the Flecktones performance should be restored before The Fabulous Thunderbirds 1984 episode. Complicating the prioritization process was the condition of the videotapes—some were deteriorating more rapidly than others, and you might have only one shot at capturing the aging material.

The High Fidelity Plan

The KLRU staff found that the best solution would be to digitize the material and store a version of their newly digitized files in the cloud. From the cloud, they reasoned, they could easily distribute a copy of the content to licensees and potentially replace their current hodgepodge of delivery systems. In addition, cloud storage would be an integral part of their goal to ensure the long-term security of their irreplaceable assets by serving as one of the archives for all their digital content.

The team compared different cloud providers and chose Backblaze B2 Cloud Storage. Backblaze provides the high performance, ready-access storage needed at an affordable price for both storage and distribution. In addition, Backblaze B2 pricing is straightforward. There are no pricing tiers or hidden fees, which makes forecasting costs much easier and more predictable.

The project started with an outside vendor digitizing the ACL videotapes. The newly-digitized episodes were ingested onto KLRU's internal servers, reviewed for quality, and scheduled for clean up as necessary. The finished files were then tagged with the attributes team members deemed necessary to retrieve the information at a later date. Finally, the newly-minted digital media files, episodes, and related materials were ready to be uploaded to Backblaze B2. But there was a problem.

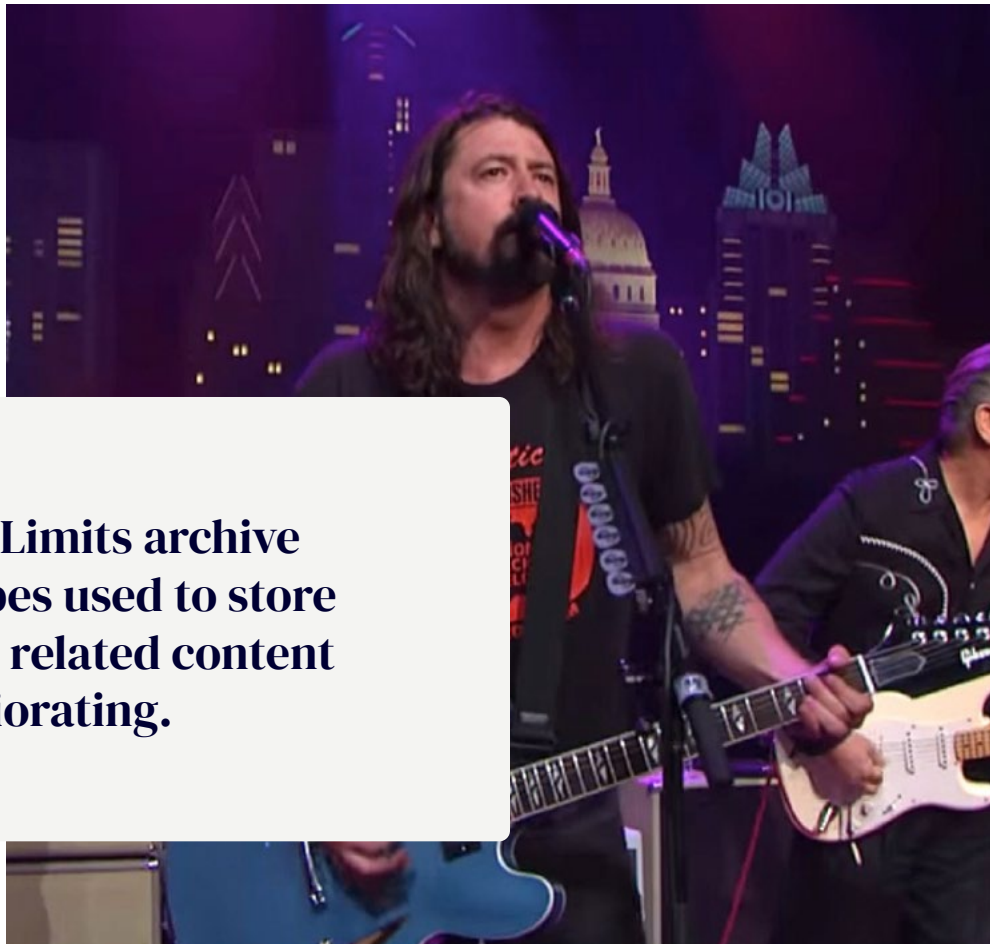


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The Bandwidth Problem Solved

KLRU found that the internet connection available to them was not very fast or reliable. It was fine for standard office work, but high-volume media uploads were another thing. Since any future connection upgrade was expensive and months to years away, KLRU needed another solution.

To address this, Backblaze provided KLRU with a Backblaze Fireball rapid data ingest tool for securely migrating large amounts of data to the Backblaze B2 Cloud Storage. KLRU was able to load 40TB of digitized media from their local storage system to the Fireball and ship it to Backblaze. Once there, the data was securely downloaded to KLRU's Backblaze B2 account. The entire process proved quicker and more reliable than using their internet connection.



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Backblaze is helping by providing KLRU with the affordable cloud storage they rely on to keep their unique cache of digital content secure and available for years and generations to come.

Lyle Lovett, Peace (of Mind), and Harmony

From this point, the team connected their purpose-built media access and distribution system to the data by using Backblaze B2 APIs. The system uses locally stored proxies for the initial presentation of the requested content and then accesses and downloads the high-resolution files stored on Backblaze B2 as needed.

The ultimate goal of Jones, Cole, and the rest of the KLRU team is to have the entire catalog of ACL episodes and related content preserved for future generations. Backblaze is helping by providing KLRU with the affordable cloud storage they rely on to keep their unique cache of digital content secure and available for years and generations to come.

About Backblaze

Backblaze B2 Cloud Storage is purpose-built for ease, instant access to files and data, and infinite scalability. It seamlessly supports workflows via hundreds of third-party software integrations, or through direct APIs and CLIs. At only \$5/TB of object storage per month (a fraction of the cost of the largest solutions), Backblaze B2 is priced so users don't have to choose between what matters and what doesn't when it comes to backup, archive, data organization, workflow streamlining, and more.

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