STORJ
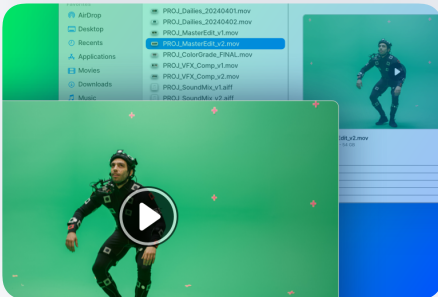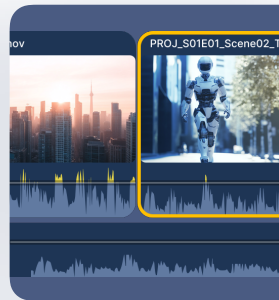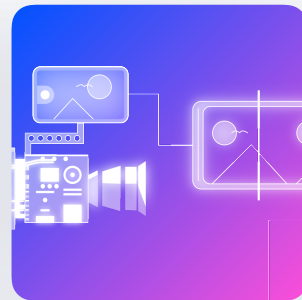
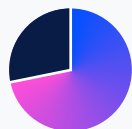# 5 ways the distributed cloud solves hybrid media workflow issues.

Overview

The Media and Entertainment (M&E) industry is in the midst of rapid transformation in how content is created, managed, and delivered. Workflows are becoming increasingly hybrid, with dispersed post-production teams collaborating across continents and time zones. An independent survey commissioned by Storj of 500 U.S. and UK-based IT decision makers at media and entertainment organizations found nearly three-quarters (72%) of respondents believe film production is becoming more global and going in the cloud.

This is a drastic change for M&E companies who have been primarily on-premise because of the immense file sizes of today's media. This presents serious challenges for those responsible for making hybrid workflows perform well enough not to reduce productivity so they can stay on production deadlines, and be affordable to stay within production budgets.

What M&E IT leaders think.

71.8% believe media production work is becoming more remote, more collaborative and open to leveraging resources and team members around the world.

51.6% think remote media production work will continue into the future with more work happening globally.

"Multi-site and remote production and post-production is really the new norm. You may have a production facility that has multiple sites around the world, so how you bridge these has really become a problem in the industry."

Floyd Christofferson
VP Product Marketing at Hammerspace

M&E studios venturing into the cloud across regions are experiencing higher than expected costs due to outdated hyperscaler architecture. As media workflows become more globally distributed, M&E businesses need a distributed cloud to work in accordance with the evolving landscape. Forward-thinking M&E organizations are turning to distributed cloud technology for high performing and affordable cloud services that excel at media workflows.

This report is based on independent research sponsored by Storj, industry trends research, and insights from M&E thought leaders. Whether your business is still on the fence, or you are feeling the frustrations of transitioning to the cloud, this guide provides five strategic benefits of deploying innovative distributed cloud technology as an essential part of your successful hybrid transformation.

Shipping drives isn't the answer.
Media needs to be in the cloud.

M&E trends indicate the industry is experiencing a shift to increased remote production and remote workflows. As an example, a production can shoot in Los Angeles and then transfer the media files to editing and post-production teams in different regions around the world.

With production workflows going global, many media asset management (MAM) solutions have developed cloud solutions to enable remote editing, but access is often limited to where storage regions are available, which is typically U.S. and Europe. As a trending response, production companies often have to pay for and set up additional storage buckets in specific regions to use these tools. Overall, this approach adds significant costs to already constrained budgets, more complexity, and fragmented workflows.

What M&E IT leaders think.

79.4% feel that migrating from on-premise workflows to cloud-based is important or very important.

"Hybrid workflow is the new norm and being dynamic is the new norm. Having the tools that enable remote editing is incredibly important in this new era of M&E."

Mattia Varriale
EMEA Sales Director at Backlight

5 Challenges the distributed cloud solves for M&E.

Not all clouds are created equal. Hyperscaler cloud storage platforms were not designed for remote, global, and hybrid media production workflows. The new distributed cloud uses storage from all over the world and creates redundancy without replication, as well as provides global access at the cost of one region of storage. Learn more about how the distributed cloud works here.

The following are five key benefits of using the distributed cloud to power media workflows. Armed with these actionable insights, your organization will be better positioned to solve evolving workflow challenges and seize new opportunities.

1 Liberate your media archives.

Currently, M&E companies that stay entirely on-premise face challenges including not having an efficient way to view their media archives. Handling massive file sizes, managing metadata, process-intensive codecs, and trying to meet faster than real-time ingest demands compound obstacles. Some companies tried to save costs by putting their media files in cloud object storage but again, they didn't have an easy way to access the archives.

The distributed cloud solves these problems with seamless file-level access to existing archives in on-premise or cloud object storage. Teams can instantly interact with their stored files, as though they were on a local drive.

When you bring your media archives into distributed cloud storage, you can also save money without sacrificing performance.
Distributed cloud storage is redundant by design and globally accessible at the cost of a single region of storage. As media production and post-production workflows continue to become more remote and global, you need affordable global access to your media files.

What M&E IT leaders think.

47% Have less than 50% of their content in the cloud. Another 33.2% have 51-75% in the cloud. Only 8.8% are fully cloud.
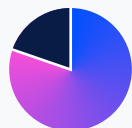
79.4% Feel that migrating from on-premise workflows to cloud-based is important or very important.

"Determine what sort of commercial model is being used and align them with the workflows you've got to ensure that you don't get any surprises of unexpected bills."

Nick Pearce
Founder at Scaling with Scarcity

2 Activate remote teams.

Today, M&E companies need to tap into the best talent wherever they are in the world. Having media stored in a globally distributed cloud extends the value of cloud editing solutions—enabling the best talent to utilize those solutions with one global bucket for media. Adding local-like file access also enables remote editors to efficiently access your archives to incorporate past media into new projects.

What M&E IT leaders think.

41.2% feel it's very important to be able to access media via MAMs or collaboration tools in multiple regions globally.

Another 35.8% say this is important.

Storing media in the cloud enables:

74.8%
Accelerates global communication.

70.2%
Working with top talent regardless of location.

64.4%
Meeting production deadlines with less pressure.

"Normal workflow has to now incorporate remote workflow. Remote and multi-site it is the norm in the fact that virtually every production company is looking at doing it."

Dominic Harland
CEO and CTO at GB Labs

"I think Covid opened up people's willingness to have a remote workforce. Having access to a global talent pool is better for all companies, but it also increases the requirement for access in all regions."

Eric Tang
Founder and CTO at Livepeer

3 Bring apps to your media.

The latest and greatest editing tools, particularly those with incredible AI capabilities, are being built as cloud applications. That means you need your media in the cloud to utilize these solutions and remain competitive.

To utilize these innovative solutions today, you need to move your media around to various storage regions to allow the right users to access the right media in the right location. The distributed cloud eliminates this issue with one global storage region, so editors everywhere can use the latest cloud tools to edit your media. Better yet, the performance is consistently fast globally. The chart below shows how the Storj distributed cloud is on average 60% faster than competitors for 5MB downloads.
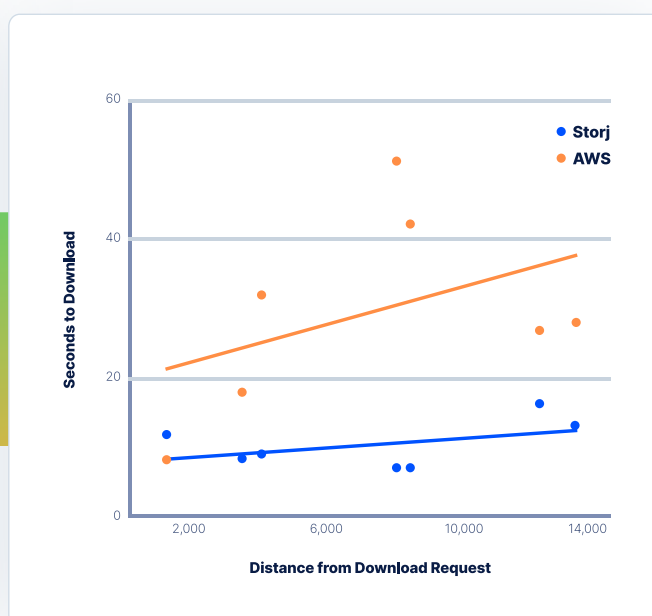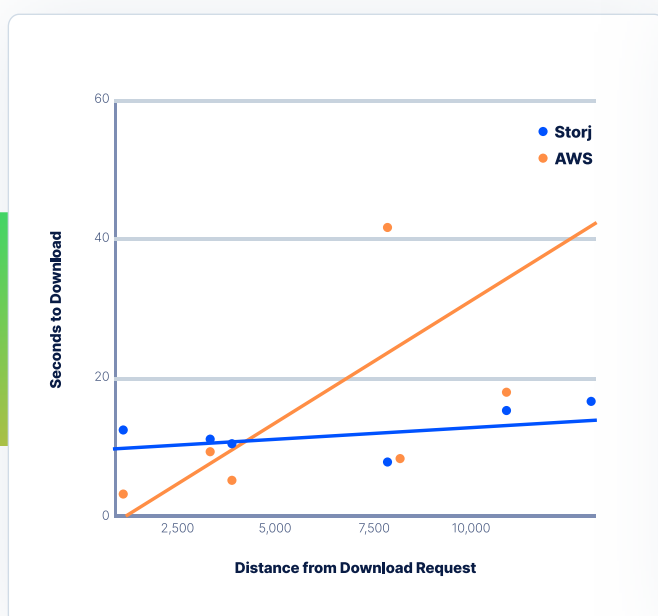
Speed is essential for the M&E industry. Media tools and solutions are embracing the power of the cloud to boost productivity, increase collaboration, streamline workflows, and more. For both production and post-production workflows, consistently fast performance—at any location—is needed to meet critical deadlines and save money.

What M&E IT leaders think.

"A lot of people do a lift and shift by just moving everything from on-prem to the cloud and think all their problems are solved, which is simply not true. Companies should not persist in the same problems and challenges of locating content, organizing content, and duplication to the cloud. So, it's important to have a strategy that meets the needs of your hybrid workflows."

James Gibson
Founder and CEO at Ortana Media Group

4 Lower cloud costs.

The distributed cloud delivers lower cloud costs compared to other cloud vendors. How much lower? It can be up to 90% lower depending on how many regions of storage you are paying for. Some of the reasons for this significant disparity are:

- The distributed cloud uses spare, existing capacity to offer cloud services.

- Redundancy and regional access are built into one global region.

- The innovative software used to segment and distribute data is more efficient.

- Additional accelerators are often not needed since the distributed cloud is so fast.

- There are no proprietary file formats or lock-ins that add inefficiencies to your workflows.

Media files will continue to grow in size and volume. You need the flexibility to scale without having to reduce margins.

What M&E IT leaders think.

"M&E companies make the mistake of not thinking about a long-term solution. They might think 'I just need to get this archived' so they go to what they think is the cheapest or most reputable cloud solution. Then, they get locked-in in terms of both price and locality."

Jordan Maltby
CEO at Shadow Magic

5 Reduce the carbon footprint of your media.

Moving to any cloud is the right move for M&E, but the legacy cloud is not as "green" as we think. Traditional cloud architectures copy and store data in multiple regional data centers for global availability, which puts a 2-6x multiplier on data growth. According to studies from the NRDC and IBM, most servers operate at only 12-18% of capacity, implying that there is a huge reservoir of already manufactured and powered, but severely underutilized, storage capacity. Cloud providers also decommission hard drives before the end of life to ensure no data is lost. Research from Yale University states that reuse of HDDs can save approximately 5 kg CO2 for every 6 months that a drive's life is extended.

Distributed cloud technology takes a smarter approach to significantly reduce the carbon emitted from cloud storage and media distribution by at least 83%.

- Storage and compute capacity comes from existing hardware and disks already spinning, so almost no additional energy is needed.

- Hardware life can be extended without risking data loss, which avoids carbon-intense mining and manufacturing.

- Data growth does not require new energy-hungry data centers to be built.

- Reduces the amount of data created, as redundancy and global access are achieved without replication.

What M&E IT leaders think.

67.4% agree or strongly agree that media productions have a responsibility to ensure their media is stored in a way that's environmentally responsible.

72.2% would choose more sustainable file management and storage solutions even if they are more expensive, less performant, or less secure.

"We've seen a lot of focus on the reduction of carbon emissions on set, but everything from that onward regarding sustainability has taken second priority. I hope people become aware of the carbon impact both of the cloud and the online processing, the rushes, the archives, the streaming – all that."

Tom Dunning
CEO and Co-Founder at Ad Signal

The world's data grows by 23% annually, with 120 zettabytes created last year alone. Storing this data uses as much energy as 61.8 million combustion cars. Training a single AI model consumes energy equal to 1,000 US households. Furthermore, the Wall Street Journal predicts that energy needs for data centers and AI workloads will double by 2026. M&E IT leaders need to play a role in choosing technology that reduces carbon emissions. The distributed cloud is poised to help make this possible for media workflows.

What M&E IT leaders think.

"When it comes to carbon reduction, the cloud has a really big play. The fact that you can be in one location and upload your files, and in another location to download those files, means you no longer have to ship those physical files. With solutions like Storj and MASV, it's a huge reduction in costs and emissions. "

Mathew Sobkowicz
Co-Founder at MASV

"We need to think differently about technology usage. The old maxim of reduce, reuse, and recycle remains relevant today and can be applied to IT operations. Organizations must question how efficiently they use technology. To truly reduce carbon impact, IT organizations need to tap into more efficient and sustainable ways to source the technology needed to run the business."

Colby Winegar
CEO at Storj

The distributed cloud is the best cloud for media.

The M&E industry is rapidly evolving. Moving media to the cloud is the right step, but you need to do it strategically. As noted, not all clouds are created equally, and M&E companies face significant challenges.

Distributed cloud technology offers a revolutionary way to meet production deadlines, collaborate and distribute globally, and do so affordably and sustainably. By leveraging this technology, remote production and post-production teams can overcome traditional barriers, reduce costs, and work more efficiently than ever before.

Break free from the traditional cloud and vendor lock-ins. Realize greater performance, efficiency, and lower costs. Distributed cloud technology from Storj helps position your organization for a more successful, secure and sustainable digital future. Learn more at storj.io.

**STORJ**

Liberate your media archives.

Access your media like never before with Object Mount, a high performance filesystem that connects to any S3 object storage.

Works seamlessly with any S3 object storage.

Get instant access to your media files.

Object Mount lets you focus on what matters most—delivering high-quality media whether you're working in on-prem environments, hybrid setups, or fully cloud-based infrastructures.
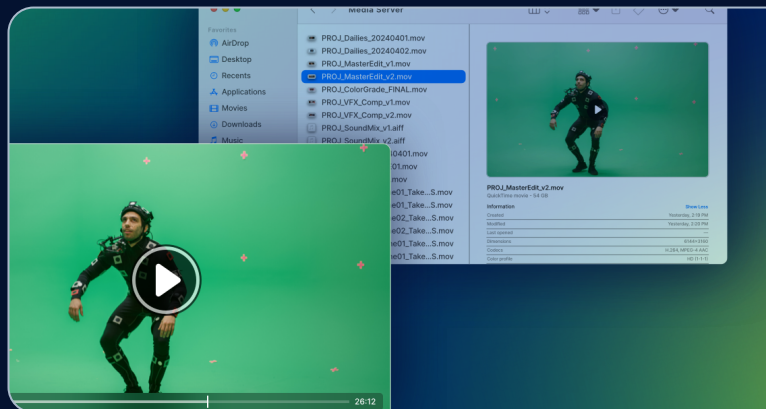
Fast, cost-effective object storage access.

You need instant access to your content wherever it lives. Traditional filesystem solutions often introduce latency, bottlenecks, and complex architectures that slow down workflows and increase costs. Object Mount eliminates these inefficiencies by providing a POSIX-compliant, low-latency, high-throughput connection to object storage, ensuring seamless access to critical assets without unnecessary downloads or infrastructure overhead.

With Object Mount, files are accessible across S3-compatible environments, meaning you can browse, retrieve, and edit only the files you need, significantly reducing data transfer costs and optimizing your overall storage utilization.

"Object Mount delivers highly responsive and POSIX-compliant file system access to content on cloud or on-prem object storage platforms, without changing the data format.

Creative professionals can access content in an instant. And when also using Storj object storage, users know it is protected in a non-proprietary format on the resilient, scalable, and cost-effective distributed cloud platform."

Brent Angle
CTO at CineSys

STORJ | Object Mount

Learn more at **objectmount.com**