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NINE PITFALLS OF RELYING ON FTP TO MOVE LARGE MEDIA FILES

FTP was developed in 1971, and a lot has changed in the decades since it was first created. Though the protocol has seen improvement over the years, there are some fundamental drawbacks to relying on this old technology for transferring today's large media files.

WHY IS FTP STILL USED BY SO MANY BUSINESSES?

When it comes to general file sharing over the Internet, there are many options. However, when it comes to large file transfers, there are only a few. Although FTP alone lacks many requirements that are necessary to meet the needs of today's media and other data-intensive companies, it's still being used as a foundation technology for many file transfer solutions.

After all, FTP is an open protocol. Because there's no direct charge to use FTP and it's been around so long, there are many IT professionals familiar with it. But, as files continue to get larger and more frequently exchanged over longer distances, and security continues to become more and more critical, FTP is increasingly the wrong technology for today's complex global media workflows.

THE PITFALLS OF FTP

1. FTP is slow

FTP has no acceleration technology built in. Moving a 30-50GB or larger file — which is very common in media — can take a very long time with FTP, especially over long distances. Latency and packet loss may not be noticeable when moving a small file, but with large files over long distances or congested networks, the difference can mean hours or even days. FTP on its own does nothing to help deal with these common issues with standard IP networks.

2. FTP is unreliable

Most FTP solutions do not have built-in checkpoint restart, the ability to continue data transfer from the point of failure if the transmission is interrupted. This means starting over from the beginning. With large files and a lack of acceleration, network interruptions can be immensely costly.

> ***"There's no guaranteed Quality of Service over the Internet. You can't depend on FTP to get the file there on time. You need a guaranteed transfer time, or you can't work on the kinds of projects we work on."***
> ~ Henric Larsson, COO of the Chimney Group

3. FTP requires IT resources

FTP is often considered "free". But when you take into account the cost of valuable IT resources, FTP is far from free. It's most obvious with even basic IT requests such as adding or removing users. In the media business, where partners, contractors and freelancers are abundant, user management can become very time-consuming and costly. However, there are other costs with FTP, related to customizations, automation, monitoring and reporting. Not to mention the cost of delays waiting for IT to get through their own list of priorities.

4. Security is not standard

Secure file transfer is not a standard element with FTP. While it's possible to complete an FTP file transfer securely, it requires scripted customization or security software, which also means ongoing maintenance and resources. In fact, security breaches in 2017 at HBO, Netflix and Disney have been blamed on hackers exploiting FTP used by third-party post-production companies. As a result, many top tier media companies now forbid FTP in an effort to close security holes.

5. Lack of visibility and notifications

FTP solutions often require IT resources to parse through log files to understand transfer activity. IT personnel can write scripts or deploy legacy software to enable notifications and reporting, but FTP generally lacks the power of more modern solutions.

> ***"The user interface on FTP was a nightmare. You have to be more of an IT person to understand how an FTP works."*** ~ Michael Ball, postproduction supervisor, Accord Productions

6. Intimidating end-user interface

Most FTP software has an archaic user experience. To non-technical users, FTP interfaces can be downright intimidating. Most media professionals that need to transfer files are creatives, often in a hurry to meet a deadline, and are accustomed to modern interface designs. FTP does not contribute to a productive, engaged workforce.

7. Automation is not standard

FTP is often used to automate transfers between systems or computers. Automated transfers are helpful for regularly occurring transfers between business locations or with partners, but automation with FTP requires IT professionals to write, manage and update scripts leading to more cost and more potential delays.

8. FTP is difficult to update

As a protocol, FTP (File Transfer Protocol) is a set of communication rules used between computers rather than a single solution or software application. It is typically the foundation for a pieced-together solution needing numerous customized scripts and software add-ons to meet business requirements. Most FTP systems are far from elegant or scalable — and are very difficult to update and support.

9. The gap is only increasing

As the size of files continues to grow, media channels diversify, businesses become more global, and the entire media supply chain becomes more interconnected, the gap between existing FTP technology and business needs is only increasing.

> ***"We built our FTP probably 15 years ago. It worked great at the time, but had a lot of limitations when files got bigger and people needed stuff sooner. Then when high Internet speeds were more available, FTP just got seriously outdated."*** ~ Michael Ball, Accord Productions

THERE'S A BETTER WAY

Signiant's Enterprise SaaS Solutions

Signiant offers two distinct, but interoperable, SaaS solutions that replace FTP with intuitive web interfaces making it easy to transfer any size files anywhere in the world with speed, reliability and security.

- **Media Shuttle** is the easiest and fastest way for people to send and share large files, any time they need to.
- **Jet** is the easiest and fastest way to automate system-to-system file transfers, replacing scripted FTP for regularly recurring transfers.

> ***Many clients are demanding 4k and other high-res files. To be a reliable supplier, it's essential to have the kind of technology that Signiant offers and not just do FTP like everyone else ."*** ~ Henric Larsson, COO of the Chimney Group

SPEED AND RELIABILITY

All Signiant products are built on patented file acceleration technology, which can be up to 200 times faster than FTP. In addition, Signiant employs reliability mechanisms or checkpoint restart, the capacity to restart a transfer from the point of failure.

Where FTP struggles over long distances and with poor internet connections, Signiant technology is tolerant of any network — no matter how slow it is, how globally distributed its users are, or how many network hops are required. The result is an acceleration protocol that supports far faster and more reliable transfers.

> ***There have been two real differences from our old FTP system. One, Media Shuttle is just a lot quicker. But the other, which is probably even more important for us, is that it's an interruptible transfer. A lot of the network connectivity that our reporters have is likely to be interrupted."*** ~ Matt Whiting, Head of Applications at Guardian News & Media.

STORAGE INDEPENDENCE

Signiant invests heavily in developing software that works with any storage solution. After all, you know best how to store your valuable assets. Signiant is dedicated to providing fast, seamless access to those assets – wherever they might be physically stored, including traditional on-premises file storage, on-premises object storage, and cloud object storage from AWS or Azure.

> ***Adopting Jet has enabled us to launch a brand-new service, which will handle our DCP deliveries to hundreds of cinemas throughout Malaysia."***
> ~ Avinash Suresh, Director at Yusari Filem

INDUSTRY-LEADING SECURITY

Signiant is a recognized leader in security, and was awarded the DPP 'Committed to Security' mark for both production and broadcast. Signiant utilizes standards-based security technology like Transport Layer Security (TLS) to secure data and information as it is transmitted, including advanced authentication, data integrity, and data confidentiality. Signiant ensures that all transfers are appropriately authorized and tracked to provide nonrepudiatable proof that files were delivered.

However, designing secure software is only half the picture. Operating a secure service is equally as important. As a software-as-a-service or SaaS provider, Signiant employs service organization controls implemented in accordance with industry standards and best practices.

> ***It used to be like the wild west of file transfer, when every vendor had their own FTP-like service. Media Shuttle has become a centralized place that we trust and know is secure, fast and reliable, so we are continuing to invest in it."*** ~ Jesse Korosi, Sim's Director of Workflow Services

CLOUD-NATIVE SAAS

When you purchase a subscription to Media Shuttle or Jet, you're entering into a partnership with Signiant that includes 24x7 SRE (DevOps) to ensure the system is always up and running with the highest performance and availability. Signiant's customer success team will work hand-in-hand with you to make sure you get onboarded quickly, and our customer support will be there to address any issues that might come up. As SaaS solutions, Media Shuttle and Jet also offer you the benefit of ongoing innovation without having to worry about costly upgrades; Signiant handles that for you.

> ***"FTP physically pains me, now that I'm used to Signiant."*** ~ Dylan Yastremski, Founder of Allegiance Studios

DON'T RISK FALLING BEHIND

FTP can no longer keep up with the modern global media supply chain. Whether you are a top tier company or a small startup, being in the media business today requires next-generation acceleration software. Signiant prides itself on being an easy company to do business with. Media Shuttle and Jet are easy to deploy, and easy to try in your environment. With simple, predictable pricing, Media Shuttle and Jet work for companies of all sizes.

Contact us to learn more about replacing your outdated FTP systems.

ABOUT SIGNIANT

Signiant is changing the way businesses move large, high-value digital assets around the world and into the cloud. Their on-premises software products were originally adopted by Media & Entertainment enterprises, pioneers in the electronic transport of large files. Over the last decade, Signiant has embraced cloud technology to create next-generation SaaS file transfer and cloud upload solutions with scalable, reliable, cost effective, and easy to deploy capabilities.

Today, Media & Entertainment are no longer alone in the need to move massive files, and Signiant's rapidly growing customer base includes companies with digital assets ranging from satellite imagery and big data analytics to genome sequences and biotech research. Signiant's technologies work for every size company to provide: accelerated file delivery up to 200 times faster than standard internet transfers; enterprise-class security along with full visibility and control of transfers and storage; and simple user-friendly tools. **Find out more at www.signiant.com**.