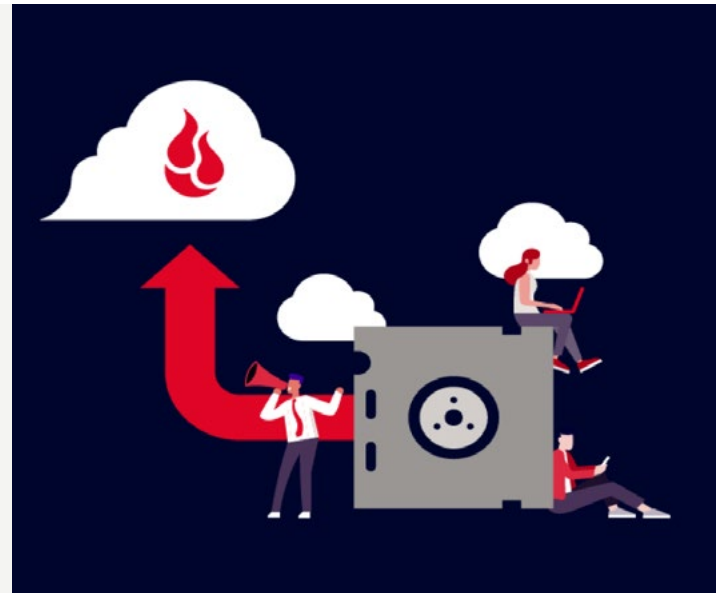




Leading Global Ad Agency Global Ad Agency Moves to Cloud for Instant Access and Content Preservation



Use Cases

Active Archive / **Content Preservation**
Disaster Recovery

Keywords

Tape → Cloud Migration / **Archiware P5**
Xinet

80

Biweekly Tape
Backups
Eliminated

Situation

When a leading global ad agency moved one of their biggest offices to a green building, their power and space-hungry LTO system conflicted with new sustainability goals. But that's not the only reason they wanted to eliminate tape. Tape management took their IT team months of time—time better spent serving the company's staff.

20

Years of Client
Work Preserved

Solution

Working with technology consultants, NAPC, the agency integrated their Xinet digital asset management system with Archiware P5 back-up and archiving software using OnFile by InPress Systems. They connected the system to Backblaze B2 Cloud Storage as their active storage and disaster recovery destination. Backblaze B2 now safely stores and protects 20 years of client work and backups of active production data central to the daily operations of an international firm.

Result

Moving to Backblaze B2 helped the agency's IT team eliminate hardware and meet sustainability goals while also increasing the trust and confidence they have in data recovery versus dealing with degraded tape or drive issues. Most importantly, their worldwide team now has instant access to mission-critical assets—absolutely essential when you're developing campaigns for some of the biggest brands in the world.

100%

Sustainability
Goals Met

With 100+ offices in 90+ countries, the agency develops communications plans, creative campaigns, and interactive experiences for both Fortune 500 companies and small-to-medium-sized businesses. Their work can be seen in advertising campaigns for some of the most high-profile brands.

An Inside Look at One Agency's Tape-to-Cloud Journey

Mark Twain said, “Many a small thing has been made large by the right kind of advertising.” That certainly rings true for the creative side of the advertising world, but when it comes to data management, nothing is small. To get a final print or web creative, agencies draw from a broad pool of high-resolution assets from photo shoots, illustrations, stock imagery, videos, and other sources—all adding up to terabytes of data which must be stored and accessible during the fast-paced production process.

Digital asset management is a top priority for IT at most agencies, and especially so for an agency with global reach and a storied history like the one profiled here. “Plainly stated, if the data is not accessible, the business is losing money,” said one of the firm’s IT managers. His team is responsible for the systems that store massive amounts of production files for one of the agency’s largest offices. Files are kept for a minimum of seven years (and often longer, depending on contractual obligations). Some assets in their system go as far back as 2004.

Migrating from an on-premises LTO system to Backblaze B2 in the cloud gave the agency a flexible,

reliable, and easy-to-use solution for data backup and archiving. The IT manager said, “With Backblaze as part of our new stack, all of our assets are in a singular system that can be accessed by all the teams involved in the agency.” Of course, one day co-founder, Zach Law, came into work to find an update just finishing on that mission-critical machine. Law expected this day to come—he knew they’d been working on borrowed time—but that didn’t make it any less painful. It was time for a new approach to data management and protection.

The good news was that, while painful, setting up a new approach would solve a handful of problems at once: the team would no longer need to spend the four to five hours it took to manage backups every week, freeing them to focus on bigger and better projects. And Law knew that keeping all of the company’s data in one office was risky. He needed a backup system that would protect terabytes of project data without wasting his team’s talent and time. Now he had the justification to go and set it up.

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IT Manager, Leading Global Ad Agency

Care and Feeding of a Hungry Tape Library

Previously, the agency's asset repository was archived on a massive Quantum Scalar i500 LTO tape library that housed more than 130 tapes. They used up to 80 tapes per full backup every two weeks, and ran incremental backups every night. Both their Xinet digital asset management (DAM) system and all disaster recovery files were backed up to LTO5 tapes. “The tape machine was a beast,” said their IT manager. “It was like a refrigerator that took up a whole cabinet by itself.”

Working with this tape system was like facing that ever-hungry beast in a wrestling match. He recalled, “It would take hours to cycle tapes in and out of the

library, and we had to make sure that the barcodes were scanned properly and the tapes were recognizable before being sent off-site for secondary backup and tape storage.”

The team also had to make sure to always have blank tapes on hand, and they'd frequently pull old ones from storage for reuse. However, tapes were often degraded or damaged by the drive, and therefore had to be destroyed and new ones purchased. The system itself needed constant cleaning and maintenance. “It was like a juggling act to make sure everything was running smoothly,” said their IT manager.

The Catalyst For Change

The miseries of tape had the team looking for a new solution, and a move to a new space brought the need for change to a head. As part of a company-wide sustainability initiative, the new office was located in a green building where they consolidated data center operations. Although the legacy LTO library was a critical piece of hardware, it was far from energy efficient and much too big for the new space.

So, the IT team engaged their long-time technology consultants at NAPC for help. NAPC had worked with Backblaze B2 for clients with similar challenges.

Also, Archiware, a backup and archiving software company, had just come out with a new cloud container format for easier data transfer to the cloud. A cloud-based solution with Backblaze at the core made the most sense to everyone. "We considered a couple of AWS options, but Glacier would take up to four hours to retrieve files and an S3 bucket would be really expensive," said Larry Chase, SVP at NAPC. The IT manager added, "My global creative director is not going to wait a week for an asset that he needs for a pitch tomorrow. Period." Backblaze could offer speed and convenience at a lower cost.

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Larry Chase, SVP/Partner, NAPC

From Tape to Backblaze B2

Once the agency adopted Backblaze B2, migrating data to the cloud was seamless. The team transferred disaster recovery data from their LTO into an Archiware P5 container format and wrote the first backup locally to their Xinet before transferring it to Backblaze B2 in the cloud via two Backblaze Fireballs. They also integrated the middleware, OnFile by InPress Systems, to connect Xinet with Archiware. After that initial push, any changes went over the WAN directly to their new Backblaze B2 instance.

Going forward, the IT manager and his team run disaster recovery backups every night via Archiware to Backblaze B2, and everything runs smoothly and efficiently with minimal effort needed. Because files are in hot storage on Backblaze B2, the team can pull down a backup quickly in the event of an incident at speeds that are equivalent to AWS S3. This helps strengthen business resiliency for the agency and gives the team greater peace of mind.



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IT Manager, Leading Global Ad Agency

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IT Manager, Leading Global Ad Agency

That Perfect Image, Right at Your Fingertips

Backblaze B2’s flexibility enabled the solution to fit seamlessly into the agency’s existing workflow, and the new system is easy to use for both IT and creative teams. With archived files stored in the cloud, users can now easily access files themselves from a web interface in the Xinet system. “Our creative teams can quickly get their hands on existing files rather than having to recreate them from scratch,” said the IT manager. “They stay productive and efficient, and the business can continue to serve clients on schedule.”

The IT team no longer has to deal with laborious day-to-day maintenance or the months-long, painful re-archiving process that was needed with every LTO system upgrade. “I’m very happy about not having to waste months of my life restoring data from tapes and archiving it again every time we change to a new tape format,” said the IT manager.

With no tapes to maintain, data degradation is now a thing of the past, which gives the team greater confidence in the integrity of their archives. In addition, the cloud-based solution has solved for those physical-world quirks—crinkled barcodes or dirty tape drives—

that took extra time to address. “We no longer worry about whether the system can read tape properly. We know Backblaze is there with a catcher’s mitt, ready to receive the data and keep it safe,” said Larry Chase of NAPC.

On a broader level, the IT Manager and his team are happy that they can easily comply with the new green building requirements. Storing terabytes of data in the cloud instead of on-premises, with no power throughput needed for file retrieval, helped the company achieve its environmental sustainability objectives.

The final step in the rollout is to migrate the last batch archival data to Backblaze before the IT team can decommission the tape library for good. What will happen to the old hardware after that? Their IT manager quips, “We’re going to gold-plate it and use it as a beer carousel. Seriously, it’ll be recycled somewhere off-site.”



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IT Manager, Fortune Media Group



Founded in 1993, NAPC provides technology solutions to over 400 brands across the U.S. and globally. NAPC’s technical expertise for media clients includes leading technologies like Xinet and Archiware, as well as NAPC’s own BrandControl suite for Xinet.

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.

backblaze.com