CASE STUDY

NFINIT

Client: Chef Works®

Industry: Apparel Manufacturing and Distribution

Solution: NFINIT Object LS

Location: San Diego, CA

Challenge: Enabling quick and easy access to Chef Works' huge library of large multimedia files.

Result: Accessing files for editing went from hours to seconds.

Company Bio

For over 50 years, Chef Works has been designing and manufacturing apparel and merchandise for the culinary and hospitality industry, growing into a major leader as the provider of choice for back of house and front of house uniform programs across multiple industries. Chef Works' presence is vast, with six global corporate headquarters and distribution locations in over 65 countries across 6 continents.

> " The best part of NFINIT Object LS is the speed at which it streams a large file. Its fast upstream and downstream data transfers give our team instant access, increasing efficiency and improving delivery timelines.
>
> **Amanda Stuckey**
> VICE PRESIDENT OF MARKETING

Background

The organization's marketing team of 10 people is based in and around San Diego, California. Because the group works with different global distribution partners – each with many particular requirements – they often create multiple versions of collateral. Moreover, the market needs are constantly shifting, so their core collateral is always evolving. To maintain control, they rarely outsource print or digital design work.

For Amanda Stuckey, Chef Works' Vice President of Marketing, this means dealing with volumes of large files.

"The gigantic ones are the ones that cause us the most headache," she explained. "For instance, a 210-page catalog file that has words, graphics, and photos. It's a humongous file upwards of 17 gigs if not more. They have graphic image links in the file and if you move photographs around from different folders it breaks the link. Then you

6 global
CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS

Distribution locations in over 65 countries across 6 continents

- NORTH AMERICA
- CENTRAL & SOUTH AMERICA
- EUROPE
- AFRICA
- ASIA & MIDDLE EAST
- OCEANIA

have to go find them and re-link them. These photographs are TIFF files to ensure your printed final product is crisp and clear to the reader. It is just part of what you have to do when building a print ready catalog file."

Chef Works also does plenty of in-house video editing, and plans to do a lot more in the future. Video files are notoriously large and, for Chef Works, they eat up tera-bytes of storage both in the raw form and the finalized format. We need access to both files so we can adjust at a moment's notice.

> " We uploaded some huge catalog files and some small things. We tested one of our big videos. It all downloaded super fast.
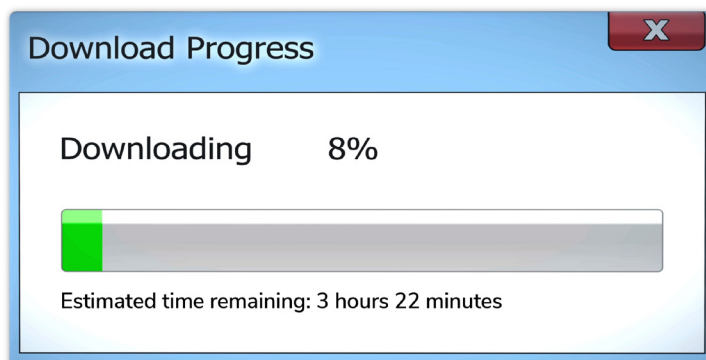
Situation

Stuckey and her marketing department worked with Mike Page, Chef Works' Director of IT, to try several different methods of file storage. Their priority was speed of access, including remote access around the world.

For a while, the team used external drives in conjunction with an on-prem server. When the server approached capacity, the marketing team would archive less essential files on 10 or 20 terabyte storage drives. This system was less than ideal for a couple different reasons.

First, it created new logistical problems for keeping marketing collateral organized. Drives would be quickly filled, needing multiple units to manage files that then were not properly marked as to what files were in what external drives. Drives would be lost or mixed up, and multiple versions of files would be duplicated in different places.

Secondly – and more importantly – pulling large files off the external hard drives was painstakingly slow. It would often take hours to gain access. "There would be a project

we needed to get done in two days," explained Stuckey, "and the computer was taking half a day to load it. We can't have a whole computer down to download this one file. Then we would have to upload it again afterwards. It was a nightmare."

Download Progress	X
Downloading	8%
[progress bar]	
Estimated time remaining: 3 hours 22 minutes	

Chef Works staff and computers could be tied up for hours waiting for files to download.
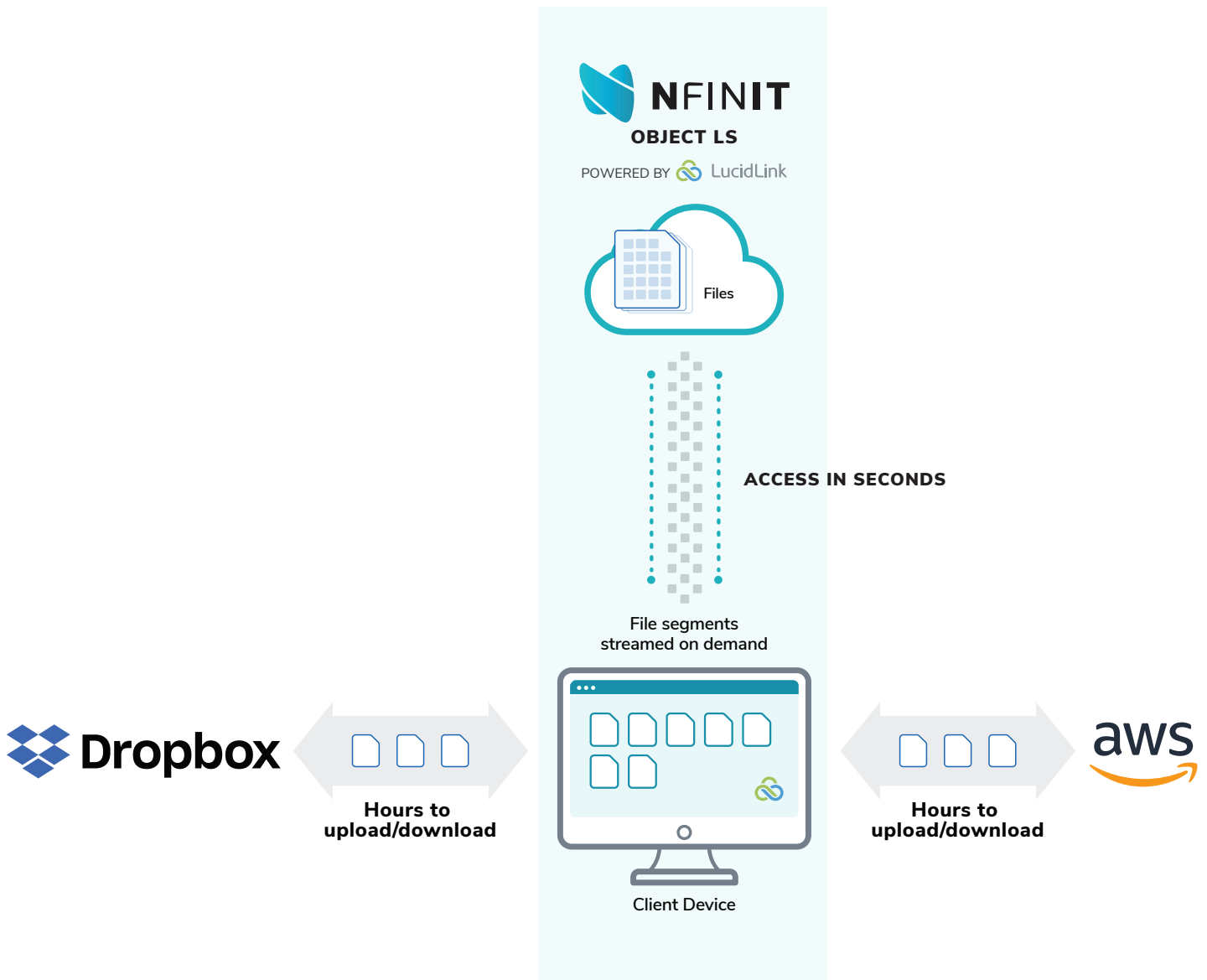
If the marketing team was to efficiently transfer or edit files that are several gigabytes in size, other options had to be explored.

As an alternative, Dropbox worked to a degree, but "it's not really equipped for gigantic files transfers and shares," Stuckey explained. The public cloud option delivered similarly inadequate results. "We tried Amazon," said Stuckey. "It was a great service and we found that small files are fine, but when we started to go back to those 17 gig files, it just takes too long to load."

Chef Works team members would begin loading a file, then work on something else for an hour or two on a separate computer while the original project loaded. "It just didn't work for us," Stuckey said.

> " We had a lot of complaints over the years but now the marketing team is saying 'Wow, this is so much faster. This is really impressive.
>
> **Mike Page**
> DIRECTOR OF IT

Solution

Page needed a better way to support the Chef Works marketing team. He set up a call with NFINIT's Business Development Manager, Javier Carreño. Page has a long-standing relationship with NFINIT, and knew Carreño from past Chef Works IT discussions.

"We've been with NFINIT for many years for our colocation," Page said. "We host most of our servers over there and we've done that for a long time. We have a great partnership with them." On the call, Carreño told Page about NFINIT's Object LS, an object-based, S3-compatible cloud storage offering with a special software application layer meant to maximize speed, especially for large files. After a demonstration Carreño and Page set up a two-week trial.

"We created a virtual cloud for them, gave them resources, and then set up the environment for them," described Carreño. "That way, they are using their own files and accessing them from their own computers with their own end users."

The trial was a major success. In less than two weeks, Chef Works became an NFINIT Object LS customer.

Object LS turns one file into many hundreds of blocks and allows users to jump to the blocks they need without loading the entire file just to view certain parts of it. That way, Stuckey and her team can always access the piece of the file they want access to right away – almost like they are streaming files instead of downloading them.

Stuckey was uncertain heading into the trial but was immediately impressed. "We were wondering if it was for real," she said. "So we uploaded some huge catalog files and some small things. We tested one of our big videos. It all downloaded super fast."

Even when working with massive design and video files, the marketing team accessed them quickly, smoothly, and easily. "The marketing team tested it and they were really impressed with the performance," said Page.

Chef Works didn't need the full two-week trial to make a decision. Two days in Stuckey, Page and their teams were sold.

Result

These days, Chef Works' marketing team is in high gear with more new videos and design work than ever. Even with a marketing team that is geographically dispersed and at the mercy of large variances in home internet service, the increased efficiency and performance offered by Object LS has taken file access from hours to seconds.

"We had a lot of complaints over the years," admitted Page. "But now the marketing team is saying 'Wow, this is so much faster. This is really impressive."

Because object storage is the ultimate in scalability, both Stuckey and Page see the solution as one that can grow with them. "It's basically off my mind now," said Page. "I don't have to worry about finding additional space or performance anymore." In fact, Chef Works is so pleased with the service that after using Object LS, they've started to work with NFINIT on other ways to enhance their business IT solutions – including an encryption service for their Human Resources department and a new backup disaster recovery system.

For Carreño, the Chef Works Object LS story is all about the trial period, where the advantages of the service speak for themselves. When a file opens five times as fast this week as it did last week, it's a powerful demonstration. "It's about showing people that it can do what we say it can do," Carreño explained. "When people can see firsthand and realize how fast it is, there's always an aha moment."

NFINIT provides managed cloud and infrastructure solutions optimized for any workload and any business. NFINIT's consultative approach and focus on innovation ensures that we deliver the best customized environment, every time. Serving thousands of clients worldwide from our San Diego base, NFINIT fulfills clients' technology roadmap with best-in-breed solutions and expert support. For more, visit www.nfinit.com.

NFINIT Object LS is powered by LucidLink Filespaces, a high-security, high-performance application that runs file-based workloads on object storage for maximum efficiency and productivity.

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