

Case study

A+E Networks

This media and entertainment giant partners with Iron Mountain and AWS to transform historical analog footage into today's digital media formats.

A+E Networks is comprised of well-known media brands, including A&E®, The HISTORY® Channel, Lifetime®, and BIOGRAPHY®. They are in eight out of 10 American homes, cumulatively reaching 335 million people worldwide. As the industry and art form have evolved, so has the network.

Since its founding in 1983 with just two cable channels, A+E Networks has grown into a multi-platform, multimedia, multi-genre content creator. One of the biggest challenges facing the media and entertainment industry now is the creation of new content.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, new productions were halted, and media companies were scrambling to fill the gaps - especially as people were stuck at home, turning to their TVs and devices for entertainment and distraction. Fortunately, A+E was able to rely on its back catalog to continue producing new content, especially at a time when historical content was in high demand as viewers craved comfort and a sense of nostalgia.

Leveraging historical footage

A+E Networks has always retained a treasure trove of historical video footage, but the pandemic created an

urgency to digitize this archival content and make it accessible so that it could be used in new productions. Today's media productions are completely digital - old movie reels have been replaced by digital cinematography - and content is captured, manipulated, and distributed digitally. With the help of Iron Mountain, A+E's film stock can now be retrieved from the archives, encoded into a digital format, correctly cataloged and tagged with rich metadata, and stored on Amazon S3. The historical content can be easily searched, accessed, and used by the creative editorial teams to tell new stories. In addition to providing new storytelling content to the A+E Networks brands, the company has recently entered into an archival footage partnership with Shutterstock.

Any format, any challenge

Eleanor Eagle, Manager of Global Acquisitions Services at A+E Networks, worked closely with Iron Mountain to make the digitization partnership happen. She toured the Iron Mountain facility, learned about the storage, and visited the studio to determine if Iron Mountain would be a good fit for A+E's needs.

"I realized Iron Mountain would be able to do all of this encoding work with all of



Industry

Media and Entertainment

Challenge

A+E Networks wanted to preserve and share its archival analog film footage in new digital productions in the cloud

Solution

- Iron Mountain Data Management Services for AWS
- Iron Mountain Entertainment Services



these tapes which has been problematic for other vendors. The other vendors simply didn't have the equipment that Iron Mountain did," says Eagle. "That was a big breakthrough for us as a team to know that we could send a variety of different assets to Iron Mountain and still get that same end product because they had the equipment to do it."

As A+E Networks found, Iron Mountain came through in terms of the necessary equipment, a long history of proven industry experience, and AWS expertise. Media and entertainment companies worldwide turn to Iron Mountain Entertainment Services (IMES) to preserve, access, and monetize their content. It is considered a one-stop shop for archiving and digitization needs, and can migrate, master, reformat, clean, enhance, and edit just about any legacy media format ever made into today's digital media formats.

Safely open for business

Although working through the pandemic proved challenging for many businesses because of shutdowns, A+E Networks was able to navigate these challenges with the help of Iron Mountain. Eagle recalls, "One of the big concerns we had going into COVID was, 'Who is going to be able to be on premises to do some of the work that we needed?' When you're looking at a physical asset, someone has to be in a building to put a tape into a tape deck to have it encoded and then transcoded."

This process is not something that can be done electronically or remotely, but Iron Mountain's strict COVID protocols enabled the company to safely open for business. "We work with several vendors all over the world, and none of them but Iron Mountain were able to be on premises in a safe way that allowed us to do this work," says Eagle.

After the video footage was digitized, Iron Mountain's Data Restoration and Migration Services for AWS enabled active use of these files in the cloud with seamless and secure migration and access.

Partners in digitization and cloud storage

Here's how it worked:

- Iron Mountain securely located A+E's content - much of it decades old and on physical backup tape - and then encoded and transcoded the content, so it could then be digitized. This is a process that cannot be done remotely.
- Iron Mountain then securely delivered the digitized content to A+E Networks, who uploaded it to AWS so it could be accessed and distributed by A+E Networks domestically and internationally. Having a large catalog of content now available on Amazon S3 allowed A+E Networks content programmers to switch to remote work, which was hugely important to continue broadcasting throughout the pandemic.

Outcome

- Preserve, access, and monetize petabytes of historical content in the cloud
- Enable active use of files in the cloud via Amazon Simple Storage Service (Amazon S3) on AWS
- Help A+E fulfill its brand promise of "Life, Magnified."

- This repeatable process continues to be used by A+E Networks today with Iron Mountain finding and restoring content and AWS hosting the catalog going forward.

A+E Networks provides unparalleled visual content to empower creative industries to tell stronger, more dynamic stories. Iron Mountain and AWS support this mission by protecting and activating A+E's historical media archives in a digital format in the cloud.

"Having continuity in a time of complete uncertainty was really critical to us."

Elenor Eagle, Manager Global Acquisitions Services, A+E Networks

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About Iron Mountain

Iron Mountain Incorporated (NYSE: IRM), founded in 1951, is the global leader for storage and information management services. Trusted by more than 220,000 organizations around the world, and with a real estate network of more than 85 million square feet across more than 1,400 facilities in over 50 countries, Iron Mountain stores and protects billions of information assets, including critical business information, highly sensitive data, and cultural and historical artifacts. Providing solutions that include secure storage, information management, digital transformation, secure destruction, as well as data centers, art storage and logistics, and cloud services, Iron Mountain helps organizations to lower cost and risk, comply with regulations, recover from disaster, and enable a more digital way of working. Visit www.ironmountain.com for more information.

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