



Emmy Award-winning Bardel Entertainment increases data security and decreases operational costs with Cohesity



ENTERTAINMENT INC.

INDUSTRY

Media and entertainment

USE CASE

Backup and recovery

COHESITY SOLUTIONS

Cohesity Data Cloud
DataProtect

WORKLOADS

Amazon Web Services (AWS)
Wasabi

Key Benefits

- Made it easier to qualify for cyber insurance
- Enhanced data security
- Reduced time to restore data by 99%, increasing artist productivity and decreasing operational costs
- Achieved 30-40% deduplication on stored data

Bardel Entertainment Inc. has been a leading animation service provider in North America for over 30 years. The company produces content for an impressive list of top-level digital collaborators including Netflix, Cartoon Network, Rick and Morty LLC, and Warner Brothers. In order to better protect its clients' digital assets, corporate information, and reduce backup storage costs, Bardel made the decision to deploy Cohesity in 2022. They are now using Qumulo object storage for live production workloads, Cohesity for immutable backup with faster recovery, and Wasabi for longer term archival. By moving to Cohesity for data security and management, Bardel significantly improved data security, achieved a 30-40% deduplication rate on stored data, and enhanced developer productivity with access to backup copies in minutes instead of days.

Challenges

Bardel had been relying on an aging HPC PixStor Storage solution for its customers' digital assets. The first filer was located in Bardel's Vancouver, British Columbia data center, with a replica filer in Kelowna, BC, having equal capacity for data protection. The PixStor system performed adequately for many years, but the main filer was nearly out of storage capacity and performance was declining. While data security had not been an issue with the previous solution, Bardel also wanted to improve their ability to quickly recover client data from stored backups and archives after any breach or accidental data loss.

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“Cyber insurance is very hard to get these days. You have to answer a lot of questions from the investigators, explain exactly how you protect your data, and describe all of the security solutions you are using. But since we now have Cohesity, the process will be much easier because it's such a well-known and trusted data protection solution.”

– Arash Roudafshan, VP of Technology, Bardel Entertainment Inc.

In 2022, Bardel decided to replace its aging PixStor solution with a Qumulo filer for its live production workloads to improve data security and performance. Their plan was to use Qumulo to move all of Bardel's customer data as a backup set into an Amazon Web Services (AWS) Glacier environment in a deep archive state for data protection. Bardel was also getting ready to relocate to a newly constructed data center facility in Vancouver.

The existing backups worked fairly well at first, but performance started to decline. "Our production workloads weren't very heavy during the initial previous deployment," said Arash Roudafshan, VP of Technology at Bardel Entertainment Inc. "But as the number of client productions and new media episodes started ramping up and generating more data, the time to maintain backups within those Glaciers increased significantly."

The previous solution also required Bardel's IT team to create custom scripts for different backup scenarios. "You must be able to understand everything about your data in order to manage the scheduling and orchestration of your backups," said Roudafshan. "We wanted to find an easier way to manage our backups going forward."

Solution

Bardel then decided to deploy Cohesity DataProtect along with its Qumulo storage systems. "I've been following Cohesity for many years," said Roudafshan. "I'm a huge fan of their product offerings, and I like how the organization has been developing and growing. Choosing Cohesity was an easy decision for us and the perfect fit for our organization."

Cohesity was chosen for many reasons, including its advanced security functionality. "Even though we had good data security with the previous solution, the threat of malicious intruders and ransomware is something that is always on my mind," said Roudafshan. "It's not just about protecting our clients' intellectual property; it's safeguarding our proprietary corporate data and employee information as well. We're in a world where we have to be constantly diligent and stay on top of the protection of our data. That's why it's essential to work with solution providers like Cohesity that are equally concerned with data security. If we ever are the target of an attack, Cohesity provides additional protection, with a logical air gap against ransomware via snapshots even the admin can't delete, and alerts in the event of any attack."

Bardel was originally using Amazon Web Services (AWS) Glacier cloud storage with its Qumulo systems. They are now using Wasabi as their backup tier. "We have contractual responsibilities to securely retain our customers' data archives for many years,"

said Roudafshan. "Wasabi has essentially the same cost structure as Glacier, but it doesn't have an additional ingress cost. If we ever need to recover data from a backup set on Wasabi, we don't have to pay additional fees for moving our data back on-premises."

Results

Data security has been enhanced since deploying Cohesity, according to Roudafshan. "We are now running frequent, incremental backups from our Qumulo filer to Cohesity, and then initiating an 'instant run' to create an additional copy that we store in Wasabi," he said. "We keep short-term copies of all of our productions on Cohesity for the duration of the show. Once the productions are finished, all data sets are converted into an archival state and retained on Wasabi for at least a year. If there is a repetitive or seasonal structure to that show and we know we are going to get more projects from that data, we'll retain eight- or nine-years' worth of those development files on the Wasabi cloud."

Bardel decided to purchase cyber insurance in 2022. "Cyber insurance can be quite difficult to obtain, as I experienced during my first year at Bardel," recalled Roudafshan. "Our policy covers the monetary loss of our clients' production data if it is impacted by a failure or a breach. But anything beyond that customer data is not covered by our policy, which is a concern to our organization. This is why we rely so heavily on making sure we have frequent backups on Cohesity and long-term archives on Wasabi."

Bardel anticipates that Cohesity will make the process of qualifying for cyber insurance much easier going forward. "The cyber insurance application process we went through last year was quite extensive," said Roudafshan. "The examiners came to our site and asked us numerous, detailed questions about our security policies and processes and how we performed and stored our backups. We told them we were backing up everything to the AWS cloud directly from our production filer. They were okay with that approach, but they preferred having a secondary filer taking care of the backups, not just our primary filer doing all the work. Going into this year's renegotiation for our policy renewal, we'll be in a much better place. Cohesity is a well-known and trusted solution with the cyber insurance examiners. That's just another benefit I brought up when explaining the need for Cohesity to our executive team."

Using Cohesity's advanced analytics and deduplication functionality, Roudafshan was able to obtain increased visibility into the workflows and determine how much capacity they could free up from their production workloads. "Cohesity showed us exactly where the dedupes should be performed," he shared. "By using Cohesity, we were able to reduce the amount of stored data by 30-40%, resulting in significant infrastructure savings for our organization."

Restoring data is now much faster for Bardel. “By using the Cohesity backups instead of the deep archive copies stored in the cloud, we don’t have to rehydrate an entire show’s data to recover just one or two smaller assets anymore,” said Roudafshan. “It used to take 12 hours to get the data rehydration process started from AWS Glacier, and then several more days until the data was ready for use. Now, when someone submits a restoration ticket into Cohesity, an engineer simply goes into the cluster, targets the needed data, initiates the recovery process, and delivers the data to the client within minutes. Our artists’ time is the most expensive part of each project. By minimizing the amount of time our artists had to wait for a restored copy to work on, our operational costs for each production have been reduced significantly.”

“Our clients are among the top in the industry,” concluded Roudafshan. “The most important thing for them is to trust the companies that are protecting their intellectual property. In my initial conversations with our clients’ executives and CTOs, they have always asked a lot of questions on how we create and store our backups. Now, when I say we are using Cohesity as our backup cluster, they immediately relax and say, ‘That’s fantastic!’ With Cohesity in our arsenal, they know their data is well protected from day one, with multiple copies in separate geolocations.”

Bardel Entertainment realized substantial benefits by deploying Cohesity, including:

- Making it easier to obtain cyber insurance
- Enhancing data security
- Reducing the time to restore data by 99%
- Increasing artist productivity, resulting in lower operational costs for each production
- Lowering the amount of data storage by 30-40% using deduplication

About Bardel Entertainment Inc.

An Emmy Award®-winning studio, Bardel Entertainment Inc. has been a leading animation service provider in North America for over 30 years due to its stellar reputation, built on three core values: quality, creativity, and innovation. Bardel has over 500 employees in two state-of-the-art studios, one in Vancouver and the other in Kelowna, British Columbia. Bardel is now producing content for a diverse slate of top-level collaborators including Netflix, Cartoon Network, Rick and Morty LLC, and Warner Brothers. Bardel also produces feature films, prime-time series, kids and preschool TV series, as well as projects for SVOD and VOD platforms.

Learn more at [Cohesity.com](https://cohesity.com)

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