

British Film Institute

Ovation Digitalization Strategy Saves British Film Treasures

Industry: Media & Entertainment

Challenge

The British Film Institute's National Archive holds one of the world's largest film and television collections in the world, with more than one million titles. With the growing transition from physical to digital display, the institute recognized that the UK's screen heritage was in danger of being stranded in the analogue domain and forever inaccessible to the people of Britain.

The institute wanted to digitize 10,000 films and provide safe and secure long-term storage and access of heritage film. A digital repository was needed to integrate with existing workflow applications, be flexible with future applications, and accommodate predicted data growth. A key BFI concern was being locked into a single vendor's technology drive and media roadmap.

Solution

The BFI selected Ovation to determine the best strategy, and Ovation selected a digital tape solution from SpectraLogic as the best choice for BFI's unique storage requirements. The custom-built solution was designed to:

Provide a modern, simple portal to a multi-tier storage architecture breaking away from traditional and legacy solutions that are based on licensing models, driving greater cost when scaling.

Allow data to move seamlessly to disk, tape and cloud storage, in a way not previously possible.

Be cost effective, easy to manage and scalable to exabytes of data.

The solution met BFI's challenge of dealing with the sheer size of files inherent in digital preservation. Two SpectraLogic T950 tape libraries and two Converged Storage Systems were installed at a BFI site in Hertfordshire, and the 10GB per second connection that BFI built with Ovation helps move those high-bitrate files across.

The result

With its modern data platform in place, the BFI National Archive now has a trusted repository that can preserve its audio-visual heritage and facilitate effective access for audiences worldwide.

Beyond its scalability to exabytes of data, the end result is also cost effective and easy to manage. BFI's own developers need no outside help to work with the system, a major advantage of the Spectra Logic machines.

The customized, sustainable data management strategy adopted by BFI with help from Ovation overcame obsolete video tape formats that threatened more than a century of film treasures with doom. The success of this project effectively ensures long-term preservation of one of the largest film collections in the world.

The Program has substantially transformed access to the nation's film heritage of the landmark Britain on Film. Above all, the project has encouraged millions of people to engage with and enjoy their screen heritage for the first time.



Our customized solution has helped us create a content strategy to preserve the BFI National Archive digital collection long-term. It integrates seamlessly into our workflow applications and allows us to easily store and quickly access our files on tape libraries. The non-proprietary format of the system and its genetic diversity gives us confidence in our system's future roadmap.

Stephen McConnachie

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Book a consultation

More information about BFI's approach to securely transcribe Britain's cultural records from obsolete analogue to sustainable digital.

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