

5 WAYS TO IMPROVE CONTENT PRODUCTION SUPPLY CHAINS

DRIVE MORE EFFICIENT MEDIA PRODUCTION
WORKFLOWS AND UNLOCK THE VALUE OF
ARCHIVE CONTENT



INTRODUCTION

According to the DPP's Design For Tomorrow series on ['Libraries and Archives: Managing media inventory'](#), an archive is "the beating heart of a media company; the place where its most valuable assets are stored."

These assets might be culturally valuable. The Wales Broadcast Archive launched in 2023 contains over half a million video clips that cover more than a century of Welsh broadcasting from the BBC, ITV and S4C. Or they might be commercially valuable. When Amazon acquired MGM in 2022, the [formal SEC filing](#) valued the studio's catalogue of more than 4,000 film titles and 17,000 TV episodes at \$3.4 billion.

Or it might be a combination of both culture and commerce. [Yorkshire and North East Film Archive](#) collects and preserves the work of amateur and professional filmmakers and holds the most astonishing moving image record of life in Yorkshire and the North East of England over the past 130 years. The content is licensed to programme makers and funds the charity.

Similarly, the [International Tennis Federation \(ITF\)](#) administers and regulates the game through 210 affiliated national associations and six regional associations. As a result, it has a vast back catalogue of archive footage that can be used by marketing departments and for licensing.

Yet for value to be fully realised, archive content needs to be stored where people can easily find it and view it, and where content owners can protect, distribute and manage it. For a media archive to be part of a modern content supply chain, assets can no longer be filed away on disconnected, low-cost storage. They must be part of a flexible, scalable and easily accessible repository that drives more efficient media production workflows.

This is one of the challenges facing media companies and sports organisations in the digital age. Crucially, it involves getting five things right and each one is linked to the other.



1. SCALABLE AND CONNECTED STORAGE

The demand for archive footage has never been higher with old clips reused in new programming such as documentaries and news. As the [Screenocean archive points out](#): “There has been a rise in the demand for archive footage as a way to seamlessly blend in historical footage enabling stories to come alive. The way we portray stories has seen a greater appetite for authenticity, audiences are becoming hooked on true, original content.”

The major streaming platforms are already investing in high-quality factual programming like Formula 1: Drive to Survive (Netflix) and Welcome to Wrexham (Disney+). While archival movie projects such as Peter Jackson’s They Shall Not Grow Old and the David Bowie-focused Moonage Daydream have reinvigorated the big screen documentary. Other factual programmes (e.g. TV news) often use archive content alongside new footage to add extra insight or context.

Until recently, the technical strategy for building a long-term media archive for video, images, audio, documents and social media posts, was to store content on low-cost LTO tape. But this strategy is now at odds with the growing need to quickly and easily find, re-use, repurpose and remonetise archive material.

The traditional definition of a media library is a collection of media files, such as videos and images, that are stored for regular reuse. This is in contrast to the definition of a media archive, which is a collection of media files that are not actively used day-to-day and need to be preserved long-term. With cloud storage on services such as Azure, AWS and Wasabi, plus 24/7 access to content, it’s easy to argue that the lines between media library and media archive are rapidly blurring.

As far as a media archive is concerned, organisation is key if a content repository is to evolve from dead-end cold storage to become an integral part of a content supply chain.

2. OPTIMISED INGESTION AND ORGANISATION

Uploading petabytes of content into the cloud certainly stores and preserves it, but the ease with which that content can be organised for future reuse must be planned for and prioritised. Content has zero value if it can't be found or accessed. Content producers creating new programming, increasingly expect media archives to be simple to search and for content to be immediately accessible on whatever device they are using.

Optimised ingestion of content into a media archive is key to this discoverability. Not only does data need to be easy to upload at scale ([via live feeds](#), the web, API, XML import or third-party services like Dropbox), adding metadata to tag and categorise that data is crucial for powering search and maintaining quality control. The challenge is building semantic metadata that is consistent and goes beyond simple 'title' and 'description' tags, enabling searchers to search, sort and filter to find what they need faster.

Establishing commonality in how to label content – creating naming conventions, customising database fields, and ensuring that the data is useful to the business in a meaningful way – is the central theme here. Modern media asset management (MAM) platforms can take this further for video content, offering advanced features for technical and time-based metadata, such as live logging, plus smart annotations (including face detection, chapters and star ratings) and integration with third party data providers like Stats Perform.

Ultimately, metadata processes can be automated with smart tools and AI ingestion workflows, reducing the time and cost it takes to manage large volumes of audio-visual content, while boosting accuracy and efficiency.

AUTOMATED BLACK CAPS

New Zealand Cricket auto-ingests matchday live streams directly via SRT feeds into their media asset management platform, enriching the information and metadata in real time by connecting their Opta data to the incoming content. This enables their content producers, sponsors and third party partners to access and use this content in near real-time.



3. A FOCUS ON ACCESSIBILITY AND EFFICIENCY

Accessibility of stored content is vital for the long-term health of any archive. Unlocking the value of a media archive requires making as much content available as possible, anywhere users need it, anytime they want it. The Infomedia international online news archive, for example, hosts more than 1 billion articles from over 200,000 news media sources. [IMG Replay](#), meanwhile, is the world's largest sports archive, with over 45,000 hours of sport and entertainment content online.

A modern archive must be connected. But archives also need to be fast and responsive, so the challenge quickly becomes one of usability rather than capacity. It's here that a media asset management platform with a customisable UI comes into its own, giving content owners complete control over the way media is accessed. The ability to quickly search and browse content, discover related content, preview assets and download files fast is key to providing an engaging and satisfying user experience.

The accessibility challenge doesn't end there. In an increasingly automated world, media archives can boost efficiency by connecting and sharing data with other systems. Plug in a payments platform, for example, to monetise content downloads or link to Google Analytics to get insights into audience engagement. And by integrating a media archive with a cloud native video editing platform like [Blackbird](#), organisations can unify cloud workflows for seamless archive management, editing and publishing of content to social, OTT, VOD and other digital channels.

PREMIER DISTRIBUTION

The [Premier League](#) uses two branded, self-serve content portals for two distinct audiences, with the same media served from the same cloud, optimised to facilitate discovery, offer enhanced choice and deliver broadcast-ready video assets at blistering speeds to a global customer base. The master content is only stored once and the two systems provide a window to the media through the two different user interfaces – one for broadcasters and the other for footage buyers.





4. SECURE CONTENT DISTRIBUTION

Self-service access to archive content, either paid for or free (and subject to appropriate permissions - see #5), is a common distribution model. In this way, the media archive sits at the heart of the supply chain and, if set up correctly, can handle content access, authentication and distribution with no human intervention.

Automating delivery via workflows, whether to single users, internal production units, broadcasters or sponsors, is an alternative distribution model saving time and reducing costs. With the right media asset management platform, broadcast-quality files can be delivered at high-speed using encrypted HTTPS connections. In fact, file delivery can be automated via workflows for specific audiences, e.g. broadcasters, OTT platforms, subscribing clients or other departments in an organisation.

As an example, [Tennis Australia](#) faced various issues supplying video content to broadcasters who couldn't easily access its vast archive of historical matches. Switching to a MAM platform for its online archive, Tennis Australia can now distribute and edit content in any format across social media feeds and TV broadcasts. Licensees, meanwhile, can directly and securely access, preview and download Tennis Australia's content; including match footage, interviews, and historical clips. Broadcast rights holders praised the improved search and content accessibility during the Australian Open.

5. BALANCING RISK AND RETURN

A media archive can also improve a content production supply chain by reducing risk. It can do this in two ways.

The first is to tightly control access to valuable content. [Banijay](#), the world's largest independent producer with 120 production labels spanning 22 different markets, uses a secure, centralised media archive to control who is accessing its content and monitor what they are doing with it. Granular, permissions-based user access reduces the possibility of assets being leaked, and also provides clear evidence of responsibility, which acts as an effective deterrent against potential misuse.

The second part of reducing risk is to choose a platform that is up to the task of fulfilling points 1-4. It's here where heritage and experience matters most. A modern media archive needs to be flexible enough that it can adapt to changing market conditions and future content requirements, reducing the risk of obsolescence. This means embracing new formats and metadata options, adding automations, engagement tools and AI, as well as exploring integrations with third-party applications to ensure that workflows are smart, structured and repeatable.





CONCLUSION

As the demand for archive footage continues to grow, sports organisations and media companies are increasingly moving away from disconnected, low-cost storage to media asset management platforms in the cloud. There are several benefits:

- Whether for cultural or commercial preservation, archives are one the most valuable assets a media company has
- To unlock this value, archive material needs to be stored in a flexible, scalable, centralised and easily accessible repository.
- Cloud storage services are necessary for media archives to be easily accessible.
- Good metadata management is vital – content has zero value if it can't be found.
- Metadata processes can be automated with smart tools and AI ingestion workflows to reduce time and cost.
- Secure, self-service access to archive content saves time and reduces costs.
- A flexible and adaptable platform reduces the risk of obsolescence and delivers greater ROI.

A modern media asset management platform is the backbone of any media archive, capable of driving more efficient media production workflows and enabling content owners to realise greater value from their content. As the sheer amount of video data grows, a media asset management platform provides a premium experience for a broad range of users and keeps content safe for the future.

To learn more about how to drive efficiency within the content supply chain, [contact Imagen today](#).

ABOUT IMAGEN

Imagen is the leading cloud-based media asset management platform. Used by media companies, sports brands and enterprise organisations who own and manage large amounts of video content, it enables them to drive more value from their content libraries.

All these organisations face the same challenge: how to store, manage and distribute media content fast and securely across borders and boundaries.

Imagen provides a convenient and cost-effective way to manage, market and securely deliver large volumes of high-resolution video content.

Media executives can manage content easily, find footage fast, and get it out to stakeholders around the world with ease, even at huge file sizes. With lightning quick, secure and highly controlled cloud-based access to video content, Imagen protects the past and preserves media for the future.

Companies like the English Premier League, Chelsea Football Club, WTA Media, IMG Replay, MLB, MLS, NHL and many other large media & sports organisations use Imagen to get the most out of their video.

GET IN TOUCH WITH IMAGEN

To discuss your video management, delivery and distribution requirements, please contact us and one of the team will be in touch.

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