

THE DATA EXISTED. THE PATH DIDN'T.

How Nine PBS lost access to 70 years of its own archive



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THE CONTRADICTION

Nobody says the archive was destroyed.

70 YEARS

of programming — about 50 terabytes

STILL UNREACHABLE

- No ransomware.
- No fire.
- No failed disk array.
- The data still exists. The station still can't reach it.



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WHAT ACTUALLY FAILED

The contract stopped one layer too soon.

2019

Nine PBS contracts with Open Source Storage (OSS).

Feb 2026

OSS stops responding. Contract expires weeks later.

2026

OSS turns out to be defunct — but the hardware sits inside Iron Mountain's facility, a company Nine PBS never contracted with.

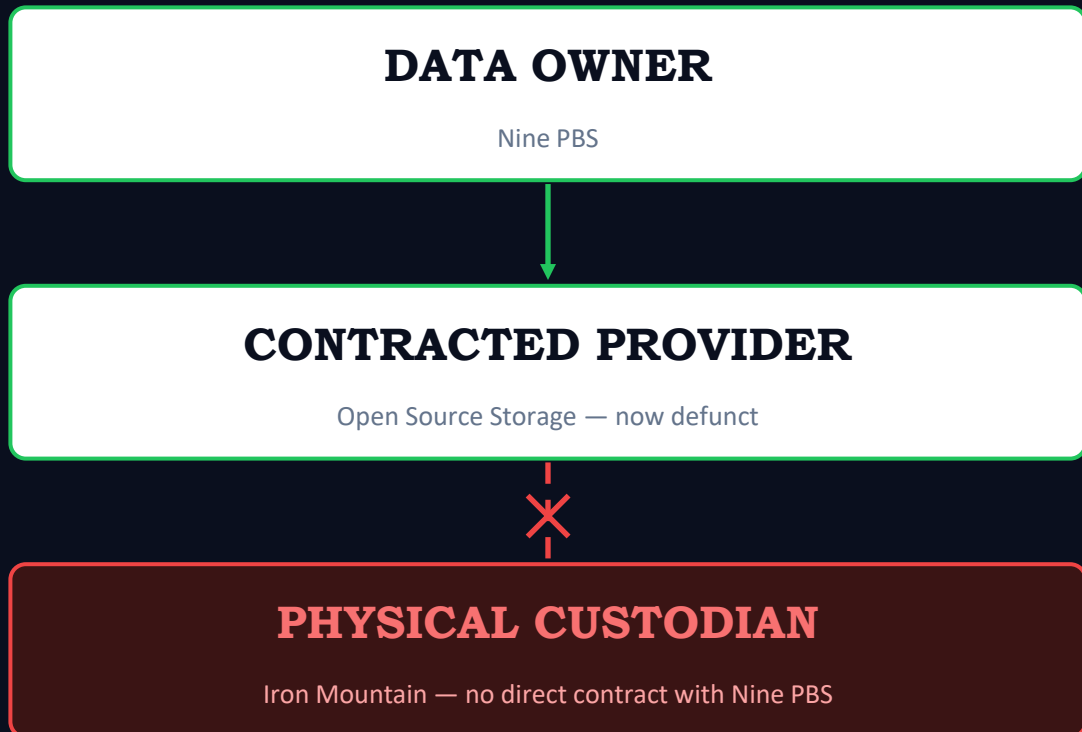


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THE THREE-LAYER BREAK

Ownership. Contract. Custody. Three different layers.



The path breaks where no direct relationship was ever built.



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WHERE THIS GENERALIZES

This isn't a cloud storage problem.

MSP

The account may sit with a party you've never contracted with.

Backup Vendor

Nine PBS's exact pattern — hosting subcontracted one layer down.

Cloud Reseller

Another contractual layer between you and who you can actually contact.

SaaS Aggregator

One login, several backend vendors you never signed with.



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If the company you contracted with disappeared tomorrow, who could actually hand you your data?

Most organizations have never asked it.

Validate the path. Not just the asset.

Ownership was never the question in doubt. Reach was.