Quantum
CatDV

Protecting Video Assets for Online Learning at UCSC Silicon Valley with CatDV

The University of California's UC Scout program creates a wealth of multimedia assets to help high school students meet eligibility requirements for California's universities. When media creators based at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC) Silicon Valley campus needed to free up storage space on their media server, their department implemented a cloud backup solution integrated with CatDV asset management. The department regained capacity on the media server while providing direct access to assets in the cloud through CatDV.

After creating thousands of videos for 65 online courses, the creative professionals at UCSC Silicon Valley were running out of storage space on the university's 128 TB media server. Their department's digital asset manager, Sara Brylowski, knew she needed to archive data from completed projects to make room for new ones. Her mission was to build a new creative workflow and optimize asset management so she could give media creators the resources they need without requiring her IT team to spend any more time managing hardware.

The media creators couldn't wait until all the pieces were in place before they started, so they worked off a NAS and cloud backup from the university IT department's preferred supplier. Brylowski could see that neither solution worked well.
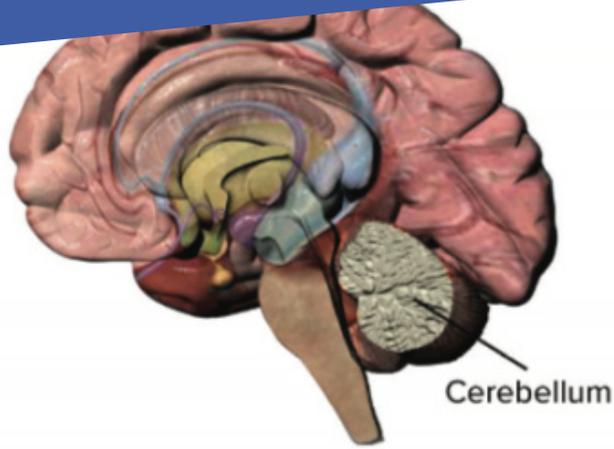
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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

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Brian Botel
CEO, Cutting Edge

FEATURED PRODUCTS

CatDV

SOLUTION OVERVIEW

- CatDV asset management system
- Backblaze B2 cloud storage
- Facilis TerraBlock shared storage

KEY BENEFITS

- **Enabled fast, direct access to a cloud archive** with integration between CatDV and Backblaze B2 cloud storage.
- **Protected content from ingest to archive** with fully integrated asset management and storage solutions.
- **Freed up storage for new video projects** by shifting content from the media server to the cloud.
- **Reduced backup storage costs** by avoiding unnecessary backup of application files.
- **Streamlined backup and archiving workflows,** enabling staff to spend less time managing hardware.
- **Expanded to support new types of video projects** because of improved workflow efficiency.

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Sara Brylowski
Digital Asset Manager, UCSC

To help her design a more efficient workflow, Brylowski turned to Cutting Edge, one of the country's top media systems integrators with a specialty in storage and asset management solutions. Cutting Edge recommended replacing UCSC's existing storage with a Facilis TerraBlock 128 TB media storage solution. Built specifically for editing high-definition video, the Facilis media server allows the teams of editors, producers, graphic designers, and animation artists at UCSC—a total of 22 creative professionals—to share files and collaborate effectively.

MANAGING A GROWING LIBRARY OF ASSETS WITH CATDV

Once the media server was in place, Brylowski's focused on finding the right media asset management (MAM) solution for organizing the department's diverse and growing library of assets: video shot in studio, B-roll, licensed images, and audio from multiple sources. "We specifically wanted something that would handle

more kinds of media than a traditional DAM [digital asset management system]," says Brylowski. "Most of them are built for marketing and not video production."

CatDV was a clear choice. "It had the features we needed at the best price point," says Brylowski. "Other MAMs have more bells and whistles, but they cost 3 to 4 times more."

PROVIDING FAST, DIRECT ACCESS TO A CLOUD ARCHIVE WITH CATDV INTEGRATION

One of the key features that CatDV offered was integration with cloud storage for archiving. Brylowski was considering both Backblaze B2 and Amazon S3. Both were proven cloud solutions that were fully integrated with CatDV, as well as a broad range of other software. Brylowski ultimately chose Backblaze because its pricing made it a fraction of the cost of Amazon S3.

Brylowski set up three Backblaze buckets: a backup bucket for protecting active files, an

archive for storing infrequently used assets, and a library for the masters of completed course videos. Then a team from Cutting Edge helped connect the buckets to CatDV.

When a new course goes live, its build files are cataloged in CatDV and then moved to the Backblaze archive bucket. Proxies or thumbnails for archived assets still appear alongside the online assets in the CatDV interface.

Retrieval is surprisingly fast. "Until they use it, the editors worry it will take hours to pull assets from the archive. But it only takes a minute," says Brylowski. "They'll say, 'Ugh, it's offline!,' and I'll say, 'Just wait a second.' After a quick refresh, the archived assets are back. That's been a big relief for them—they trust the system a lot more."

PROTECTING CONTENT FROM INGEST TO ARCHIVE

Moving to Backblaze B2 also resolved the department's problems with backing up content. The university's standard cloud backup was designed for traditional file servers, so it backed up everything, even the iterative files generated by video production applications, which don't need to be backed up.

With B2, Brylowski can back up just the volumes currently under production. Right before post-production begins, she sets up a sync in SyncBackPro, which mirrors the project's folder structure and work-in-process files in the B2 cloud bucket. The mirrored folder structure on B2 simplifies restoring files that are inadvertently deleted on the media server.

"We can drill into the exact project in our B2 backup bucket, find what we need, and pull it back down quickly," says Brylowski. "Backblaze's integration with Cyberduck makes it intuitive and easy."

FREEING UP STORAGE FOR NEW PROJECTS

With the CatDV and B2 solution in place, Brylowski is actively freeing up storage on the media server by cataloging and

archiving content for previously completed courses. "Right now, our Facilis is down to 100 TB, and we have about the same volume stored in Backblaze," says Brylowski. "That will shift significantly as we catalog more of the completed courses and move their build files to archive in B2."

By managing storage more efficiently, the department won't have to increase the capacity on its media server as video production increases. And unlike the media server, the B2 archive can grow indefinitely.

As Cutting Edge CEO Brian Botel explains, "We recognized that UCSC needed a sophisticated and reliable asset management workflow with cloud archive at a competitive price point. CatDV enabled us to orchestrate file movement throughout the full content creation lifecycle, from the Facilis media server to a B2 cloud archive, that can limitlessly scale on demand."

REDUCING COSTS, STREAMLINING MANAGEMENT

The new, integrated solution has allowed the department to move the video team's data from the standard backup solution that the rest of the university employs. As a result, the university can significantly reduce costs for off-site storage.

In addition, the integrations among CatDV, Facilis, and Backblaze have allowed the internal IT staff to be largely hands off with video data. "Previously we were using a blanket solution to back up our data, but our current trio of solutions allows us to go in with a scalpel and only retain the objects that we want to save," says Brylowski. "We're able to manage it all within our team and not burden our IT staff with managing a different workflow for just our department."

PREPARING FOR EXPANSION, REFOCUSING ON CREATIVE PROCESSES

Efficiency has become more critical as the department has expanded operations from producing only UC Scout courses to creating 3-4

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Digital Asset Manager, UCSC

university-level extension courses per quarter. In less than two years, the department has generated more than 4,500 videos, each running 7–18 minutes long, often with custom animations created in-house.

Having a more efficient workflow in place has even opened up the possibility of creating online courses for groups outside the UC system. "We have our process really well defined and we're an effective team," says Brylowski. "It only makes sense to offer our services to other organizations."

The biggest value of the new workflow is that the department no longer has to worry about whether its content is protected and readily available. "With this workflow, we can manage our content within its lifecycle and at the same time have reliable backup storage for the items we know we're going to want in the future," says Brylowski. "That's allowed us to concentrate on creating videos, not managing storage."

ABOUT UC SCOUT

UC Scout delivers A-G approved online classes and curriculum to middle and high school students around the globe, with the intent to bridge the achievement gap. A-G courses are requirements that students must meet to be eligible for admission to the University of California and California State University.

UC Scout is designed to ensure that a higher proportion of California's young people, including those who are first-generation, socioeconomically disadvantaged, and English-language learners, are prepared for postsecondary education and success in the workplace. Course materials are designed to inspire lifelong curiosity and prepare pupils of all backgrounds and education levels for an increasingly technological world where training and job skills are mobile, asynchronous, and self-directed.

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