

Industry

Ministry

Challenge

Obsolete video formats rendered content unusable

Solution

Iron Mountain Data Management

Value

- Preserves the life work of Dr. James Merritt
- Enables repurposing content in a high-content-demand industry
- Provides unified, reliable, efficient, and organized content storage



Building the Future by Preserving the Past

Touching Lives proactively uploads obsolete tape formats to the cloud, amplifying the life work of Dr. James Merritt and furthering its mission and outreach.

Touching Lives has an evergreen mission. Its purpose is to “touch the lives of lost people and enrich the faith of the found.” For over 40 years, Dr. James Merritt, the host of Touching Lives, has enabled this mission through his video sermons and radio and TV programs. Today, Touching Lives broadcasts all over the world, including the 50 states and over 140 countries.

formats that became inaccessible as the formats aged out. That’s when Touching Lives, after being referred by Amazon Web Services (AWS), turned to Iron Mountain for help in preserving this treasure trove of content and digitizing the legacy of Dr. Merritt’s work for ongoing use.

Building the Future by Preserving the Past

For Touching Lives, future-proofing its mission means preserving its past. That’s because TV and radio presence can live on for years to come. The content is enduring because it is built on unchanging Biblical principles. The impact of ministry content sends out ripples that increase in reach and magnitude over time. That’s exactly what Touching Lives content seeks to accomplish, making its preservation, or digitization, a key factor in building a stronger future.

To enable Touching Lives’ global reach, content such as sermons, articles, and devotionals are offered via various digital media formats on the web. Content must be posted for daily devotionals and weekly sermons, mandating substantial new content creation.

During its 40-year tenure, Touching Lives has produced a substantial library. However, videos produced before 2015 – about 75% of all content – existed in various tape



The majority of Touching Lives' historical video content was locked in a host of unusable formats, spanning from Betamax, and MPEG-1 to Linear Tape Open (LTO) and everything in between. Touching Lives could not play any of these tapes because the video format became obsolete. For example, Betamax ceased production of video recorders in 2002.

"Preserving Dr. Merritt's powerful ministry was a top priority for us. It's a way for us to continue to amplify and further expand his ministry and life's work and reach more people. In ministry, we constantly need content, at least every seven days or 52 times a year. Repurposing timeless content, built on the steadfast principles of the Bible, is a must-have," shares Jared West, Director of Marketing, Touching Lives.

Cleaning Out Your Closet

With about 75% of its content in unusable formats, Touching Lives had to make a significant effort to clean out its closets. Ultimately, Touching Lives identified 600 videotapes for digitization. Touching Lives reached out to AWS for help, who then referred Touching Lives to Iron Mountain. AWS S3 Glacier is used by Touching Lives for low-cost data archiving and longer-term storage and AWS cloud storage is used for shorter-term file storage.

Touching Lives selected Iron Mountain to digitize and catalog the content. The first step was a small pilot project for Iron Mountain to convert four or five videotapes. After that, Touching Lives packed and shipped 40-50 cartons containing approximately 600 videos to Iron Mountain. The Iron Mountain team digitized and uploaded the newly converted files to AWS for easy storage, and for Touching Lives ready retrieval.

While all of the videos were shipped to Iron Mountain at one time, Touching Lives and Iron Mountain teams worked out a monthly volume of videos for digitization and cataloging. This flexibility allowed Touching Lives to digitize the content project within its budgetary constraints.

"Iron Mountain cared about and understood our needs, as evidenced by the flexibility in our working relationship. The team at Iron Mountain has been helpful, knowledgeable, and accommodating, making the project a seamless experience for us," comments West. "Also, it has been so great to clean up our cache of content and not lose a very important part of our legacy."

Preventing Fires Before They Start

Touching Lives' proactive approach to its video content project is unique—and smart. Many organizations and individuals adopt a "fire-fighting" approach instead of a "fire-prevention" approach. Planning ahead gave Touching Lives a comfortable runway to manage the project while allowing time to complete the digitization and upload-to-cloud within budget.

The newly-digitized historical content will be repurposed for Touching Lives outreach. The next step is to put the content into bite-sized chunks for use in social media. Multiple social media channels, such as YouTube and Facebook serve millions of Touching Lives followers. The repurposed content is a pathway to keep expanding reach and enriching lives.

"It was important for us to document Dr. Merritt's powerful ministry. So, we started to preserve it proactively and will be able to repurpose the content as needed going forward," shares West. "With the help of Iron Mountain, we've created a way for Dr. Merritt's work to live on and continue to realize our mission and help people around the world."

[Learn more](#) about Iron Mountain Digital solutions including the preservation of your assets.

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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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