

Imagine a life without strings!

Today's nirvana, for a modern human being of the 21st century, has a new definition. A user experience at peace with all devices, without the barriers of wired or wireless, or the divisions of linear and non-linear; and to consider the possibility that the focus of humanity should be living a life unattached to decisions made by someone else.

BY ASHISH MUKHERJEE



“A hybrid CMS would be able to seamlessly integrate the various services offered by a network, so that a customer, who is using multiple services, would enjoy a better viewing experience.”

— Ashish Mukherjee

CEO, Benchmark Broadcast Systems

Modern men, women and kids seek a life where connectivity is a given and continuity is the result of such connectivity.

Imagine an average working woman in the 21st century holding a kid in one hand, and a smartphone in the other. Rushing to the childcare centre and then to the metro to catch her train, her immediate objective is to go back to watch episode 10/season 5 of her favourite tele-serial, which she left half-way when she had to get ready for work. She wants to finish seeing this episode on the metro before she reaches her work. Also, she would like to record multiple episodes of the programme so that she can finish watching all of them in one go, in a binge-watching session with her friends over a weekend.

A whole lot of strings are missing in this seamless interface. The show started on the TV screen, continued on the smartphone and may probably end during the lunch hour on the PC at her desk. There are no wires (or strings) attached for delivering data. The place to watch is no longer the living room, but anywhere.

We can cater to the requirements of this average customer today, and it involves a variety of technologies. Streaming video is now available seamlessly, flowing from a single Content Management System (CMS),

which keeps track of each subscriber and her constant desire for content and continuity, regardless of the device.

Several large TV networks have been implementing multiple distribution channels to spread their content, including digital terrestrial transmission (DTT), over-the-top (OTT), pay-TV and others. While the content creation process may use the same sources, distribution platforms could be very different. Traditional TV uses baseband signals with a set-top box (STB), while newer media such as OTT run TV over IP.

To be able to provide this “continuous content” functionality, there is a complex chain of backend platforms and providers requiring careful management. If the same content needs delivery over multiple platforms, networks typically have separate infrastructure for each type of platform and manage them in the backend with various CMS. Synchronising multiple CMS to provide continuous content availability is an agonising task.

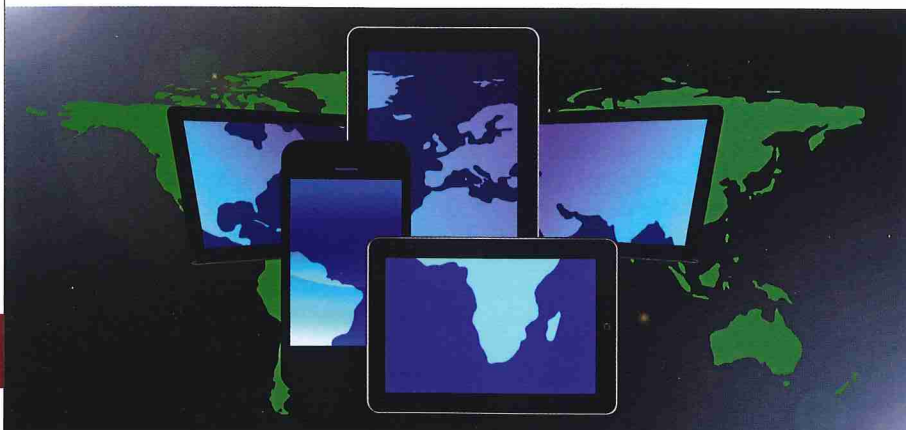
A better method to manage these different streams would be to have a hybrid CMS that can manage baseband signals as well as TV over IP. Such a system would be able to seamlessly integrate the various services offered by a network, so that a customer, who is using multiple services, would enjoy a better

viewing experience.

Such a hybrid system necessarily needs to have the following feature set:

- A single CMS is managing all the different streams of the network, regardless of the end-user device.
- Metadata management for DTT, OTT, pay-TV, video-on-demand (VoD), digital video recorder (DVR), catch-up TV and new delivery methods as they emerge, including importing, checking, presentation and preview of the metadata.
- A single integrated electronic programme guide (EPG) that allows the user to see all her choices across the various delivery methods within the system, based on filters she chooses for herself.
- A clear catalogue structure that includes content positioning and animation.
- Allows definition of purchase specifications or restrictions, pricing, content ratings, and link to the digital rights management (DRM).
- A way to integrate with third-party recommendation engines.
- Editorial tools that can help TV networks to highlight premium content and promotions.
- Search engine with multiple fields, auto-completion, and user-definable search algorithms that tie in with the network's content promotions.
- Management of advertisement streaming, including selective ad replacement over baseband signals as well as for TV over IP.
- Management of TV storage in the local memory of DVR boxes or the cloud, as per user choice.
- Powerful administration tools for backend management.

The principal benefit of the hybrid system is the vastly improved user experience for the network's customer. With a clear and concise view of the choices available, decision-making becomes smoother and results in happy customers. The benefit to the TV networks is higher customer retention and resultant market share. Moreover, management of their internal back-end processes becomes easier. **APB**



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