

CASE STUDY

Vintage Aerial

Cost effective replacement of on-premise storage with cloud storage.

The time had come for Vintage Aerial to upgrade or replace their storage servers. The quotes they were getting for a replacement system were in the \$25-\$30K range after discounts. One of their primary goals was to simplify the operations side of the business especially as it related to their data storage technology. They would rather write and manage the software powering the Vintage Aerial web site versus spending time operating and managing their storage hardware. They decided it was time to look at using cloud storage instead of buying more hardware.



Kevin Marsh is a Partner and Director of Engineering at Vintage Aerial. The company stores more than 20 million high-resolution aerial photographs scanned in from 1/2 million rolls of 35mm film. Their customers enjoy unique heirloom-quality prints of rural areas, farms, small towns, and villages, taken over the second half of the 20th century.



Vintage Aerial utilizes Amazon AWS services to help run their day-to-day operations. Before Backblaze B2, when a customer on their website decided to purchase a photo package, the photo was moved from the local on-premise storage system to the AWS environment, where it was processed according to the customer order. The finished product was packaged and shipped to the customer.

To replace the on-premise storage system, Kevin first considered using Amazon S3 to store the 20+ million photographs, 80 terabytes, in the cloud. A quick calculation told him that just the storage cost for this amount of data was going to be about \$1,680 per month if he used S3. That would be at least \$100,000 over five years for S3 cloud storage versus spending about \$30,000 if he just replaced his current storage servers.

Kevin then looked at Backblaze B2. He had calculated that his storage cost would be \$400 a month, meaning he would spend just \$24,000 over a five-year period. That was considerably less than S3 and even slightly less than buying an on-premise system. He tested B2 out to ensure the performance was acceptable. B2 passed.

Now all he had to do was migrate 80 terabytes of data from his old storage system to Backblaze B2.

Projected 5-year cost to store 80 TB of photos

AMAZON S3	\$100,000
LOCAL STORAGE	\$30,000
BACKBLAZE B2	\$24,000





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Backblaze B2 was the tipping point in enabling us to move to cloud storage.

- Kevin Marsh

Backblaze had not yet introduced its Fireball data loading service and at the time Kevin had a 5Mbps upload connection. To upload 80 terabytes of data to Backblaze was going to take years. Instead, he rented a server in a local datacenter with a 10Gbps upload connection at a cost of \$500/month. Then he used sneaker-net to transfer data from his office to the rented server using a 4 TB USB hard drive. Once the data was on the server it could be uploaded to Backblaze B2 using the datacenter's network connection. The entire process took 80 days, for an average transfer rate of 1 terabyte per day, including those days when the sneaker-net took the day off.

With the data loaded in B2, Vintage Aerial is now spending their time adding capabilities to the service. For example, they will soon introduce the ability for a web site visitor to zoom in to a photograph on the site. Currently, for efficiency, low-resolution thumbnails are displayed on the site. The customer can zoom in, but the images pixilate very quickly. With the new feature Vintage Aerial will be able to quickly download from B2 the high-resolution version of the photograph so the customer can zoom in without a loss in resolution. Kevin expects this capability to create a better customer experience and increase sales. This new functionality was one of the reasons, Kevin did not consider Amazon Glacier and similar services which can take hours to restore data.

Once all the photographs were loaded in B2, Kevin was able to turn off the old storage servers and reclaim the closet space he had dedicated to them.

B2 had allowed him cost effectively replace his on-site storage servers. Better yet, B2 has reduced the amount of time Kevin spends on storage management and allows him to focus on making the Vintage Aerial service even better.

About Backblaze B2 Cloud Storage

Backblaze B2 Cloud Storage is a cloud storage solution that provides data storage at one-fourth the cost of leading cloud storage providers: \$0.005 GB/month for storage, free uploads, and \$0.02 (\$/GB) for downloads. Things to know about B2:

- Upload and download data using a Web GUI, API, or CLI.
- Stored data is instantly available. There are no offline or near-line delays.
- There are no pricing tiers for data storage, it is simply \$0.005 per GB per month.
- Data durability is 99.999999% and availability is covered by an SLA.

www.backblaze.com/b2