Backblaze

Yacht Club

Full Speed Ahead: Film Studio Saves Time To Develop Business

All images provided by Yacht Club.

60
Hard Drives Replaced

0
Active Data at Risk

20+
Hours/Month Saved

Situation

Yacht Club, a product-focused production studio, used hard drives to store client projects, but passing the drives between staff and spending hours each week duplicating the data slowed down production. Wasted time, ample room for human error, and a lack of off-site backups were putting the company and their precious client assets at risk.

Solution

To free them from the risk and hassle of hard drives, Yacht Club installed a LumaForge (an OWC company) Jellyfish Mobile device as their primary storage. They initially repurposed the drives for on-site backups, but management was still tedious and relied on ad hoc backup software. When that solution eventually failed, they discovered that Backblaze B2 Cloud Storage could tier backups automatically from the Jellyfish to the cloud.

Result

The team at Yacht Club went from spending four to five hours each week to just minutes a month managing backups. Their data is stored off-site, giving them peace of mind, but it's still immediately accessible when they need it. Now, Yacht Club is free to focus on creating stellar films and taking on bigger and better projects.

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YACHT CLUB

Yacht Club is a full-service production company based in Brooklyn, New York. As a team of producers with backgrounds in hands-on production, Yacht Club consistently seeks out unexpected ways to execute projects. They use a combination of live action, tabletop, animation, VFX, and still photography, and foster a level of inventiveness and quality that has attracted a roster of major brands like Adidas, L'Oreal, and Ray–Ban to their studio. Their spectrum of directorial talent is accompanied by an in-house postproduction team that provides animation, editorial, and VFX support.

From Stormy Workflows to Smooth Sailing

Yacht Club's business was booming. They make product-focused videos for global brands, and there was no time to waste on nonessential tasks when companies like Converse, Vans, Maybelline, and Land Rover were waiting on creative. But this led to a risky scenario: They relied on one computer to sync backups—one computer that could never be updated. It ran custom-coded backup software written by a former associate producer. Updating the operating system would break the tenuous coding that kept the backups working, and no one knew how to fix it.

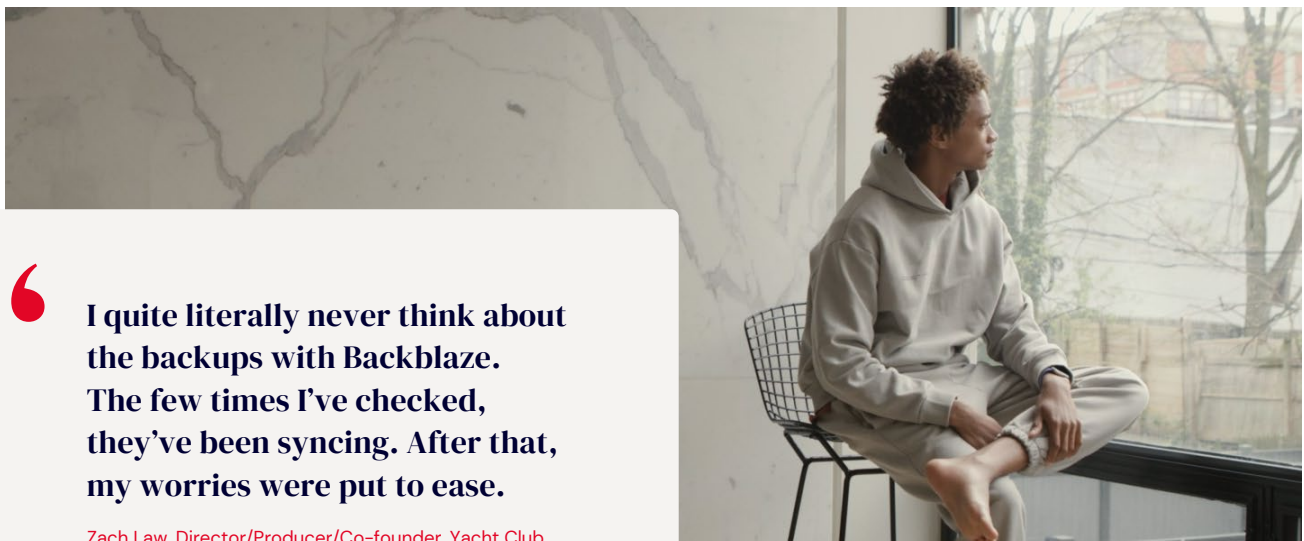Of course, one day Co-founder, Zach Law, came into work to find an update just finishing on that mission-critical machine. Law expected this day to come—he knew they'd been working on borrowed time—but that didn't make it any less painful. It was time for a new approach to data management and protection.

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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Jellyfish Takes the Sting Out of Drive-juggling Stress

Prior to that fateful day, Yacht Club had already taken steps to upgrade their infrastructure. Originally, they managed data solely on Western Digital G-DRIVES they used to store and share their work. A typical 30-second spot can generate anywhere from one to five terabytes, and each project had two dedicated drives that were periodically mirrored so there were always two copies.

As the number of projects they took on grew to as many as 10 at a time, passing the drives back and forth between multiple editors, postproduction staff, and freelancers was getting tedious. Organizing a tower of 60 drives became a nightmare, and finding anything after a project ended was often an exercise in futility. "There were certainly times where we would have to look through a bunch of G-DRIVES to find a project if the drives weren't labeled correctly. That definitely caused headaches," Law said.

They invested in a LumaForge (an OWC company) Jellyfish Mobile device to store active projects and repurposed the G-DRIVES for on-site backups, assigning one drive per project. Jellyfish are highly-specialized network attached storage devices specifically designed for video editors and postproduction teams. "Their stream counts are accurate and their performance is great, but they also have partnerships with Blackmagic Design, Adobe, Maxon Cinema 4D—all of the software we use," Law explained. If Yacht Club ran into issues, they felt the team at LumaForge would have answers because they know media production technology inside and out.

Knotty Backups Tie Up Production Time

The Jellyfish gave Yacht Club ample capacity for active projects. But the new approach to backups demanded more attention than they could afford to give. "We were constantly making sure that those G-DRIVES were backed up in an organized way, and we were getting too much work to make sure that was all happening. Honestly, backing them up was often getting overlooked," Law acknowledged.

The team would miss a week or two, then spend a full day making sure everything was backed up correctly. And the challenge of attending to backups was only the tip of the iceberg: Their backup infrastructure relied on one computer and an out-of-date operating system. The custom-coded archive software did partially automate backups from the Jellyfish to the G-DRIVES, but no one else in the office knew how to code. If there was ever a problem, they only had one person who could maintain the system. After that individual left, they needed a hands-off solution they could rely on.

Ship Shape: Finding a Right-sized Backup Solution

Law reached out to LumaForge who recommended Backblaze B2. He did his own research and priced out a few other providers, but felt they didn't fit his needs. He didn't anticipate accessing the backups frequently, but still wanted the data to be easily available should they need it. He found that other providers' pricing tiers accounted for a lot of download activity or made accessing data difficult. Because Backblaze B2 offers single-tier pricing for ready-access data storage, Law didn't have to trade affordability for accessibility.

He also wanted a "set it and forget it" solution, but found that other providers didn't integrate as seamlessly with the Jellyfish device. "We needed a backup solution that would work without any of us having to dedicate a lot of time or any knowledge of coding. From that perspective, Backblaze was exactly what we were looking for," Law said. He started planning for implementation.
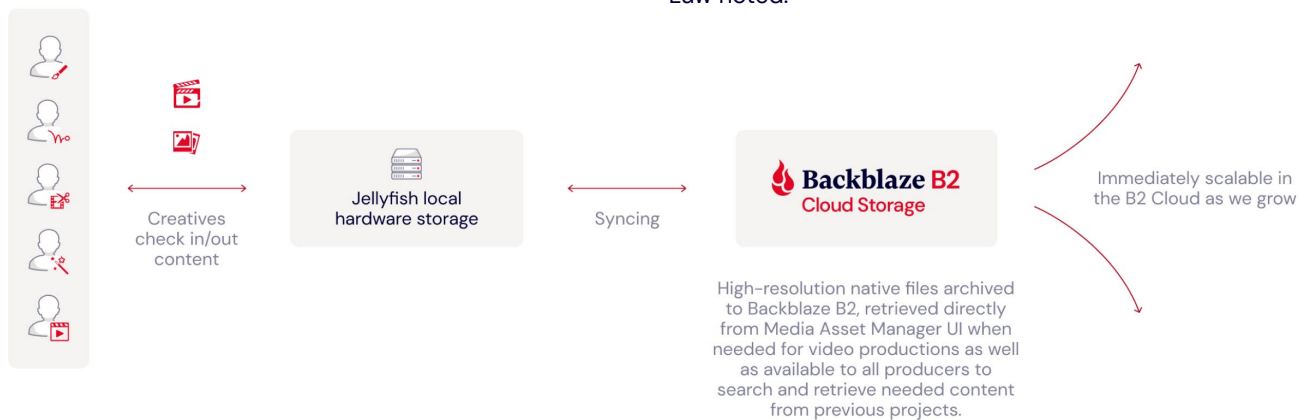
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Backblaze B2 Puts Backups on Autopilot

To configure backups from the Jellyfish to Backblaze B2, all Law had to do was open a B2 Cloud Storage account and select Backblaze B2 as his preferred storage in the Jellyfish UI. "Out of everyone in my company, I'm fairly tech savvy, but anyone who has created a Netflix account could set up Backblaze B2. That took a lot of the worry out of the process," Law said.

Law planned the initial upload of their Jellyfish data over a long weekend when Yacht Club was having some construction done to expand the office. They knew the Jellyfish server as well as their internet bandwidth could be dedicated solely to the data transfer. "By the time we got back into the office, everything was good. I'm not sure if it took the full three days or just one or two, but it was perfect," Law noted.

Creatives check in/out content — Jellyfish local hardware storage — Syncing — **Backblaze B2** Cloud Storage — Immediately scalable in the B2 Cloud as we grow

High-resolution native files archived to Backblaze B2, retrieved directly from Media Asset Manager UI when needed for video productions as well as available to all producers to search and retrieve needed content from previous projects.

Yacht Club Charts a Course for Expansion

Now, all of Yacht Club Film's active project data is automatically backed up every Friday per Law's preferences set in the Jellyfish UI. They keep active projects on the LumaForge backed up in Backblaze B2 for about six to eight months after delivery before moving them off of active storage to longer term storage on individual drives.

In the Jellyfish UI, Law can select which folders need to be backed up, so Yacht Club only pays for the storage they need. And if they ever need more storage, Law is confident about the firm's ability to grow with Backblaze. "We're inevitably going to need more storage. It's nice to know Backblaze has as much storage as we could need, and we don't need to find another company for that," he said.

Previously, backups were something Law had to think about more than he wanted to with ongoing creative projects. With the new system, that stress is gone.

"Now, I quite literally never think about the backups with Backblaze," he attested. "The few times I've checked, they've been syncing. After that, my worries were put to ease." Overall, they reduced the time they spent managing backups by nearly 100%—from four to five hours every week to just minutes a month, if at all.

With an easy-to-use backup solution, the biggest benefit Yacht Club has realized is simply the time they've recouped to focus on developing new business and creating work. "Backblaze freed up an astronomical amount of time for us," he said. "It automated the backup process to a point where we don't have to worry about it anymore." Instead, they can spend that time thinking about how to expand in the commercial world and work on bigger and better projects. "All that time saved will go into figuring out how to keep growing. Always moving forward is the hope," Law concluded.

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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.

www.backblaze.com

Backblaze