

Esports Event Production
Company

Esports Company Accelerates Delivery of Final Assets from Shoot to Post



4x

Faster Workflow

Situation

The team at a prominent esports event and video production company produces promotional assets for more than 500 esports events a year. They initially used Google Drive to collaborate, which was slow, painful, and put the team at risk of missing tight deadlines. To start to address the shortcomings, they implemented iconik, a cloud-based media asset management solution, with Google Cloud Platform (GCP) as their storage backend, but GCP was expensive and failed during a couple of events.

50%

Cost Savings

Solution

The post-production team switched to Backblaze B2 Cloud Storage, and migration was a breeze thanks to Backblaze's partnership with iconik. Now, the team uploads files to iconik where proxies are transcoded, and iconik sends the original files to Backblaze to be stored. If the team edits files, iconik syncs those files back to Backblaze as well. The global team can collaborate easily on files and hand them off to clients for review and approval.

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Transfer Issues

Result

With Backblaze B2, the post-production team streamlined their editing workflow, quadrupled their productivity, and improved the quality of their work. Clients have noted their faster delivery times, and the team is more confident that they can scale up as the company grows its business. Now, other groups within the company are looking at Backblaze B2 for their own storage needs.

This turnkey esports solutions company works with top-tier video game brands like Major League Gaming, Fortnite, Halo, and Call of Duty to provide a range of event services, including production, broadcast, tournament, and program design. The company brings 20+ years of industry experience and relationships, as well as a deep understanding of consumer culture, to creating a holistic solution for every event that meets the needs of game publishers, competitors, and fans.



Esports Event Production Company Beats the Clock

The thrill of the game, the roar of the crowd, the endless hours of practice being put to the test—all come together on tournament day as professional gamers face off to see who's the best of the best in a multiplayer battle or real-time strategy game. Although esports have been around for decades, their popularity skyrocketed at the turn of the millennium, and today, video game brands sponsor large-scale esports events throughout the year.

This prominent esports event production company provides a range of turnkey services

that support esports operations, from tournament design to production to broadcast. In 2020 alone, the company produced over 500 esports events with 2,220+ broadcast hours. Such a high volume of projects results in a massive amount of data that needs to be processed, shared, and stored on behalf of the company's game publisher clients.

Meet the Post-Production Heroes

With every esports event, a full suite of marketing assets is required to promote the event and engage the audience. This is the realm of the post-production team, which produces everything from player headshots and team photos to hero images and player interviews, as well as behind-the-scenes footage and post-event recap videos.

The turnaround time for most of these pieces is lightning fast, especially on media day right before

the event, when the promotional assets are created. “We typically finish shooting at five in the afternoon,” explained the company’s post-production team lead. “And then we have to deliver by eight in the morning the following day. This includes videos complete with effects and music.”

Google Gets Knocked Out in the First Two Levels

The post-production team depends heavily on their technology tools and infrastructure to make sure that everything flows smoothly, and friction in the pipeline will put their mission at risk. Not long ago, the team was storing files in Google Drive, which was not designed to support the post-production environment. The team was continually hitting Google Drive’s daily limits of 750GB total uploads per day, or 5TB per file, across individual and shared drives. This made it hard, or even impossible, for team members to share and collaborate on large files.

“It was a bit chaotic,” recalls the team lead. “Each editor typically uploads eight to 12 files per day. To keep projects moving, they had to reach out to IT to request additional email accounts just for the drive space, and they were using their personal accounts as well. And, if an upload failed, which happened constantly, we’d have to start all over again.” In addition, the team had to export files to multiple systems for review, and simultaneous transfers would typically fail. “It was disastrous,” said the team lead. “Sometimes, one of our editors would sit for eight hours just babysitting uploads. The process was a painful waste of time and money.”

The post-production team adopted iconik’s media asset management (MAM) software to help them

meet their aggressive deadlines. With iconik, the original camera files come off the camera and into the MAM, where they are transcoded into proxies. The proxies are then used to create new assets in Adobe Premiere Pro, and iconik sends the originals to cloud storage.

To start, the team used Google Cloud Platform (GCP) as their cloud storage backbone. But the volume of files can be huge—at a recent event, the team uploaded close to 800 files, or 12TB of data, during a five-day period. With such a large volume of data uploaded and downloaded per event, GCP costs started to add up. The growing volume of content began cutting into their margins due to high storage and egress costs.

And on a couple of occasions, GCP even failed in the middle of a big event, and iconik had to transfer everything to temporary storage on AWS.

“The stakes were very high,” said the team lead, “because we had a lot of clients complain that their edited pieces were not easily accessible or were not delivered on time.”



The Hunt for a Winning Storage Solution

When the team began looking for a new solution, Backblaze came recommended, and the team lead had also heard Backblaze B2 discussed on a LinusTech Media podcast, which gave him more confidence in the solution's reputation in the industry.

So, the team lead opened an account with Backblaze B2 to test it out. He transferred about 24TB of data from his own NAS system to Backblaze, ran a check sum, and confirmed that everything was valid. He even tested it from several locations in North and South America and

had no issues. "It all worked great," he said. "I could clearly see how we could rely on Backblaze to safely transfer and store our files."

As partners, Backblaze and iconik are integrated, which made implementation and data migration fast and effortless. It took only 24 hours to migrate an initial 66TB of data over to Backblaze servers. After that, the team migrated a few hundred GB at a time, for a total of 128TB by the end of 2022.



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Backblaze gives us peace of mind knowing that we have reliable, scalable file storage during the post-production rush at a big event.

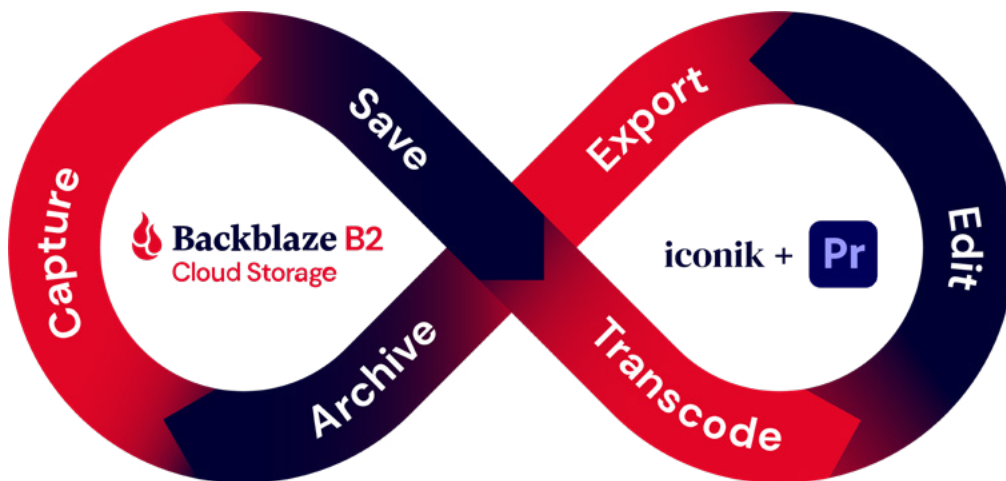
Post-Production Supervisor, Esports Event Production Company

Unlocking New Abilities for Better Teamwork

A key aspect of the post-production team's workflow is fast, seamless collaboration. Once the team captures images and footage at an event site, they upload them to Backblaze B2. The team lead said, "We have a couple of systems on a 1GB pipeline, and they've consistently hit transfer speeds of 700–800Mbps."

The team uploads files to iconik, where iconik then transcodes them and creates a proxy that the whole team can access. iconik retains the proxy files on their storage servers and the original files are kept in Backblaze B2.

Two on-site and seven remote editors all have immediate access to the files they need using an iconik panel in Adobe Premiere. Usually, they edit the proxy files, but sometimes they skip the proxy step and edit the originals directly if the turnaround time is too tight. Once the edit is done, they use the iconik panel in Adobe Premiere to export the final asset and save it to Backblaze B2. The files are archived on Backblaze for easy access in future, and with Backblaze's built-in data protection, the team can rest easy when storing and handling files under a non-disclosure agreement (NDA).



An Optimized Media Workflow

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Overall, Backblaze has saved us a lot of time, money, and headaches.

Post-Production Supervisor, Esports Event Production Company

When Zero Is the Highest Score

For the team, migrating to Backblaze was a game changer. "Since we've been with Backblaze, we've had zero issues and a lot of tangible gains," said the team lead. With easy and fast access to files, editors have been able to streamline their editing sessions, quadruple their productivity, and improve the quality of their work. Clients have noticed faster delivery times, and they in turn, can speed up their review and approval processes. For the business, moving to Backblaze cut storage costs in half. The team lead summed it up: "Overall, Backblaze has saved us a lot of time, money, and headaches."

Based on the post-production team's experience, other teams at the esports company are also considering using Backblaze. The post-production

team lead is also looking at ways to further optimize his team's use of Backblaze by partitioning their storage space and configuring more granular permissions, as well as using more of the platform's metrics and reporting features to provide ROI data back to the business.

With their faster workflow, the post-production team is better able to collaborate with colleagues and clients across North America, Europe, and Asia and beat the clock on delivering assets. As the esports company takes on new publishers and scales up its services, the post-production team is ready to rock and roll. The team lead said, "Backblaze gives us peace of mind knowing that we have reliable, scalable file storage during the post-production rush at a big event."



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iconik, a Backlight business, is a media management platform that enables organizations to organize and share media from one place. The company's hybrid cloud approach offers the best of both cloud and on-premises storage, giving customers a holistic view of their content from everywhere. iconik is easy to use and allows for hassle-free media collaboration.

About Backblaze

The Backblaze B2 Storage Cloud is purpose-built for ease. It offers always-hot, S3 compatible object storage that supports your workflows via third-party software integrations, APIs, CLI, and web UI. And it's priced for easy affordability at rates a fraction of other cloud providers. Businesses in more than 175 countries use the platform to host content, build and run applications, manage media, back up and archive data, and protect and recover from ransomware.

backblaze.com