



Storage in the Spotlight: Jay Cooper Uses G-Technology storage with Axle media management to Preserve Kenny Chesney's Legacy

Even though you won't find his name on your ticket stub, Jay Cooper certainly knows a thing or two about sold-out arena concerts. For over a decade, Cooper has crisscrossed North America with multi-platinum country music superstar Kenny Chesney, acting as Chesney's Touring Video Director. As the tour's 18-wheelers make their way from metropolis to metropolis, Cooper travels alongside, but he's more than a glorified roadie. Coordinating concert video production for a musician of Chesney's magnitude is a massive undertaking in its own right, but Cooper wears additional hats. He sometimes serves as a scouting director of sorts, using his extensive archive of concert footage in huddles with Chesney to review past performances and pinpoint highlights worthy of an encore on future tours. Grinding through hours of video while simultaneously surviving the rigors of the road, Cooper requires an elite loadout.

"I've always liked G-Technology and have used their stuff plenty of times in the past. This past year I've made the move to wall-to-wall G-Technology, including in my backpack and on the road. It's worked flawlessly."

Jay Cooper

Few professional video directors understand the pressure that Jay Cooper faces on a daily basis. Plenty of pros deal with terabytes of video for their 9 to 5. Some may also call the shots behind the camera at concerts and then turn the video around the next day. But how many are in charge of concerts where tens of thousands of fans pour into a stadium to see one of the world's highest-selling recording artists? Jay Cooper, Touring Video Director at Screenworks, lives for that unique pressure. He's built his career on capturing a massive concert's raucous energy on video, including the last 10+ years of shows from country music icon Kenny Chesney.

The Country Music Association has recognized Cooper's skill and passion, honoring him with an SRO Award for Tour Video Director of the Year on multiple occasions. When Chesney brings down the house, it's up to Cooper to make sure his cameras capture every incredible moment.

Of course, Cooper isn't a one-man show any more than Chesney. Just as the country star relies on a team of professionals to orchestrate tours that regularly gross tens of millions of dollars in box office receipts, Cooper depends on two teams — his fellow video professionals, and a complement of G-Technology storage solutions with Axle software to make any highlight and any shot from any concert instantly viewable.

Road Warrior

Cooper has worked for several musicians, but has logged over a decade in Chesney's service. When Chesney embarks on a major North American tour, Cooper travels with him, cameras and crew ready. Every year, concert season heats up, and Cooper prepares for a stint that spans several months, thousands of miles, and several major cities. Chesney's shows regularly gross millions of dollars in ticket sales; his best nights have crossed \$10 million. It falls on Cooper's shoulders to film every minute, load his equipment, hit the road, and do it all over again the next night.

"I'm making 10 recordings a night," Cooper says. "I do eight individual camera stems, as well as a master cut which goes to a screen and then a confident wide shot, as I call it, which is just one camera pointed at the stage. It just records the whole scene at once. Each of those recordings is around 120 gigs, so for every show I'm recording over a terabyte of information."

Cooper made the DVD-to-HDD recording transition without a well-defined game plan, building his storage arsenal in piecemeal fashion. He regularly purchased smaller drives — both internal and external — individually as needed. He would dump his recordings onto a drive, and once he had stuffed that drive to capacity he moved on to another drive. That approach didn't work.

"At the end of the year, I would have 18 2TB hard drives that were matched and made into backup," he says. "That was all getting pretty expensive."

For Chesney's 2016 Spread the Love Tour, which played 32 dates including 14 stadiums from April to September, Cooper decided to get serious. He talked to Chesney, who's "very involved in the video production side of things — all of the content that's made for our show he signs off on and works with the content creators to make," and convinced him that they needed to step up to a more fitting storage solution. Cooper acquired a 64TB G-SPEED™ Shuttle XL, a transportable 8-bay RAID tower with a Thunderbolt™ 2 interface. He also secured a G-SPEED Studio XL to complement his office setup. These G-Technology products formed the foundation that Cooper supplemented with Axle's radically simple media management software, as well as with additional G-Technology drives.



G-SPEED™ Shuttle XL with Thunderbolt™

Cooper put his new system to work and dramatically improved his workflows. "Like I said, I have over a terabyte of information per show. The next day, when I'm at work, we do a show, we load out, take the bus to the next place, and load in immediately the next morning. Part of my workflow, as soon as we get power to my video system and we get set up, is immediately transferring all those over to the G-DRIVE™ with Thunderbolt.

"I used to transfer video from a 2TB internal hard drive into a puck. I would plug in everything and transfer the files. G-Technology's hardware is so much faster than what I was using. I can now do what used to take me three or four hours every day in an hour, maybe an hour and a half at the most."

A supporting cast of G-Technology G-DRIVE ev ATC portable drives help Cooper maintain control over video files that travel as often as Chesney's crew. In fact, when Cooper is out

on tour, his G-DRIVE portables are a constant companion. He keeps two in his backpack as backups at all times, keeping his content safe in the event a disaster strikes his master copies. After all, Cooper knows that with a caravan of vehicles hauling all the equipment necessary for a major tour, accidents can happen.



G-DRIVE™ ev ATC

"There have been video trucks that have wrecked," he says. "Things like that have happened. The G-DRIVE's have taken their place in my backpack, permanently."

Appreciating G-Technology's professional storage lineup's performance and durability, Cooper has set up others in Chesney's crew with appropriate G-Technology hardware. He outfitted Chesney's tour photographer with a G-DOCK ev™ to effortlessly transfer the hundreds of concert photos she shoots each night. After copying the photos to a second drive, the photographer passes a drive to Chesney for review.

The video is often reviewed, Jay adds. "Sometimes we pull things, like little clips or media things, or, 'like, remember this show where we had this one thing happen?' And we want to make a story about that, so with the Axle software we can search those things, then find them really quick and use them. Or, I can scan through the show, find that moment, and mark in and out points that can be referenced directly in my editor who opens the original file."

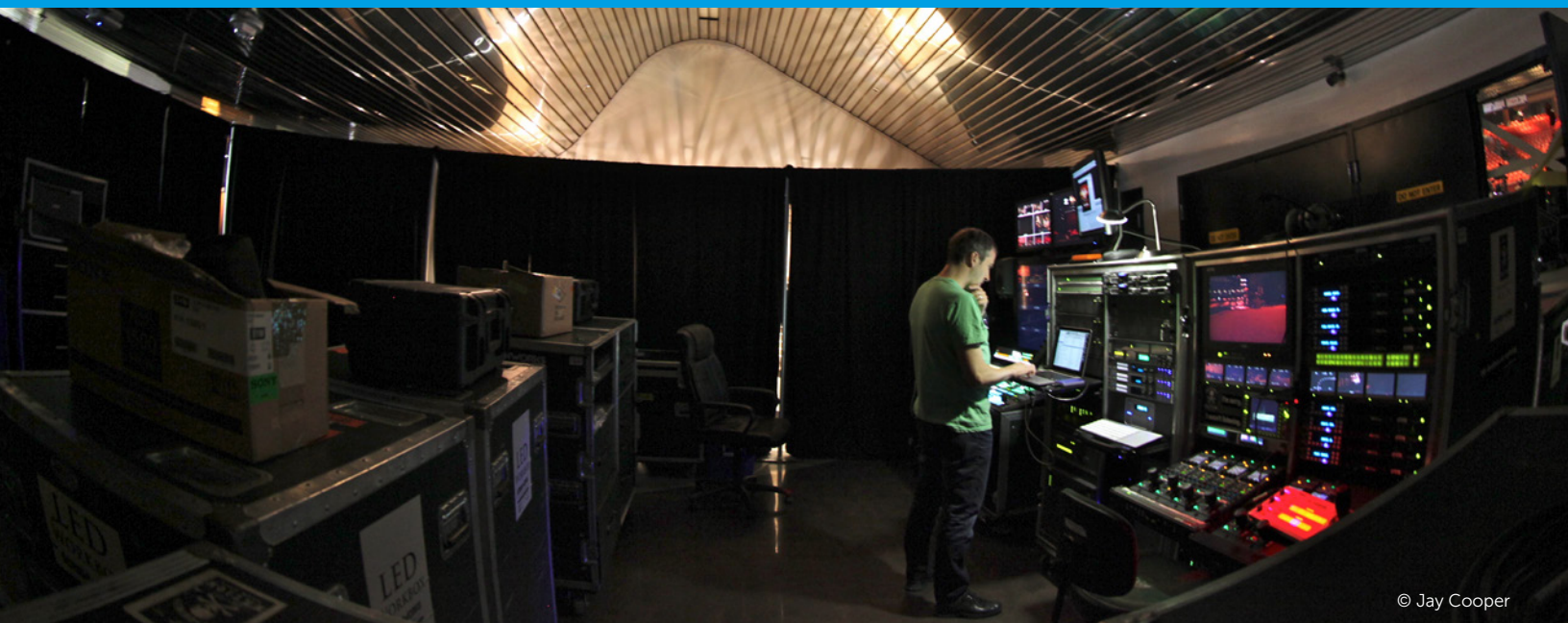
Although Chesney is only playing select festivals and six headlining dates in 2017, that doesn't mean Cooper will be putting his feet up. Quite the opposite, in fact. Cooper has already begun an undertaking that's just as important as his work on tour, and he relies on G-Technology to help.

Producing A Legacy

Kenny Chesney first arrived on the country music scene in 1994 with his debut album, *In My Wildest Dreams*. It didn't take long for him to rocket to the top of the country charts, releasing hit after hit. Blockbuster concerts followed, the result of which is thousands of hours of concert footage for Cooper to archive. And Cooper is doing much more than cataloging Chesney's concerts.

He explains: "When I proposed my idea to Kenny, I said, 'Hey man, I've been doing this show for 10 years and have boxes of DVDs, and there's no way we can search. I have the outside of the boxes labeled, which shows are in each box, but I don't know what all that stuff is. There's no way to easily access it.' I convinced him, 'This is your career. One day you're going to remember that you used to sell out stadiums and wonder what that was like. Well, now you can look. You'll know.'"

With Chesney's blessing, Cooper began the daunting process of converting box after box of concert DVDs to a format that would let Chesney quickly and easily find any moment he wants to relive. To do the job, Cooper created a powerful tandem of Axle Video's media management software and G-Technology's G-SPEED Studio XL. Not only does Axle's software automatically detect and index media—metadata included—it also encodes that media to a lower resolution



© Jay Cooper

for Axle's interfaces in browsers, Adobe® Premiere Pro® panel and mobile devices. The seamless automation helps Cooper breeze through his existing workloads while on tour, but he also relies on Axle for his ambitious plan to archive Chesney's concert history.

Thanks to the G-SPEED Studio XL's top-end data rate of 1300 MB/s, once Cooper has pulled footage from DVD and converted it to an Apple ProRes 422 file, he can rapidly move it to the G-SPEED Studio XL and tag the footage for future searches. Naturally, now that Cooper has transitioned to all-digital recording, he can effortlessly move video from his G-Technology G-SPEED Shuttle XL and G-DRIVE's to the G-SPEED Studio XL. Eventually, Cooper wants the 10+ years of concert footage he's amassed while working with Chesney to be searchable from a phone.

"I want Kenny to open his phone and go, 'Oh hey, I wanted to see the time that so and so came to our show in Pittsburgh in 2008.' He could type all that in, and there's the show and how many angles you want to look at."

Without Axle's help, quickly retrieving the right moment from the right concert would have bedeviled Cooper, and Chesney by extension. Axle automatically catalogs the media, creates lightweight proxies of the full-res originals, and puts them in its simple web and iPhone/iPad interfaces, giving Cooper and Chesney fast access to video without bogging down a system. Once concert footage is cataloged by Axle, Cooper uses Axle to create



G-SPEED™ Studio XL



© Jay Cooper

custom descriptive metadata that makes the footage easily searchable. He has markers for special guest appearances, special moments, and other markers that let Chesney relive and compare previous concert highlights almost instantaneously. Cooper and his colleagues can even pull clips and subclips from search results into Adobe Premiere Pro CC for immediate editing.

“At the beginning of rehearsals for this year’s tour, I showed him how it all worked. He asked, ‘Can you find when this happened?’ I typed in his friend that came to sing at his show, the show’s location, and said, ‘Let’s look at it from camera 3.’ Boom, there it was. Camera 3, this moment in this show. Kenny said, ‘That’s super fast. That’s amazing.’”

Wherever Chesney goes on tour, he takes Cooper with him, knowing Cooper won’t let him down. Wherever Cooper goes, whether that’s a concert stadium or his private studio, he relies on G-Technology G-SPEED Shuttle XL and G-DRIVE with Thunderbolt hardware with Axle media management software, knowing they won’t let him down.



G-DRIVE™ with Thunderbolt™

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