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ITV News Streamlines Large-Scale Archive and Simplifies Access with CatDV Asset Management Platform

The UK's ITV News has a large and growing archive of digital content, which until recently was spread across disparate systems. Journalists had no easy way to find or retrieve what they needed. Implementing a new, consolidated archive solution with the CatDV Asset Management Platform has streamlined workflows and made it easier for users to access content. Now journalists can rapidly find and retrieve required clips from their news bureau or anywhere on the road.

With a history in broadcasting that dates back to the 1950s, ITV News has amassed a tremendous archive of news stories and longer-form content. News teams in distinct regions across the UK often want to retrieve archived media for their current reporting, but it's not easy. Over the years, different groups had stored content in a variety of systems, using multiple formats.

In 2004, ITV News attempted to create a single, searchable database for its content libraries—and that effort temporarily addressed some challenges. The database and search engine helped users find the location of physical media on shelves, such as the tapes that contained short news stories and longer programs.

However, the database and search engine could not easily accommodate the news division's transition from physical media to HD digital files in

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2014. When the search engine was left unsupported on an old operating system, it was time for a change.

"We needed to bring together a number of disparate, ageing database systems into one unified, friendly interface for archiving and retrieval that could serve a range of users," says Steve Teague, head of technical services at ITV News.

SELECTING CATDV ASSET MANAGEMENT PLATFORM TO MEET RIGOROUS WORKFLOW AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The ITV News team was ready to invest in a new archiving and asset management solution. But team leaders wanted to retain as much of the original infrastructure as possible to make the most of previous investments.

The team defined a number of key workflow and technical requirements. For example, the new system had to support uploads from existing Avid iNEWS and Interplay systems; provide regional catalogs and maintain identities for ten distinct news regions; enable users to search across all regions; integrate with popular file-sharing systems for proxy reuse; allow partial retrieval of long-form content; and more.

After evaluating proposals from several vendors, the ITV News team selected a solution that included the CatDV Asset Management Platform along with an archive storage system from Spectra Logic. "CatDV

met our technical requirements and offered the best combination of flexibility and adaptability," says Teague.

TESTING, CUSTOMIZING, AND DEPLOYING THE NEW SOLUTION

To implement the new archive and asset management solution, ITV News assembled a technical team that included CatDV experts plus outside consultants. The team conducted a proof of concept, testing the interface and developing updated workflows.

The combined technical team customized the solution to integrate with existing technologies and accommodate current processes. For example, the team developed a custom XML schema for Avid Gateway imports, implemented ways to match legacy clips from the previous database to assets in the new storage environment, and enabled sharing via Dropbox using a public link.

The CatDV team customized the look of the interface using a variety of available web interfaces and style sheets. "We were keen to create an ITV corporate look while also reflecting the unique identities of the distinct nations," says Teague.

This combined team then deployed the solution into production, importing approximately 3 million assets across 10 regions into the new environment. After the records were reindexed, the system was placed online, ready for users in a centralized archive.

STREAMLINING WORKFLOWS, SIMPLIFYING CONTENT ACCESS

"The daily workflows before CatDV were very manual," says Teague. For example, when ingesting content, team members often had to cut and paste descriptive metadata between systems. Loggers had to enter timecodes manually. CatDV has helped streamline ingest and logging, replacing manual tasks with automation.

At the same time, CatDV has simplified the experience of accessing content. Journalists from across the UK can now search a single database and retrieve content quickly and easily—without assistance from technical staff.

"From our point of view, the CatDV approach has taken us from a very labor-intensive, manual system to something that is efficient, puts content first, and makes it easier to exploit our assets," says Teague. "From the user perspective, we have had very positive feedback, especially on the self-service aspect of the system, which has meant easy remote access to content."

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Given the positive experience users are having at ITV News, it might not be surprising that a growing number of teams beyond the news division are using the archive and asset management system. "The solution has been widely adopted," says Teague. "In addition to ITV News, the system is now used by our clip sales team, studios, and sports teams within ITV."

MAINTAINING TIGHT SECURITY

While the new solution has made it easier for authorized users to find and retrieve the archived content they need, the ITV News team has made sure to safeguard assets from unauthorized access. Through integration with Active Directory domains, the CatDV platform enables ITV to bring new users onboard easily with their ITV credentials while mapping each user to a specific CatDV role. Administrators, technical support users, super users, loggers, and browsers all have different levels of access to systems and content.

PREPARING FOR EVOLVING NEEDS

In operation for more than 60 years, ITV News has certainly experienced numerous shifts in the workflows and technologies employed for broadcasting news. With a new archive solution centered around CatDV asset management and ongoing workflow improvements, the ITV News team can now better support the digital workflows of today—and tomorrow. According to Teague: "CatDV is a pleasure to use, and the biggest reward is that we now have a system that we understand and that can flex to our changing requirements."

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