



CUSTOMER CASE

OL TV

INDEXING AND PRESERVING MEDIA CONTENT OF THE OLYMPIQUE LYONNAIS TV CHANNEL

OL TV, the official channel of Olympique Lyonnais

OL TV is the official channel of the Olympique Lyonnais (OL) soccer team. OL is the most successful French club in recent years, dominating the Ligue 1. The OL TV channel, which started broadcasting in 2005, is dedicated to programming related to the club. It is distributed by satellite and cable. OL TV has full production and post-production facilities at its disposal, including sets, editing rooms and mobile production units that follow the team.

A rapidly growing media collection

The content is produced digitally and is organized by season. It consists mainly of rushes, broadcast-ready material and short form content. The programming consists of matches and feature content. The short form material is categorized by themes, such as great photos, goals, season highlights, amateur goals, etc. While this content is the raw material for the channel, it is also part of its heritage. It increases rapidly each season as programming and techniques develop. In addition, some archived content still on video tape is being digitized and stored as files, furthering the need for more digital storage.

The need for an archive becomes evident

Originally, the produced content was stored directly to disk on the Xserve server and a SAN. The backups were done on external hard drives. This decentralized structure had reached its limit; it became difficult to ensure that the media were secure. External hard drives are not designed for long-term storage – they may fail when you need them the most! Furthermore, with media scattered on various hard disk, searching for specific content became cumbersome, limiting the value of the stored content.

The project

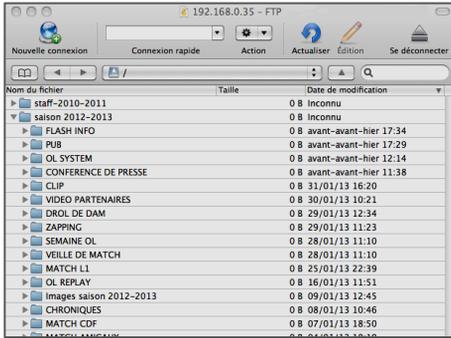
In 2011, to respond to this dual challenge, the technical team led by Nicolas Houël made the decision to restructure the way the video content was being stored and managed. Eric Lacroix, an operations engineer, became the project lead. Following an evaluation of the technologies and solutions available on the market, the project team leaned towards the Active Circle product offered by CTM Solutions. “This solution was the only one that matched our criteria for long-term storage and easy access”, said Nicolas Houël, Technical Manager.

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Nicolas Houël, Technical Manager



The OL TV control room



Access in file mode



Search in Web mode



Media view

"Active Circle is an open archiving system giving access both through file mode and the web browser, which is a real assurance of the longevity of the solution"

Nicolas Houël – Technical Manager

Deploying Active Circle and Active Media Explorer

As Active Circle is a system that leaves the choice of hardware open to the customer, OL TV chose an Xserve server from Apple, running CentOS. It uses disk space and a Quantum LTO 5 tape library for long-term storage. A distinctive feature of the Active Circle system is that it manages the LTO tape storage like a disk, using a file system interface to access archived content, even when it's located on tape. On the user side, OL TV opted for AME (Active Media Explorer), a web interface for viewing media and providing access to the archives.

Automatic archiving through synchronization

The archiving workflow is simple: an archiving space is defined on the SAN, and the media to be archived is placed there. The operation is immediate, in the sense that it simply consists of moving files within the SAN system. The files are automatically synchronized with Active Circle at regular intervals with the help of the Rsync utility in cumulative mode.

Automatic Indexing

The Active Media Explorer (AME) indexes the data and automatically generates low-resolution proxies in H264 format for viewing the media. The existing category structure of the media (by season, league, program, etc.) is preserved by the AME, which employs this structure to create fields for indexing and search. Text fields allow the users to enrich the indexing by adding information that can be used for searches.

Easy search in archives through the AME web interface

The users (editors in particular) access the Active Media Explorer in a web browser, which allows them to view the media. This eliminates possible time loss due to choosing the wrong media for retrieval from the archive. If the needed LTO tape is in the library, the retrieval will be transparent to the user. If not, a member of the technical team will load the tape in the library. It was decided that the retrieval workflow should restore the media to its original location on the XSAN, to simplify life for the users.

Direct access to the archives in file mode

Active Circle provides direct access to the archives through network shares, just like a traditional file server. This transforms the archiving system from a "black box" into an open system. The folder tree structure is preserved and visible instead of being hidden, freeing the technical team from this typical constraint of traditional archiving systems. "The connection between the content indexing of the AME and the folder data structure is very convenient, as it allows us to access the content both using the AME interface and directly in file mode", emphasizes Eric Lacroix, project manager and administrator for the OL TV solutions.

Mission accomplished: Long term storage combined with quick access

In the end, the technical team could pat themselves on the back for having reached two seemingly contradictory goals: preserving the media assets of OL TV in the long term by using a centralized model and storage on LTO tape, while improving the ease of access to the archives. "Active Circle is an open archiving system giving access both through file mode and the web browser, which is a real assurance of the longevity of the solution", concludes Nicolas Houël, Technical Director at OL TV.

Created in 2002, Active Circle develops software for organizations that manage large volumes of data: video content, images, scientific or technical data, or user information. The Active Circle solution optimizes data lifecycle management while at the same time simplifying storage administration and reducing total cost of ownership.

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