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October 2015

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CONTENT INNOVATION AWARDS 2015

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Maple House

149 Tottenham Court Road

London W1T 7AD

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7017 5000**Fax:** +44 (0) 20 7017 4953**Website:** www.digitaltveurope.net**Editor** Stuart Thomson**Tel:** +44 (0) 20 7017 5314**Email:** stuart.thomson@informa.com**Deputy Editor** Andy McDonald**Tel:** +44 (0) 20 7017 5293**Email:** andrew.mcdonald@informa.com**Contributing Editor**

Stewart Clarke

ContributorsKate Bulkley, Andy Fry, Adrian Pennington,
Adam Thomas, Anna Tobin, Jesse Whittock**Correspondents**France: Julien Alliot; Germany: Dieter
Brockmeyer; Italy: Branislav Pekic**Sales Director** Patricia Arescy**Tel:** +44 (0) 20 7017 5320**Email:** patricia.arescy@informa.com**Art Director** Matthew Humberstone**Publisher** Tim Banham**Printing** Wyndeham Grange, West SussexSUBSCRIPTION HOTLINE
INFORMA GROUP
TEL: +44 (0) 207 017 5533informa
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Rewarding initiative

The Content Innovation Awards is a new initiative from *Digital TV Europe* in partnership with our sister publication *Television Business International (TBI)*, that is designed to celebrate some of the great innovations from content providers, distributors and technology companies that are helping transform the way we produce, distribute and consume TV.

Why another awards event, and why this awards event?

The production and consumption of content are undergoing a transformation as the range of devices and opportunities to view video grows ever wider. With viewing no longer confined to the TV alone, but increasingly being done on multiple devices including tablets, smartphones, game consoles and computers, the type of content that is created and the way it is produced and distributed is also being forced into a period of rapid change. This brings challenges – but it also brings creative opportunities. Different industry participants are collaborating in new ways to deliver new types of content, new windows and new forms of interaction and engagement with viewers.

The lines between the production, distribution and consumption of content are blurring. Content producers are increasingly involved in distribution and in moving closer to their viewers through social and interactive initiatives. Pay TV service providers are investing in content and in platforms that engage their subscribers in new ways. And viewers are themselves becoming active participants by engaging with content on social platforms and by providing data to suppliers that shape what content is made and the way it is packaged.

For all of these reasons, we thought the time was right to bring different parts of the industry – producers, distributors and technologists – together in a single event that celebrates innovation across all parts of the content production and delivery chain.

The Content Innovation Awards will honour industry excellence in multiple fields, with 16 categories announced for 2015 including best channel, best series launch of the year, 4K initiative of the year, and pay TV service of the year. Other categories include MCN of the year, social TV initiative of the year and cloud TV initiative of the year.

Our independent judging panel collectively boasts many decades of industry expertise and includes specialists in multiple fields who have contributed their insights in particular categories.

The shortlist is profiled here in full, with summaries of the achievements of the companies behind the entries. ●



Stuart Thomson, Editor
stuart.thomson@informa.com

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4K initiative of the year

Whether it takes the form of a new channel or pioneering effort in content creation, this award pays tribute to the most exciting uses of 4K.

Blue Ant Media for Love Nature

Canada-based Blue Ant Media rebranded its HD linear broadcast channel Oasis as Love Nature in January this year having realised that there was a huge opportunity to meet a growing market demand for high-quality natural history content as 4K Ultra HD technology came of age.

This led the company to make the bold move of committing itself to produce some 300 hours a year of 4K documentaries, series and 'slow-TV' programmes to build a formidable catalogue of nature content, through a mix of in-house production and international partnerships. The channel was initially promoted through a free preview to homes in Canada.

Blue Ant Media says Love Nature uses state-of-the-art drone and 4K technologies to deliver high-quality content, distributed without commercials on linear and OTT platforms.

The company will also distribute its content direct-to-consumers via a newly-launched subscription video-on-demand app.

This year Blue Ant Media has rolled out 4K content including *The*



Jago: A Life Underwater

Big Feed, Volcanoes, Land of Gremlins and Arctic Secrets, building on a number of earlier titles including *Lewa Diaries* and *Nomads of the Serengeti*.

BT for BT Ultra HD Service

BT Sport Ultra High Definition launched in August, becoming the first live sports UHD channel in Europe, distributed via a new UHD set-top box.

The channel kicked off with 4K coverage of the FA Community Shield football match on August 2 between Chelsea and Arsenal. BT expects the UHD service to be the star element in its top TV package, with weekly broadcasts of content including Barclays Premier League games and the British MotoGP race at Silverstone.

BT took the decision to launch a channel based on the DVB UHD-1 Phase 1 standard, meaning that it had to make a considerable effort to put in place the delivery chain that enabled the channel to reach customers' homes.

In addition to delivering

content at higher resolutions, BT is delivering faster frame rates of 50 frames per second, seen as particularly beneficial for fast moving sport content.

Other picture improvements include the use of 10-bit sampling of brightness and colour rather than the 8-bit technology typically used for HD content.

The service is delivered using HEVC compression to the new Ultra HD box via multicast. Customers are required to have a BT Infinity fibre broadband subscription and a compatible 4K TV set to receive the channel, which is delivered at about 30Mbps.

BT deployed new Ultra HD cameras at venues using a new outside broadcasting capability. New infrastructure has been put in place to transport the high bandwidth Ultra HD broadcast streams back to the BT Sport studios for decode, monitoring and then for onward distribution across the BT TV multicast network, and technology has been put in place to support a 24/7 channel that includes live feeds, the replay of pre-recorded content and advertising – among other features.

According to BT, the service has been very favourably received, with a price point that puts a high-quality viewing experience within the reach of a mass-market audience.



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4K initiative of the year

Sky Deutschland for the first 50fps live broadcast over satellite



Sky Deutschland last year claimed a world first when it broadcast a live Bundesliga football match over satellite in Ultra HD as a part of an internal showcase.

The match, between Bayern Munich and Werder Bremen, was broadcast at 50fps encoded in HEVC. Six 4K cameras, combined with another four HD cameras that were up-converted to Ultra HD,

delivered the UHD video at a resolution of 2160p50 from the Allianz Arena. The match was shown on several Ultra HD TVs in Sky's HQ in Unterföhring, Upper Bavaria.

Stefan Kunz, vice-president of business and distribution services at Sky Deutschland, says that Sky Deutschland's first trials with UHD technology date back to 2012 and since then the company has made good progress over the years. "The first big step we made [was] by broadcasting for the first time [a] full live football match directly from the stadium. That was the first point where we really saw 4K, UHD transmission as possible," says Kunz.

Since the trial, Sky Deutschland has continued its UHD experiments and in July of this year secured additional capacity for broadcasts on SES's Astra satellite at 19.2° East. "At Sky Deutschland, we believe in being innovative with our offerings and providing our customers with the best TV experience, and have therefore been investing in Ultra HD. The agreement with SES gives us planning security in terms of capacity so that we can continue to develop Ultra HD and get it ready for the market," said Sky Deutschland's chief officer of legal, regulatory affairs and distribution, Holger Ensslin, speaking at the time.

SPI International/Filmbox for 4K Funbox UHD

SPI International/FilmBox has staked its claim on launching the first global 4K TV channel in the shape of 4K Funbox UHD. The broadcaster began seeking content for the channel at MIP TV earlier this year, and began demoing the service on Eutelsat's 4K1 demo channel ahead of the full channel launch.

The company's first distribution deal for the service was with Vodafone Portugal at the start of July. The mobile telco began by showcasing some content on its own TV Net Voz platform, gradually increasing the amount of content shown. The service was made available free of charge to Vodafone's fibre customers.

SPI International used its own compression technology to deliver the service to platforms and manufacturers of devices supporting 4K streaming over the internet. The company says it has aimed to make the service available on all devices.

SPI International is focusing on making as much native 4K content as possible available via the channel, and on showing programmes that have a high production value. 4K FunBox UHD features native 4K footage of wildlife, nature, landscapes and other content. In addition to wildlife documentaries, content has included images of the San Francisco skyline, the study of cloud movements and skylight as well as the Ultra HD footage of Asian cities by night.

Travelxp 4K

Travelxp has been an early adopter of 4K and the company has overcome a number of key challenges in delivering content to populate its forthcoming channel. These include finding and investing in the right equipment and suitable studio capabilities and managing data and storage requirements, as well as the creative challenge of producing compelling 4K content.

Aware that most consumers are still unfamiliar with 4K and unclear about the difference between HD and 4K, Travelxp has focused on delivering content that brings out the best in 4K, which the company says involves different skills than those required for production of HD.

The channel has created two new shows – *Backpack* and *Eat See Do* – in 4K. *Backpack* revolves around the idea of limited budget backpack travel where the focus is on an experience that is beyond regular tourist itineraries, and will feature places that are unexplored with a special focus on the locals' tradition, activities, food, and stories.

Eat See Do will showcase three food dishes, three activities and three places to see in a particular locale. It has been filmed in Canada, Vietnam and Korea. The idea is to film things like snow-capped mountains, water droplets on leaves, striking architecture, water bodies, cultural activities, food, night lights and more, with a view to bring out the best in the colours through ultra HD quality video, according to the company.



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Cloud TV initiative of the year

Cloud-enabled OTT is now providing compelling user experiences. The award recognises the year's most innovative cloud TV service or technology.

BBC for BBC iPlayer

BBC iPlayer is the UK's number one cloud-enabled on demand TV service, available on over 10,000 devices and fulfilling 2.6 billion TV programme requests in the past year.

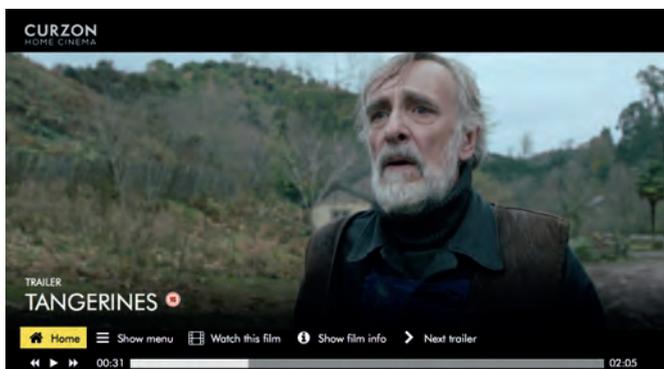
Following a successful four-screen relaunch last spring, iPlayer has extended its catch-up offer from seven to 30 days, rolled out a new OTT HTML iPlayer to Virgin TiVo, YouView, BT Vision, Xbox One and Wii U, and continued to evolve the iPlayer mobile app which has now been downloaded over 33 million times. It has also started moving beyond catch-up to include exclusives, archive collections and live events.

The iPlayer's feature set includes downloads (to laptops, tablets and mobiles), Live Restart (on computers and rolling out to TV, tablets and mobile this year); and accessibility options including subtitling, signing and audio description. At the core of this is The Video Factory Project – an in-house programme designed to encode, package and deliver all iPlayer video content. The move to cloud encoding gave the BBC the opportunity to redesign and consolidate the number of video encoding profiles being used by BBC iPlayer. "BBC iPlayer continues

to lead the UK in TV-on-demand, innovating in both content and killer features like 'Live Restart', and is now available on over 10,000 different devices, enabling users to enjoy great TV whenever and wherever they choose," says Daniel Taylor-Watt, head of BBC iPlayer.



Easel TV for Curzon Home Cinema



The UK's venerable Curzon Cinema chain broke with established practice in 2013 by launching Curzon Home Cinema, offering new movie releases day-and-date with their theatrical release.

The service currently offers about 450 titles for 48-hour rental.

Curzon worked with Easel TV on building a version of its service that was launched in May last year on a range of devices, including tablets, smartphones and computers and – most notably – on the Freesat free-

to-view satellite platform. Curzon Home Cinema is Freesat's first film on-demand service and first pay-per-view player.

Curzon has continued an ambitious roll-out schedule with launches on Samsung & Panasonic TVs and HbbTV devices as well as the Amazon Fire TV which launched in Europe in September 2014. Curzon Home Cinema has also, since August, been available on Virgin Media's TiVo platform.

Easel implemented the Curzon Home Cinema solution using its cloud-based SaaS platform, which provides a solution for content publishing and monetisation across both big screen and smaller screen OTT devices. Easel TV's contribution included two key consumer-facing elements: a cross-platform responsive design website that supports PC, Mac and iOS devices; and the bigger screen TV application which supports the Freesat boxes, Samsung and Panasonic smart TVs and Amazon Fire TV devices. Features of the service include cross-platform payment and entitlement and cross-platform bookmarking. Following the initial launch of the app in May 2014, the service has become available on a growing array of platforms with a continuing device release schedule. Curzon has seen rapid growth in usage in the last six months and aims to build on this in the months ahead.

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Cloud TV initiative of the year

Envivio for Envivio Cloud DVR Solution

Envivio – the video processing specialist recently acquired by technology giant Ericsson – demonstrated its latest and most advanced cloud DVR solution at the recent IBC trade show in Amsterdam.

Designed for the multiscreen world, the cloud DVR offering aims to give flexibility and cost-efficiency to video service providers that want to monetise services across all subscriber devices, according to the technology company. New functions include network time-shifting, start-over TV, catch-up TV, and network personal video recorders in a single virtual software solution.

Envivio's platform highlights the rise of cloud DVR as the most efficient way to provide time-shifted video services on all devices.

Envivio's solution is designed to reduce the storage bill facing operators while helping service providers gain additional revenues through ad insertion tools.

Envivio unifies storage and processing functions on a cluster of servers. The company says the technology avoids any bottleneck issues and scales with the provider's traffic.

Use of off-the-shelf servers contributes to lower the overall

infrastructure capital expenditure, while software applications contribute to reduce the amount of hardware storage required.

"We have just-in-time transcoding, which we developed with HP. It means you can just store one version and you can get up to 25 times storage gain," says Julien Signès, the company's CEO.



Muvi LLC for Muvi Studio

Launching a multiscreen OTT VoD service is a challenging task.

"The decision typically involves either outsourcing entire development and its management to IT consultancy or hiring expertise in-house," says Viraj Mehta, head of marketing at OTT specialist Muvi Studio. "In either case, the product build cycle from drawing board to go-live is high and it needs to go through various iterations, testing, Q&A and versioning before launch. This has been a major entry barrier for even larger broadcasters and content owners."

Muvi Studio's cloud-based OTT VoD platform builder helps broadcasters and content owners launch their own-branded OTT VoD service across multi-screens, with a claimed zero capital expenditure.

According to Mehta, the solution takes care of all aspects of OTT from provisioning the IT infrastructure to the delivery of the front-end apps, all from an out-of-the-box solution. Businesses can pay a monthly platform fee, which takes care of the infrastructure, bandwidth, technology support, maintenance and product updates.

Customers include Asian network Maa TV which used it to launch its VoD service MaaFlix. Maa TV was able to deploy the service in a couple of months, according to Muvi. Mehta says the money Maa TV saved on capex was refocused on marketing and content acquisition which helped the station scale up the number of users in a very short time. This meant the service was in profit almost immediately from launch, "a feat no other VoD service has been able to achieve," he says.

SeaChange for SeaChange Rave

Service providers want to offer as much value to their subscribers as possible, with services that cover live TV and VoD, on mobile devices as well as STBs connected to TV sets. Other media companies possess large volumes of content that can be monetised by going direct to consumers, without the need for intermediaries. They are both facing stiff competition from OTT player such as Netflix, but help is at hand in the form of SeaChange Rave.

This innovation is designed to help media companies and service providers run premium OTT services by monetising content assets and the subscriber base.

"Rave enables live, time-shifted, pay-per-view and on-demand video services and storefront creation," explains Yoeri Geutskens, product marketing manager.

It is deployable as a cloud-based pay as you go model and enables presentation to any device and operating system; connection through the open SeaChange Rave Unite layer; and a comprehensive range of services integrated with content publishers' or service providers' existing business systems. Advanced content recommendations, discovery and social media are enabled through SeaChange's user experience and third-party apps. "Rave raises the bar on OTT performance with services, tools and integrations that go well beyond today's online video platforms' basic capacity for workflow, media management and analytics," says Geutskens.



INSIGHT AND INTELLIGENCE ON GLOBAL CONTENT TRENDS

For more information contact
Phil Birchenall:
phil.birchenall@k7media.co.uk



Social TV Innovation of the Year

This award recognises the best social initiative or app to foster and unleash viewer engagement around content.

The Box Plus Network for Vote4Music



The Box Plus Network launched Vote4Music on its UK digital TV channel 4Music in April of this year. The programme format lets viewers vote for which music video they want to watch next by using Twitter. Airing Monday to Thursday, viewers are shown a range of different hashtags for up to 30 music videos and can take control of the show by voting for the videos they want to watch.

The vote opens at the start of the programme and closes when the countdown is shown on screen, with viewers able to vote a maximum of 50 times per programme. Box Plus Network uses an in-house-developed app to preview and schedule the music videos then create a playlist of content that can be voted on, with a hashtag automatically generated for each track.

Votes count throughout the show but Box Plus Network doesn't allow a video to play more than once in any given part of the show to create a better viewing experience.

The show runs using automated graphics, with Box Plus Network building on existing hashtag counting technology from a third-party enterprise social media marketing platform to create the automated workflow and real-time voting mechanism.

UK-based Box Plus Network runs eight music TV channel brands – The Box, 4Music, Smash Hits, Kiss, Kerrang! Magic, heat and Box Africa.

The company changed its name from Box TV to The Box Plus Network earlier this year to reflect its changing business, which now reaches youth audiences on multiple platforms – not just via TV.

Keshet/Mako for Hacking: App

Mako, the news and entertainment website owned by Israeli broadcaster and media company Keshet, has this year launched a second-screen app specifically designed to accompany scripted content. The Hacking: App lets viewers download characters' smartphone interfaces to their own mobile phones, allowing them to look at photos and videos and read personal conversations associated with those characters.

Keshet says the app responds to viewers' desire to interact with scripted shows during and in between broadcast in the same way as they might with non-scripted programmes.

The app launched with Keshet comedy *Imported* and is next due to be deployed around Keshet 'dramedy' *Plan B*, about a laid-back and self-absorbed rockstar who unexpectedly finds a baby on his doorstep, holding a note saying that he is the father.

The Hacking: App lets users access emails, text messages and social media accounts including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter relating to the characters – letting viewers get “closer to the personality they see on screen,” according to Keshet.

Mark Dorcel for #SansLesMains

Adult entertainment specialist Marc Dorcel ran a promotion offering free access to its online film collection – but at a price.

The concept was that viewers could access more than 1,000 high quality adult movies from Mark Dorcel for free, but only if they keep both hands pressed to the keyboard for the duration of the viewing.

The limited-time offer, known by the hashtag #SansLesMains (#HandsOff) piqued the interest of internet users. In the first day, more than 100 'hacks' were posted on social networks about how to overcome the “obstacle” presented by Mark Dorcel.

The campaign also sparked a 27-times increase in visits to the Mark Dorcel website, a 17-times increase in viewed films and a 50-times uptick in subscribers, according to company figures.

The offer also trended on Twitter for more than seven hours after being picked up by more than 100 media outlets who wrote articles about the campaign. Meanwhile, a YouTube clip to promote the offer, starring adult star Anna Polina, has had more than 600,000 views to date. The offer was designed to engage potential customers with the Mark Dorcel brand and encourage them to pay for the company's €9.99 per month adult entertainment offering, rather than access free x-rated alternatives.

Orange for Watch with Twitter



Orange in France launched Watch with Twitter earlier this year, a smart TV guide that shows which TV programs are trending on the social network. Orange rolled out the service in May and designed it so that viewers can choose what to watch by seeing both the most tweeted-about shows in real-time and TV programme Twitter feeds.

The 'leanback mode' TV experience is the result of a collaboration between Orange and Twitter and combines social data from Twitter and TV show data from Orange using the Orange TV and Watch with Twitter APIs. "Watch with Twitter' by Orange delivers a breakthrough social TV experience to TV viewers. It is the combination of a smart TV guide – ranking programs by real-time popularity on Twitter – and a live Twitter feed, displaying related conversations alongside the show," says Christophe Rufin, Orange's marketing and innovation director, cloud TV and entertainment ecosystems.

Watch with Twitter lets viewers see and access the top trending TV shows on television at any given time. Once the viewer has chosen a programme, they can watch it live while seeing tweets related to the TV show – automatically refreshed every minute – on the screen at the same time. They can also choose to watch the programme in full-screen mode. The service has filters to block abusive and discriminatory content and to display the most relevant conversations. It is also optimised for the large screen sizes of TVs.

Watch with Twitter launched in France after three months of development and Orange now has plans to deploy it elsewhere in its European footprint with more features to be added over time.

A study by US-based audience measurement specialist Nielsen said earlier this year that there is a strong correlation between Twitter TV engagement and engagement with programming among viewers.

By analysing minute-by-minute Twitter activity around live airings of eight US cable TV shows, Nielsen found that changes in Twitter TV activity were strongly correlated with neurological engagement, with 79.5% of respondents revealing such a correlation.

TagvanceMedia for Ekranda app for Kanal D

Istanbul-based second screen app provider, TagvanceMedia, partnered with Turkish broadcaster Kanal D to launch a companion app designed to let viewers buy content they see on TV.

The app, called Ekranda (meaning 'on TV' in Turkish), went live in January and is designed to let viewers buy and engage with the items they like in real-time. It is based on audience demand to be able to do things like discover what an actor or actress is wearing and where to buy these items.

The technology gives smart devices like tablets or smartphones the ability to become 'content aware' and identify what is being watched, using automatic content recognition and audio watermarking technology.

Content can be detected, regardless of whether it is delivered over satellite, cable, IPTV, or analogue TV, or whether it is watched live, time-shifted or as a DVR recording.

The app uses audio watermarks coming from the TV to synchronise with TagvanceMedia's content management system, letting users interact with TV series in real-time.

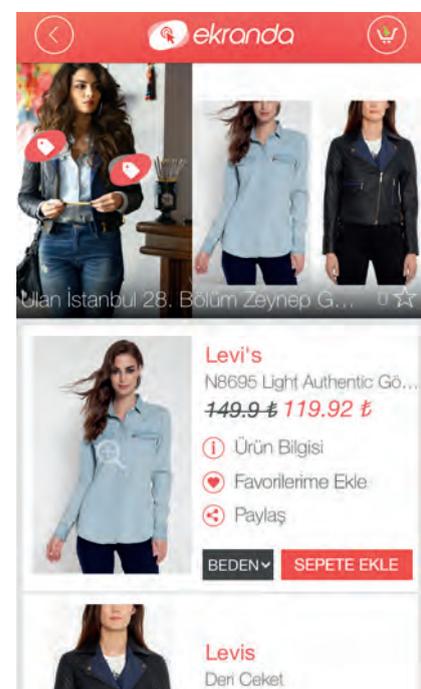
More than a dozen primetime series have been supported to date by the TV-synced e-commerce app.

Kanal D has used the app in conjunction with product placements in TV series, with 50 brands expected to be using the platform by the end of the year.

Major Turkish fashion e-commerce sites selling clothes, accessories, shoes, bags and cosmetics are handling the supply-side for purchases.

Kanal D has been building this second screen audience using calls-to-action before and during shows – in the form of TV ads and online banner ads – to encourage viewers to download and use the app.

TagvanceMedia is a Turkish second screen application provider for TV channels, brands, agencies and content owners, while Dogan Media Group-owned Kanal D is a major TV channel in Turkey.



Industry Innovation of the Year

The Industry Innovation of the Year award is designed to recognise a single innovation that has helped transform an aspect of the TV experience.

Elemental Technologies for Elemental Unified Linear TV Delivery

Video compression specialist Elemental's Unified Linear TV Delivery is based on the idea that software-defined video systems for converged video infrastructures will change the name of the game and enable new product offerings and revenue opportunities for broadcasters, pay TV providers and content programmers.

According to Elemental, software-defined video processing and delivery allows video providers to deploy software across an optimal combination of dedicated and virtualised resources and converged infrastructure for traditional and multiscreen content delivery.

Elemental has already demonstrated key parts of the overall system. At NAB, it demonstrated how software-defined video solutions allow operators to implement video processing infrastructure in a unified headend to support both traditional and multiscreen video delivery in a single architecture.

With Elemental Live, live video sources are ingested via SDI, high speed 10Gb Ethernet or fibre optic connection and the encoded into streams for linear delivery alongside simultaneous live-to-VoD and multiscreen adaptive bit-rate encoding streams. Elemental statistical multiplexing supports a mix of MPEG-2, H.264 and HEVC as well as SD, HD, and UHD within the same multiplex for cable and satellite operators looking to address both legacy and newer HEVC compliant set-top boxes.

The flexibility and scalability of software-defined solutions means that broadcasters and operators can not only reduce their dependency on dedicated hardware but also ensure a smooth migration path to future technologies and service innovations, whether they be 4K TV or multiscreen video delivery, according to Elemental.

Elemental recently announced a deal with Swedish MSO Com Hem, which has added on-demand video and multiscreen to its traditional linear TV offerings and turned to Elemental to provide a unified headend.

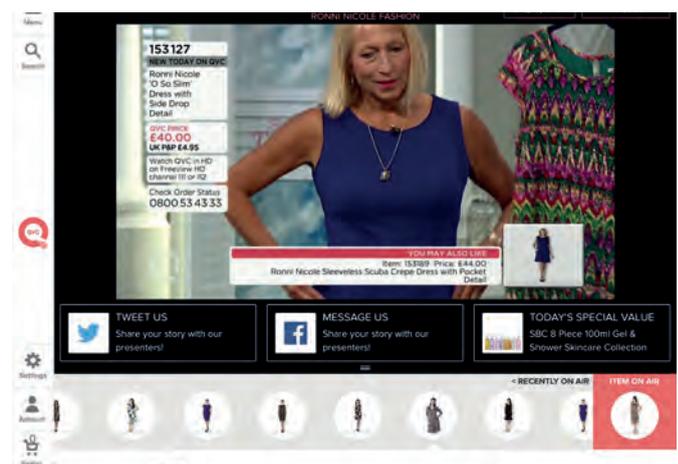
"You can, from one underlying platform – using Elemental Live and Elemental Conductor as a management platform – serve all of those distribution channels," chief marketing officer Keith Wymbs told DTVE at the recent IBC exhibition. "Instead of having silos for each of those you can combine it all into one. Elemental is able to apply the flexibility of our software offering with the power that we have from our underlying architecture that's based on GPUs to enable all of that. It's a lot more efficient than to have to manage three different platforms."

QVC for QVC Interactive TV experience

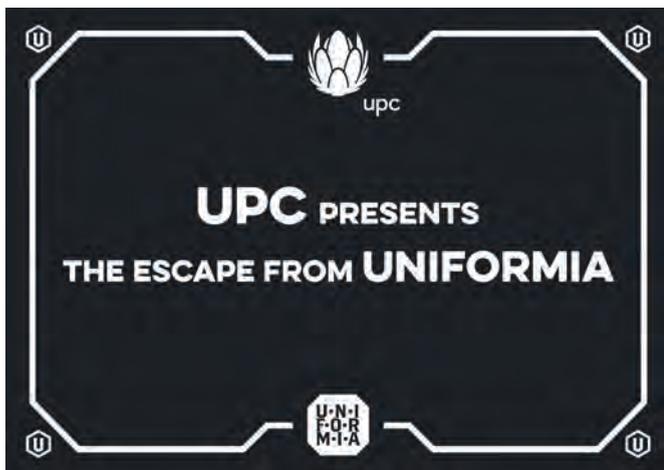
QVC worked with interactive TV specialist Axonista to bring a host of interactive features to its flagship iPad app. The upgrade was intended to give the retailer ways to add value to a customer's shopping experience and to build a two-way conversation with them. Since QVC broadcasts live 16-hours a day, it was critical that the TV experience was linked to the app in a way that felt seamless to customers.

Technical challenges included synchronising the interactivity of the app with the broadcast video stream in real-time. The primary challenge was to integrate all rich data and content, from detailed product information to customer reviews and related videos, located in disparate places in QVC's existing workflow, into a single workflow and browser-based interface. This enables production assistants to push the content into the app at the right time to drive customer engagement. All challenges were met by QVC's in-house engineers, and UX experts using Axonista's SaaS-based CMS software, Ediflo.

"We're delighted that the content experience is driven by our content team while being simple to use and without being a time consuming and disruptive process," says Rob Tucker, head of digital media, QVC. "It's been a great collaborative project with a team of up to 20 people focused on solving some very difficult technical challenges. Because QVC is a broadcaster and a retailer, we are able to measure both engagement and sales for the experiences we deliver. We already know our iPad app is a successful sales channel and are confident that this will enhance that experience and the results it delivers."



UPC Romania for Escape from Uniforma



To help its sales force better appreciate the value of customisation in the market, Liberty Global's Romanian subsidiary, UPC Romania, created an event designed not as a traditional sales force meeting, but as a learning experience.

The starting point was to illustrate the idea that freedom of choice creates a better customer experience. In turn, this depends on the

control the user feels they have over customisation and the mobility to use services where and when they want.

Soliciting the help of channel partners including MTG, Bollywood, AXN, Discovery and HBO, UPC Romania laid on a two day event for its 350-strong sales force. The theme was Uniformia, presented as a totalitarian state where choice is restricted.

Participants were tempted to win back their freedom of choice by joining workshops devised by the channel partners.

"The 2015 Content Event was a first for UPC Romania and for the cable business that we are aware of," said Bogdan Bucurei, marketing director, UPC Romania. "The aim was to change the 'number of channels' way of selling video products paradigm to one focussed on 'content value and content relevance for the customer'."

The event had a positive impact on the participants' attitude and behaviour, according to the operator. Accordingly, 76% expressed feeling more motivated in addressing clients; 70% indicated more confidence in selling and 90% of participants declared Uniformia made it easier to support UPC services against competitors.

"We succeeded in raising participants' confidence and motivation, giving them more fuel in the continuous UPC competition battle," says Bucurei. "We inspired our sales force into becoming future 'entertainment consultants' for the entire customer base."

VOO for the .évasion box and Videowall

For the launch of its new generation TV platform, .évasion, Belgian cable operator VOO went back to the drawing board to devise an interactive TV service intended to "reinvent the old concept of [a] TV mosaic". They came up with the Videowall, a realtime Mosaic UI categorised by program genre, enabling customers to enjoy a full view of what is broadcast on their entire channel lineup sorted by their preferred theme.

"We wanted the approach for this new project to really focus on the customer experience: to bring them new services while simplifying their daily TV interaction," says Tamara Leemans, CTO, VOO. "It would also potentially give us higher ARPU based on content recommendation and subscription."

The Videowall TV guide is based on video thumbnails as a complement to the traditional EPG. This sorts channels by programme genre, rather than channel genres, in real-time.

Only channels the end user has access to are displayed. Data displayed includes programme name, broadcast time, channel name, progress bar with sound available to accompany the thumbnails. One benefit is that thematic channels are more visible

and less dependent on operator numbering, exposing fresh content to viewers. The result? Videowall has become the second favourite feature of the new platform with more than 83% of customers using it daily. "By listening to customers we managed to bring to life a truly innovative service in a short timeframe and at relative low cost," says Leemans. ".évasion is a truly new way of enjoying TV, helping customers to take a viewing decision based on what is really broadcast in a really natural, comfortable way. This is what every set-top box should aim for. We are very proud to offer such a service to our subscribers in Belgium."



Best New Channel Launch

Creating a viable channel brand is not a task for the faint-hearted. But for those who succeed, the rewards are there, as this award recognises.

AMC Global

AMC Global's rollout began in October last year after AMC Networks rebranded the MGM Channel Global.

Using drama *Halt and Catch Fire* as an introductory vehicle, AMC Global is now in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia after its initial launch in Latin America. On August 23 it debuted the much-anticipated *Fear the Walking Dead* as a simulcast with the US, and then launched in the UK for the first time via BT.

According to AMC, the launch of this new network allowed it to enrich programming with a road map of innovative original series and a broader selection of movies. For each launch, sales kits were created for the affiliate teams, with a 'sizzle reel' featuring AMC's portfolio, and premiums and materials for affiliate promotion. The channel scheduled special screenings and events for *Halt and Catch Fire* in target countries. An extensive media plan for the launch was implemented with promoted social posts and digital, print and out-of-home campaigns. The show was promoted at trade shows including MIPCOM, Jornadas, and Tepal, and a presence at CASBAA and ABTA celebrated the international debut of "the network that changed the way stories are told."

AMC Global said the channel received strong press attention, and the viewer response was felt immediately, with the launch of regional websites and social media properties bringing in over 40,000 Facebook fans after only two weeks on the air in Asia, and over 110,000 fans on the Latin America Facebook page. Ratings increased in diverse territories including Spain, Taiwan, Hungary and Romania. In Latin America, AMC's ratings have increased by 35%.



BBC Brit



Norway was the second territory to see the launch of BBC Brit, one of three new genre brands being rolled out globally by BBC Worldwide. Aimed at men but with broader appeal, the channel is the exclusive home of new episodes of *Top Gear* and covers a variety of subjects: cars, science, adventure, life-changing moments, extreme characters, eccentrics and entertainment/comedy.

For its Norwegian launch event, The Stig vs. Team Norway, BBC Worldwide used the winter sport arena Holmenkollen and selected a team of Norway's biggest winter sport stars to compete in an epic relay involving multiple sports. The main objective was to build attention around BBC Brit and encourage viewers to tune in to the premiere on April 13. The relay was held the week before the BBC Brit launch, with a teaser campaign running in print, online, TV and social. After the event all mediums carried the stories from the event through launch week, generating press coverage for the channel, including a double-page spread in *Dagbladet* (Norway's second biggest tabloid) and a five-page feature in Norway's biggest celebrity magazine *Se og Hør*.

"BBC Brit has quickly established itself with audiences across the world, delivering record ratings in Norway to become the country's most watched international channel on launch day. As the exclusive home of *Top Gear*, our Nordic campaign saw The Stig race against some of Norway's top winter athletes – a creative highlight that connected with audiences across traditional, outdoor, TV and social media. I am delighted to see the global success of BBC Brit recognised in this award category," said Fiona Eastwood, director of brands, global markets, BBC Worldwide.

Fix & Foxi

Germany's Your Family Entertainment brought on seasoned channel builder Paul Robinson to distribute its new multicultural-focused children's channel, based on the books of Ron Kauka.

Fix & Foxi launched in December 2014 after YFE claimed all rights to the character brand. It has since launched in Europe the US, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa, and will target Asia, Australasia, Scandinavia, the Baltics, the CIS region and Russia in the next three years.

The channel delivers a mix of entertainment and educational content. The channel's leading characters Fix & Foxi and all the other characters from the eponymous series accompany the kids not only through Fix & Foxi itself but remain present as connectors between other hits series such as *Fairly OddParents*, *Urmel*, *Little Miss Spider* and first run series like *Heroes of the City*.

The Fix & Foxi characters were created by German comic artist and publisher Rolf Kauka, often referred to as the German Walt Disney. The comics were first published as weekly magazines in 1953 and, over the next 40 years sold some 718 million comics worldwide with a following in Europe as well as in Mexico, Argentina, Brazil and China. The channel's content is designed to reflect the world's cultural diversity and targets 5-11 year-olds with family-friendly, non-violent content combining entertainment and education.

Spike UK

Viacom International Media Networks began rolling out the well-established US entertainment network globally with a UK launch in April.

Spike's mix of formats (*Lip Sync Battle*), US acquisitions (*Breaking Bad*), movies (*The Transporter*), MMA programming, original commissions (*Tattoo Disasters UK*) and Channel 5 factual shows have led to a strong 0.31% UK DTT share.

The channel attracted 3.5 million viewers a month, representing a 0.46% share of 16-34s across the period; and, along with 34,000 Facebook likes and 24,000 Twitter followers.

Spike UK's highest rating launch to date, watched by 1.4 million UK viewers in total, and already a global and social success, was *Lip Sync Battle*, featuring celebrities going head to head lip synching the song of their choice. Celebrity combatants who have appeared to date include A-listers Anne Hathaway, Emily Blunt, Mike Tyson, Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson, Justin Bieber and Queen Latifa.

The social media comedy *Fail Army* has also been reworked for television and will be introduced to UK TV audiences by Spike.

Other shows include *Catch a Contractor* and *Frankenfood*, as well as repeats of Viacom-owned Channel 5's popular factual output.

Non-Stop People



Non Stop People, a 24/7 news channel entirely dedicated to star and celebrity news, launched in France in late 2012 and in Spain in June of this year.

The channel is a JV between Banijay and Mediatic System and broadcasts in France on Canalsat, in the French Caribbean islands on Canalsat Caraïbes and in Réunion and Mauritius on Parabole. The channel launched in a fully localised version on Telefónica's platforms in Spain in the midst of a crisis among the traditional broadcast industry. In 2014, Spanish DTT saw the loss of nine free-to-air TV channels, taking the total from 24 to 15, encouraging viewers to move to pay TV services. The channel teamed up with the pay TV market leader in the country for its first international launch. Non Stop People Spain broadcasts 24/7 news about Spanish and international celebrities, targeting 15-34 year olds.

On the model of the French version, the Spanish channel has an editorial team of 40-plus journalists and broadcasts from a TV studio in central Madrid. Non Stop People España broadcasts five shows daily. *News* is a show focusing on daily national and international events. *Good Morning People* focuses on the news of the previous night and what's happening each morning. In *El Debate*, viewers can watch journalistic talk dealing with celebrities' burning issues. *El Hub* is a magazine show that deciphers what happens on social networks, while *Xtra!* is the channel's guest-based evening show. Non Stop People España makes extensive use of multiple screens and social networks. The channel has been active on Facebook and Twitter and has a young team that is capable of carrying out multiple roles including writing, shooting, editing, voiceovers and hosting.

Non Stop People is now looking to extend distribution to Latin America and it also has an eye on the large US-based Hispanic population.

MCN of the Year

Which companies have succeeded in harnessing online talent? This award recognises those who take on the challenge of aggregating internet video.

Barcroft TV



In 2014/15, Barcroft TV says it has “reimagined the news video genre and dominated the factual space on YouTube”. One of the world’s largest YouTube news channels, it researches, produces and distributes at least five exclusive factual mini-docs per week in a news format designed to set the popular agenda around the world and get millions of people talking.

In the past 12 months the channel has premiered hundreds of original viral video clips. A diverse range of content is key to the Barcroft TV audience, with videos such as ‘Caught on Camera: Snake Devours Crocodile’ (46 million views) sitting alongside real life stories such as ‘Professional Twerker: Jessica Vanessa’ (23 million views).

In terms of growth, Barcroft TV added 807,354 new subscribers in the last year. It has also launched two sister channels, Barcroft Cars and Bear Grylls Adventure, both of which Barcroft Media curates and operates.

Endemol Beyond

Endemol Beyond launched in 2013 and within 2.5 years has become one of the fastest-growing digital networks, achieving 1.8 billion views each month. It has offices in key markets such as the US, UK, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Brazil, Netherlands and Asia.

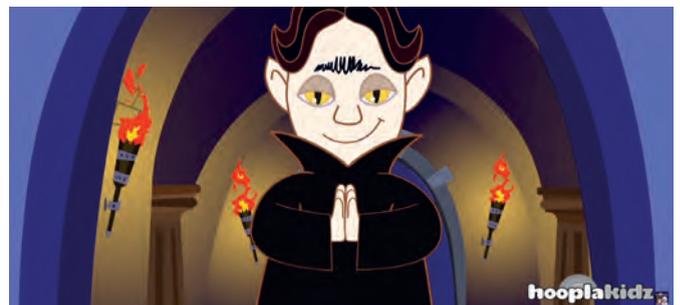
Each of these hubs produces local content that is relevant for millennials and adapted for their territory. Endemol says Beyond has been positioned as a “premium content network. Compared to other MCNs, which are home for tens of thousands of creators, we only operate around 750 channels and are focusing on the best and biggest creators in the market, making the same amount of views with a small number of channels as our competitors with a large amount.”

The advantage, says Endemol, is that “we can offer advertisers more targeted and tailored campaigns on channels with a higher reach. We can also produce higher quality content that is more appealing for

BroadbandTV

BroadbandTV (BBTV) is one of the world’s most advanced and fastest-growing MCNs with 37,000 partners amassing over 5.4 billion monthly impressions. Its network spans several key media brands including gaming network TGN, hip-hop music network Opposition and dance music network WIMSIC.

This last year has been particularly strong. In April, BBTV completed the acquisition of digital-first kids content producer YoBoHo, which generates over three billion views per year, and K-12 educational MCN with channels on YouTube such as HooplaKidz. Subsequently, it announced: Outspeak, a next generation citizen journalism brand endorsed by The Huffington Post; and Windfall, a partnership with BMG designed to help accelerate the careers of emerging music artists.



brands and advertisers”. Endemol Beyond’s formats play out across more than 20 online platforms. In addition, it is extending successful formats to traditional TV.



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Best International TV Networks Group

This award recognises a group that has made creative use of its global reach, while delivering content that is compelling to local audiences.

Discovery Networks International

Now 30 years old, Discovery Networks International boasts nearly three billion subscriptions globally. With an average of 10 channels in each market, the international side of the business represents more than 50% of Discovery's revenues. Under the stewardship of DNI president JB Perrette, the company has experienced organic international growth, led by the performance of global flagship channels including Discovery Channel, TLC, Animal Planet and ID: Investigation Discovery. Additionally, the acquisition of Eurosport has deepened Discovery's presence across Europe and Asia Pacific.

Discovery claims an annual investment of around US\$2 billion (€1.8 billion) in content. For the first quarter of 2015, it saw great success with shows including *Gold Rush*, *Fast N' Loud* and *Misfit Garage*, originating from its US flagship. However an increasing number of global shows

are now commissioned from local markets and shared globally. Successful titles originated from Discovery's London Production Hub include *Shocking Love*, *Extraordinary Pregnancies*, and *Too Ugly For Love?* According to Discovery this investment in content has helped its average audience increase across its global portfolio by 10%.

A big change has been the shift from pure pay TV to a hybrid business with free channels. Today, Discovery has free-to-air channels in Italy, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, the UK and Spain. It has also expanded out of factual into other genres, acquired indie production companies (Neal Street), launched local channels (Quest Arabiya) and increased its digital activity, with a growing direct-to-consumer business including Dplay and Eurosport Player, streaming services with a quarter of a million subscribers between them.

SPT Networks Central Europe

Sony Pictures Television (SPT) Networks' portfolio in Central Europe includes AXN, AXN Black, AXN White, AXN Spin and two digital services: AXN Now and AXN Player. Having acquired two Hungarian channels in 2015, SPT now has 12 localised feeds across Poland, Hungary, Romania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Bosnia & Herzegovina and Montenegro.

SPT Networks CE's growth in the last 12 months has made it a significant player across the region.

AXN Now boosted its regional reach considerably with a number of key strategic partnerships including distribution deals with nc+ in Poland and UPC in Poland and Hungary - turning AXN Now into one of the top SVoD services in the region. Meanwhile, the acquisition of the two Hungarian channels (Viasat3 and Viasat6) turned SPT into the fourth biggest multichannel operator in the country.

Lyle Stewart, SVP, SPT Networks, CEEMA, said: "This deal strengthens SPT Networks' position in the Central European market and we are focused on further growing our business over the coming year, building on the considerable success our channels and digital services have already had."

AXN CE has developed into a respected local producer. AXN's first Polish series, *The Crime*, aired in October 2014 to critical acclaim and ratings success. Based on a Scandinavian format with a top-notch Polish cast, it was quickly recommissioned for a second series and is currently in production with transmission planned for October 2015.

Trace TV

Launched in 2003, Trace today is an international network brand providing contemporary urban entertainment content. Its audience is estimated at 150 million people, including a large segment of multicultural millennials. Now owned by Modern Times Group, Trace reaches its fans through 38 satellite networks via 220 carriage deals. Recent developments include the creation of a new dedicated feed for one of the company's five channels, Trace Urban, in Southeast Asia.

The five channels referred to above are Trace Sports Stars, Trace Urban, Trace Tropical, Trace Africa and Trace Toca. Between them they cover a diverse range of genres, including hip-hop, R&B, afrobeat, afropop and tropical music. In addition, Trace provides an insight into the lives of sports stars through sports entertainment channel Trace Sports Stars.



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TM

Channel of the Year

The linear TV channel is alive and well. This award recognises the brand that demonstrated outstanding creativity and originality in the past year.

Discovery Channel UK & Ireland

In 2014 Discovery Channel launched a new promise to its audience in the UK, to “Make Your World Bigger”. Talent, from Idris Elba to Ed Stafford and Richard E. Grant, embraced the spirit of the promise, bringing innovative ideas to Discovery through UK production companies. This promise “stimulated reappraisal of Discovery,” says the channel team, “and propelled Discovery to extend its lead as the most popular, most recorded and youngest factual channel in the UK.”

In ratings terms, “over 100 shows surpassed 200,000 viewers – more than ever before,” says Discovery. “And Discovery celebrated its highest ever rating show with an episode of *Gold Rush* surpassing the half million (560,000) milestone. Three more episodes surpassed 500,000 making *Gold Rush* the channel’s highest-ever rating series. The launch of Make Your World Bigger helped Discovery achieve its best May ever (seven million adults).”

The Make Your World Bigger campaign also extended beyond ratings. Thousands of viewers shared videos online and Facebook fans multiplied ten-fold to 2.3 million, while documentaries sponsor, Citroën, branded 80 of its vans with the slogan and held a competition to win a trip to Alaska. The channel has extended its ratings lead over rivals and attracts the youngest audience for a factual channel.

Eurosport

Eurosport entered a new chapter with its 2014 takeover by Discovery Communications. Since then, the channel has signed over 50 sports properties, including the Olympic Games from 2018 to 2024. The channel, which dedicates over 5,000 hours to live sport every year, has increased its production to deliver a compelling and locally relevant viewing experience to fans.

The 2015 French Open and Tour de France are examples of the new programming strategy. In the case of the French Open, Eurosport and Eurosport 2 delivered coverage from the first to the last point each day, across 54 countries, exclusively in 13 key markets. In addition, fans were able to take advantage of online simulcast Eurosport Player. The 2015 Tour de France, meanwhile, demonstrated the company’s capacity to set new quality standards. For the first time, Eurosport customised the international feed with its own signal, allowing a choice of views and angles through access to all organiser cameras. At the end of each stage, Eurosport had its own super slow motion camera on the finish line to capture shots of the arrival. Fans could also enjoy



Idris Elba: No Limits

Susanna Dinnage, EVP and MD, Discovery Networks UK & Ireland says: “The launch of Discovery Channel’s Make Your World Bigger brand promise has transformed the way we interact with viewers, producers, advertisers and partners – and they with us. This promise extends beyond the TV screen into user-generated digital initiatives, activations and even to staff events. It has been hugely successful in creating an environment for all our audiences and partners to participate with us and get more out of life.”

footage from on-board cameras on bikes. In another first for this year’s Tour coverage, fans also tune into seven additional live feeds via the Eurosport Player platform.

Eurosport says its enhanced production has already generated audience rises in several markets. It reached 23.8m European viewers during the opening five days of the Tour, a 12% rise versus 2014. Live average audiences increased in Italy, Romania, Poland, France, Germany, Spain and Sweden.

CEO Peter Hutton says: “The last 12 months have transformed Eurosport, with record ratings following improved content, production and organisation under the new Discovery ownership. New premium rights like the Champions League, Wimbledon, Serie A and, of course, the Olympics demonstrate the long-term ambition to re-invent the channels. Partly thanks to significant investment in production and talent, the channel has achieved record-breaking ratings for many major events throughout the year and has increased Eurosport 2 ratings across Europe by around 20% in 2015.”

Gusto TV

Canadian food channel Gusto TV says it is “all about real people cooking real food. When other food channels are steering towards competition and contest programmes, Gusto TV is doing the opposite. We air and produce programmes that showcase Canada’s diverse cuisine as well as international series that feature interesting fares of the world.”

Although it is a new channel, Gusto’s audience ratings are strong. It has an audience reach of close to one million Canadians every month, and often ranks in the top 10 female-oriented specialty pay networks in Canada. Audience ratings data also consistently show that Gusto TV ranks in the top 35 thematic channels in Canada for retention among female viewers.

Gusto TV’s first original series, *One World Kitchen*, aired in 2015 and features five Canadian women chefs with different cultural

backgrounds: Thai, Indian, Argentinian, Italian and Japanese. The series was a big success, with viewers learning about different international influences on Canadian cuisine. The channel is working on more original series for 2015-2017.

While linear distribution is important, Gusto TV has been built from the ground up as a multi-platform experience, and all content is live streamed through TV Everywhere apps and is available on-demand (via SVoD). The company is also working diligently on building up Gustotv.com as a food news and recipe hub with an extensive inventory of exclusive online video content. According to Gusto’s management, “We receive constant positive feedback through our social media channels, website, emails and even customer phone calls. We interact with our viewers this way all the time and often use their feedback to guide our programming and strategic decisions.”

Mezzo Live HD



France-based Mezzo Live HD, which describes itself as the world’s leading channel for live classical music, opera, jazz, and dance, launched in Europe five years ago. Today it is available to 28 million subscribers across 50-plus territories.

The team at Mezzo Live HD says its strengths include the quality of musical reproduction and the constant addition of fresh content. With around 500 hours of original programming added each year, new partnerships in the current competition period include Metropolitan Opera, the London Symphony Orchestra, Opéra de Paris, Orchestre de Paris and Aix-en-Provence Festival.

The last year has seen particularly strong growth for Mezzo Live HD, says Christophe Winkel, managing director of Mezzo. “In April 2010, we imagined Mezzo Live HD as a superlative concert hall, convinced as we were that high definition could open the doors of the finest opera houses and concert halls to all. Mezzo Live HD started in Europe, then became available in Asia, with launches in no less than five new markets over the first half of 2015.”

Trace Urban HD

Trace Urban HD is one of the world’s leading urban music channels. Broadcasting in more than 130 countries, it airs the latest hip-hop and R&B music videos from top artists, urban music programming, the latest news from the urban music industry and exclusive interviews of major urban acts.

Launched in 2003, the channel now broadcasts in over 130 countries, with programmes available in French and English. With six localised feeds the channel ensures that its programmes are tailored towards its 15-34 year-old audience in the best way possible, giving viewers all-access to the stars they want to see and the music they want to listen and dance to.

In terms of recent developments, the channel has launched a new dedicated feed for Southeast Asia focusing on the most-requested and relevant programming and music.

Explaining why, James Ross, managing director, Asia Pacific, Trace says: “The appeal of Trace Urban is growing across the region, and recent feedback from audiences in Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia has been very encouraging. With the new feed we hope to fuel that growth, and address a consistent request from many operators for a specific SE Asia version.”

Trace CEO and co-founder Olivier Laouchez says: “Dominating TV screens across the world, Trace Urban has proven to be the number one destination for urban music. Continuing to expand our reach and produce excellent content, this year we developed our programme formats by introducing *The Year of* – a premium show dedicated to celebrity birthdays. A successful year past, we look forward to 2016 and further expansion of the world’s most unique urban music channel.”

TV Technology Award (content discovery)

Content search and discovery is becoming ever more important as the range of content available on platforms expands.

Freesat for Showcase

Showcase is the recommendation service that forms an integral part of UK free-to-air satellite operator Freesat's connected TV platform, Freetime. Showcase is a curated recommendation service, based on input from Freesat's in-house team, who research and identify the programmes its viewers are likely to be interested in, rather than relying on automated algorithms based on the viewer's history.

Originally launched in 2012, the service was revamped 18 months later to make it more cross-platform friendly, with a key driver being the development of the Freesat mobile app. Showcase 2.0 is designed to be much more flexible than its predecessor, allowing users to choose as many recommended programmes as they wished on any given day. The revamped service is more dynamic than the original, and viewers were enabled to discover shows and set recordings and reminders via the Freesat app. Programmes are given a unique remote-record ID that enables users to set up record functions away from home.



Rovi for Personalized Discovery Solution

Rovi launched its Personalized Discovery Solution last year in a bid to offer relevant search capabilities and a discovery offering that can be tailored to the tastes of individual viewers. The service is the result of the combination of Rovi and Veveo – a Massachusetts-based provider of personalised entertainment discovery solutions that Rovi bought for approximately US\$62 million (€55 million) in early 2014.

The Personalized Discovery Solution includes a contextual and predictive search and recommendations engine, as well as voice-enabled, natural-conversation interaction. The solution's predictive search draws on Rovi's international entertainment database and a dynamic 'Knowledge Graph' that maintains information on more than 100 million entertainment-related items drawn and verified from over 100,000 online sources. Rovi's database on its own includes editorial content and images, in over 15 languages on five million-plus TV programmes, movies and celebrities, according to the firm.

"The combination of metadata and the Knowledge Graph is Rovi's 'entertainment brain' that helps enable search and recommendations relevancy, accuracy and speed," Rovi said when it launched the solution. The conversation services included in the Rovi Personalized Discovery Solution are designed to drive voice-enabled search and recommendations that go beyond basic voice-command features.

They were built so that consumers can ask questions and have a back-and-forth dialogue in order to find the content that interests them, in a similar way to how they would interact with another person.

Rovi's platform provides contextual, predictive and personalised search results that anticipate a user's intent and interests relative to a specific time and place.

Siemens Convergence Creators for Siemens OTT Swipe: The Kids Edition

Offerings for specific audience segments are one of the key trends in the OTT market, with children one of the most promising target groups. Siemens Convergence Creators created a white-label SVoD multiscreen solution dedicated to children. The OTT Swipe Kids Edition, a version of the company's turnkey solution, offers a user experience for young kids.

Earlier this year, German broadcast channel Super RTL, launched 'kivadoo', a multiscreen kids' entertainment platform based on the technology. Parents can customise the profiles and adapt it to the capabilities, needs and desires of a child by using the following

Swipe Kids Edition-enabled features: a 'Watchlist' of content that can be created by parents, suitable for each child; and videos that can be downloaded in advance to any device and watched offline. For children who are not yet able to read, kivadoo offers special profiles without text and with greatly simplified navigation.

Siemens Product Manager, Uli Hessdörfer says: "Dedicated solutions like our Kids Edition have a strong market appeal as they provide suitable out-of-the-box features and functionality for special-interest target groups, allowing faster times to market for OTT multiscreen offerings."

XITE



Q&A: Marius Brok, XITE

Marius Brok, director of distribution partnerships at XITE, talks about the future of music television and bringing a millennial audience back to TV.

What are the main challenges in keeping millennials watching TV?

The main challenge is taking away the limitations that exist today to ease of content consumption and interactivity on TV.

To be frank, neither linear TV nor video-on-demand fully fit the needs of millennials. They are much more demanding. Television needs a product that combines the strength of linear television and VoD services, combining the following elements: interactivity, personalisation, curation, a lean-back experience, availability on all screens and a full content catalogue.

What, in outline, is XITE's solution to the problem?

To bring back millennials to the big screen, XITE developed Personalised Music TV.

XITE's Personalised Music TV is an interactive television channel that's included in the regular channel line-up or in the operator's app store.

The viewer can personalise his or her music video channel simply by skipping or liking videos. For deeper personalisation the viewer can watch curated and mood-based channels, create his or her own channel or search for music videos in XITE's full catalogue library.

Is the future of TV all about apps?

The future of TV is not all about apps; it is about the internet.

In fact, the concept of linear TV still has an enormous attraction for the masses, and that's because it's a perfect example of a modern social gathering. However, it's clear that millennials are much more demanding in the digital age, and they expect all the interactivity they can get on internet.

For broadcasters and operators, it is important to combine both the strengths of linear television – great curation and branding – with internet technologies that meet the needs of millennials.

To adapt, we, the TV business in general, should add more internet-like features to our products, adapted to TV's lean-back experience, to keep millennials and other consumers from cord-cutting.

What particular challenges are involved in personalising music channels and how can they be overcome?

Actually personalisation is not the challenge. It's a solution to a challenge. Three years ago XITE faced the question: "If you have all the music videos in the world, how are you going to serve consumers the right music video?" The answer is, obviously, personalisation!

XITE developed the entire 'Personalised Music Television' product from the ground up: a highly curated music video database, the proprietary personalisation algorithm, the user interface and the complete back-end of the application. The result is a music channel that automatically adapts to the consumer's interaction. First results show that viewing time increases dramatically, by up to over 300% per session. We are therefore proud that we can say that we reinvented music TV.

How important is the element of curation in developing personalised services and how much can be left to algorithms?

An algorithm is a great tool to help humans create the best personal music experience. But let me stress that although the algorithm is important, the element of human curation in developing personalised services is still key.

Our personalisation algorithm is great to process vast amounts of data and user interaction with our product, and generate in real-time an extraordinary personalised TV experience. However, our music experts are better at spotting new and upcoming artist, way before the algorithm recognises it as a potential hit. That's why XITE uses the best of both worlds in our Personalised Music Television product.

When will XITE launch the new service and on which platforms?

XITE is an operator-only product and is distributed within traditional pay TV packages. At the end of October we will launch XITE Personalised Music TV with KPN and Ziggo in the Netherlands and Unitymedia in Germany, reaching more than two million households. We have global ambitions and are currently in advanced talks with several major European and US operators for additional distribution.

TV Technology Award (content discovery)

UPC Romania for TV Recommendations App

People are enthusiastic about quality content, but they are also prisoners of their watching habits: they may have more than 100 channels in their TV subscription, but usually watch less than 10 channels.

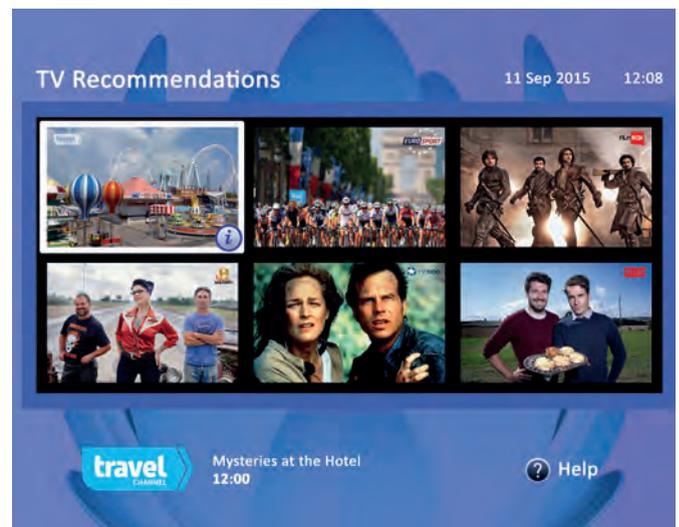
This insight, based on internal market research, led UPC to build the TV Recommendations content discovery platform. The aim was to surface new content and to help customer's move from their convenient watching zone to discover high quality channels that they don't usually watch.

The application itself is an mosaic-like interactive recommendations page, where viewers can simultaneously watch six channels from all genres. It integrates short and extended EPG information such as programme description, schedule time, channel logo, current date and hour. The app was launched on July 1, 2015 to all UPC clients with Mediaboxes and on channel 1 of their remote control.

Twelve days later it was clear to UPC that customers had embraced the concept. It registered 1.6m customer visits, 362,000 unique visitors and over 800,000 channels were accessed through the app.

Moreover, TV stations included in TV Recommendations registered significant growth in their audiences: Eurosport: a 55% increase; History: up 26% ; TLC: up 6%

"This is a success launch story that re-enforces once again that valuable customer insights can be transformed into innovative



products which are able to significantly influence the viewing habits of TV audiences," says Simona Ghebarau, senior video product manager, UPC Romania. "TV Recommendations continues to increase the value of our content portfolio by recommending high quality channels and programs to our customers giving our customers an improved customer experience."

XITE Networks International for Personalised Music Television

Music video network XITE has been distributing music videos on its linear, on-demand and interactive products in the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium, for over seven years. To bring an internet-focused millennial audience back to TV, the company has recently launched Personalised Music Television.

The service allows user to personalise their viewing experience by skipping and liking music videos via the operator's set-top box.

XITE developed the service after concluding that linear music TV was becoming outdated and the clunkiness of on-demand was not suited to the way music videos are consumed, leading to the migration of viewers to the web.

XITE's solution is designed to keep viewers watching music on TV.

Its newest product will launch in the near future with Unitymedia in Germany and KPN and Ziggo in the Netherlands.

The service provides access to over 50,000 music videos thanks to deals with the three major music labels – Universal Music, Warner Music Group, Sony Music Entertainment – and over 200

independent labels.

The live channel is compiled by XITE's music team with the support of its proprietary algorithm and personalised based on minimal user input via simply skipping and liking videos. In addition, XITE offers mood-based and thematic channels. Viewers can also create their own channel by selecting which music they want to hear, what kind of video they want to see and how they are feeling, providing XITE's personalisation algorithm with information to create a channel based on their preferences. Search and favourite-based channels are available, and users can save their preferences via a log-in procedure.

As soon as viewers interact with the channel, it automatically switches from broadcast to unicast.

"Watching music video clips [on TV] is not so popular any more but on YouTube it's crazy how much music is being watched, even though the UI is not that great. So there is definitely room for an improved product like this," director of distribution partnerships Marius Brok told DTVE.

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TV Technology Award (second-screen experience)

The user experience and the compelling use of second-screen devices is now seen as a crucial differentiator for pay TV providers.

EE for LTE Broadcast by EE

UK mobile operator EE ran a live LTE Broadcast trial at Wembley Stadium during the FA Cup Final in May, delivering multi-angle footage and replays to smartphones and tablets.

EE connected multiple devices to three BBC-supplied broadcast streams of live footage from the football match over its 4G mobile network in what it described as a demonstration of “the future of television on-the-go.”

Trialists were able to control multiple camera angles – the BBC’s main TV feed of the game and two direct feeds from different cameras in the ground – and click to watch replays of the action as it happened.

The LTE broadcast – also known as 4G broadcast – feed was accessible to a select group of people in the ground via a custom-built 4G Broadcast EE app, which also included interactive game stats provided by Opta.

BBC Research & Development worked with EE and other technology partners Qualcomm, Huawei, EVS and Intellicore on the trial. BBC R&D used its Stagebox technology and MPEG-DASH encoding to transfer the direct game feeds from its outside broadcast truck to the EE network in real time.

“Momentum is growing around 4G Broadcast as companies from mobile, from broadcast and from content industries recognise how it can finally be the way to more efficiently deliver a truly great TV experience to large numbers of mobile viewers. This wasn’t possible with 3G, but it is part of the 4G roadmap and we’re investing in this

innovation to give customers a great mobile video experience, wherever they are,” said EE’s head of video, Matt Stagg, speaking at the time.

EE now plans to build the LTE Broadcast capability into its network in 2016, and will work with device makers, content owners and broadcasters to enhance the service and to encourage adoption.



Netgem for Telco TV Multiscreen Solution

Netgem’s Telco TV Multiscreen Solution is behind a number of large-scale telco TV deployments including the UK’s EE TV.

Sylvain Thevenot, managing director of Netgem, told *DTVE* that telcos are looking for a “strong innovative multiscreen TV experience, access to the widest range of content and an innovation machine that is very cost effective”.

Netgem has supplied its telco TV platform to over 20 deployments worldwide serving five million active viewers.

Thevenot says that Telco TV “puts mobile at its heart”, provides a simple intuitive UI and can also be delivered as a service, including content. The solution provides linear, recorded and OTT content on multiple devices such as the main TV and Android and iOS phones and tablets.

“Content discovery is key – from the breadth of sources we get content. What we are doing is delivering the best multiscreen experience with simple access to the programme rather than the channel...on the TV but also on the devices that are key to the whole TV experience now,” says Thevenot.

He says that set-top boxes remain part of the solution but notes that operators are looking to reduce their investment and also to broaden their activities to a wider range of devices. The company says its cloud TV platform can work outside the home on any device. “Telco TV is cloud-based, which reduces the cost of equipment, allows you to aggregate a variety of content from different sources and provides a smart user experience across a number of different devices,” says Thevenot.



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TV Technology Award (second-screen experience)

Talpa for The Big Picture



The Big Picture, a gameshow by Dutch production company Talpa, combines picture-based questions and a play-along app that lets viewers participate from home. Contestants on the show, hoping to win a substantial sum of money, must put their visual knowledge to

the test with a series of image-based questions. Players must answer up to 15 questions, but have the option to be 'rescued' by a play-along app user if they don't know an answer.

The pool of players at home who have correctly answered a question can be selected to become part of the show. Of these, a single participant gets to take a 25% share of the studio player's prize money – and potentially the full million dollar prize fund.

The elements of live-broadcast play-along and a pre-recorded show are combined through Talpa's Connect Platform, with a maximum of two minutes needed to process app players' selections and generate a profile picture overlay of potential play-at-home winners.

The photos and names of play-along viewers are sent to a real-time motion graphics system that creates a live overlay in the set of the pre-recorded show. This overlay is a carousel of pictures that ends with the photo of the chosen, winning, app-using player along with their name. Talpa claims that the show marks a connected format first in successfully integrating content in the set of a pre-recorded show during its first season, which aired in the Netherlands.

Turner Latin America & Kaltura for TNT GO

Turner Latin America's new cloud-based TV Everywhere service, TNT GO, launched earlier this year and features live channels and VoD. Available on iOS and Android devices, the service went live in February to coincide with the Academy Awards ceremony from Los Angeles.

The app is powered by online video specialist Kaltura's OTT TV platform, is hosted in the cloud on IBM's SoftLayer cloud infrastructure, and is offered through Turner's operator partners in Latin America.

Turner deployed TNT GO in both Spanish and Portuguese, with the app designed to let users take content wherever they go and let them interact between screens by moving content from one device to another – such as from mobile to TV. The service is also designed to offer a personalised experience by allowing each viewer in the household to set up an individual profile on the app.

"Demand for this type of solution is growing very quickly. Consumers expect to be able to access live on-demand content on a variety of different devices at their convenience," says Turner's vice-president of digital development, Latin America, Josh Weinrobe. "Demand in-market will continue to grow at an accelerated pace over the next few years in Latin America. This solution puts us in a solid position to address that demand – thanks to IBM's cloud computing platform it's completely scalable and we are only beginning to leverage the broad feature-set the Kaltura solution includes."

Viaccess Orca for Voyage Apps

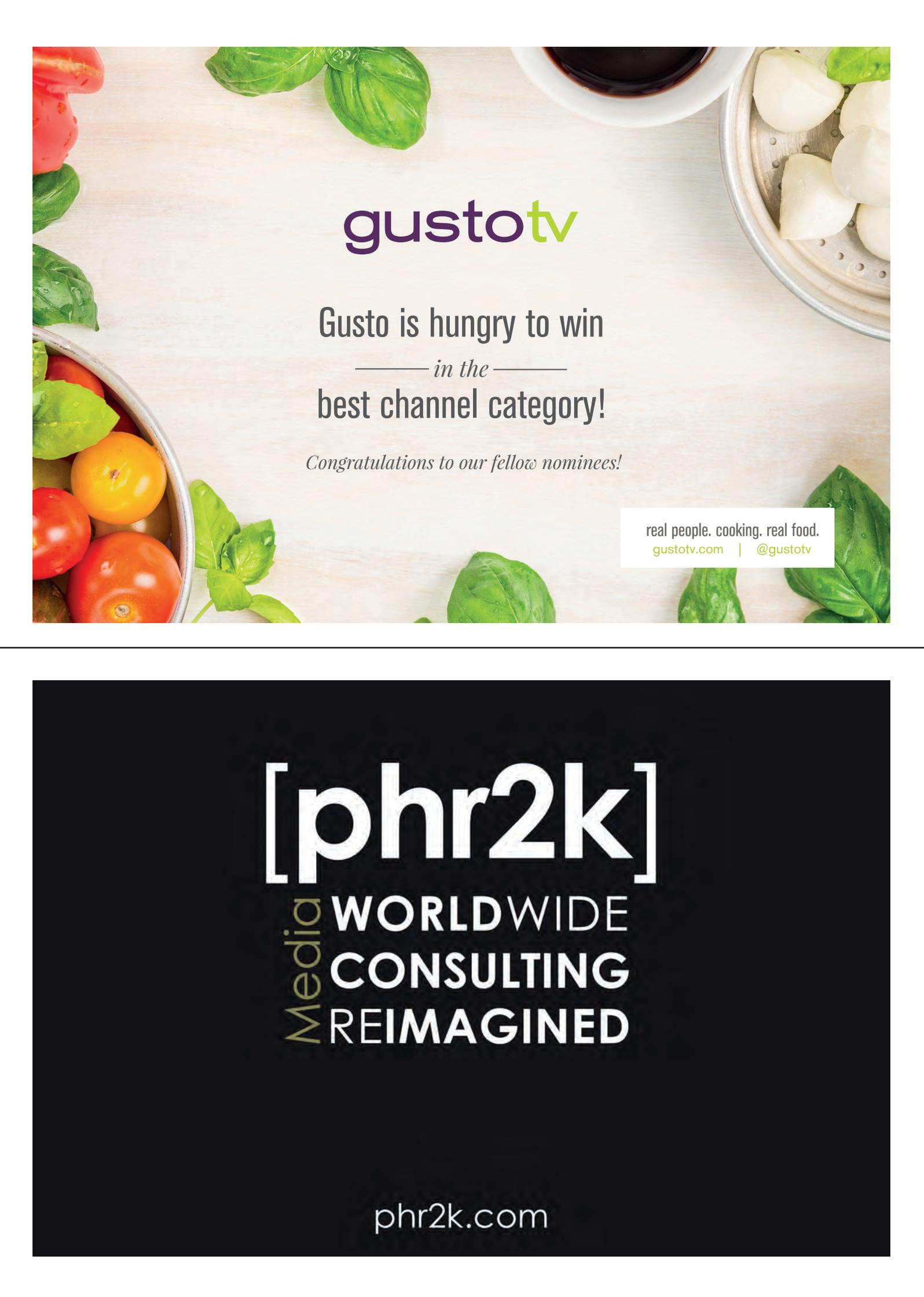
Viaccess-Orca's Voyage Apps for cross-screen engagement is designed to enable service providers to address the need for personalisation and interactivity on all screens. It combines partner Zenterio's set-top box middleware, HTML5 user interfaces, and targeted advertising with Viaccess-Orca's content discovery and personalisation tools and has been deployed by operators including Telekom Romania and Orange Spain.

The technology is designed to offer a personalised TV experience on any screen, based on the viewing preferences of users.

The apps make recommendations based on data collected on previous viewing patterns, as well as on ratings of popular shows. Other recommendations are based on factors such as whether the user prefers to watch TV series or films, children's shows or music.

The technology also provides synchronisation between devices, so that viewers can switch from one device to another while viewing the same content. Viewers can log in via a mobile device that extends their log-in to the TV.

The apps also enable targeted advertising. Users receive ads related to the content consumed and can click to open them on the second screen. The system supports viewing of certain titles for free if a user agrees that this content will include ads, if this is a model the service provider wants to adopt, opening up new revenue opportunities.



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TV Technology Award (service-enabling technology)

This award looks under the hood to recognise the most exciting or effective technology innovation underpinning a video service of the last year.

Conviva for Conviva Intelligent Control Platform

The Conviva Intelligent Control Platform is designed to help media and entertainment companies analyse, benchmark and optimise video engagement.

In a multi-screen world, the platform aims to help customers meet audience expectations for video, allowing them to increase engagement, build brand affinity and create more profitable online video businesses.

Conviva's VP of marketing, Simon Jones, explains that the Intelligent Control Platform comprises three pieces. The first is Conviva Insights, its real-time monitoring system that is used primarily by "tier one companies and MSOs to track the experience received by viewers from origin-to-destination."

The second part is Conviva Atlas, the firm's reporting system, while the third is Conviva Precision, its optimisation engine.

The solution uses a real-time map of the online video delivery ecosystem and is designed to optimise picture fidelity and eliminate

playback delays and interruptions. By tracking some 50 billion streams annually, Conviva also offers reports and analyses of the OTT market to allow clients to make enable data-driven decisions.

"All of our stuff is specifically about OTT video, and has been running for nine years, so we have a lot of data," says Jones, adding that as Conviva has many tier one customers, the data it provides is "very statistically valid". The firm's customer base includes companies like Disney, Sky, Microsoft, Viacom, HBO, CNBC and Al Jazeera.

"We have 25 PhDs on staff," says Jones – including "a guy who was at CERN looking for the Higgs Boson." He claims that the background of Conviva's workforce hints at the complexity that the company cuts through with its offering. "That's something that I think a lot of people miss with big data – it's actually really difficult."

The company was co-founded in 2006 by two computer scientists from the University of California, Berkeley – chief executive officer Hui Zhang and chief technology officer Ion Stoica.

Harmonic for XVM

Electra XVM is the first product based on VOS, the platform that signaled Harmonic's shift towards software-based compression and workflow, initially unveiled at NAB in 2014.

At the centre of VOS is Harmonic's PURE compression engine, which can output MPEG-2, MPEG-4/AVC and HEVC over constant and variable bitrate and adaptive bit-rate streams.

Operating virtually in IT data centres, Electra XVM can scale up or down based on required functions, formats, codecs and encoding schemes to accommodate peaks in demand based on capacity and functional requirements across all video services, according to the company. Electra XVM includes integrated video graphics and branding and draws on the functionality of Harmonic's Spectrum ChannelPort integrated channel playout system to preserve video quality by removing the need to inject baseband components into the IP workflow.

The playout capabilities of the platform include channel origination, linear ad insertion, and SCTE automation control.

Electra XVM uses the capabilities of VOS,

which operates on common Intel hardware platforms, to deliver video content on a common software platform and simplify workflows, giving video operators greater flexibility, according to the company.

The platform can deliver advanced video pre-processing, high quality graphics and branding and IP-based statistical multiplexing, while virtualisation enables operators to roll out and expand services quickly without costly infrastructure investment. Recent customers include Kartina TV, a German-based service provider serving Russian-speakers around the world, for OTT multiscreen delivery.

"XVM gives you the same graphics and branding used by top end operators but it's virtualised," Tom Lattie, Harmonic's VP of market management and development, video products, told *DTVE*. "Broadcast infrastructure cost is fixed but the downside is that it's expensive to build, and for a lot of content it doesn't make sense." With XVM it is possible to "micro-target people with niche content" and gives broadcasters and content owners many more opportunities to exploit their assets, he says.



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TV Technology Award (service-enabling technology)

Pace for Pace's iQ3 Personal Video Recorder (PVR) for Foxtel, Australia

The Pace-developed iQ3 Personal Video Recorder (PVR) for Australian pay TV operator Foxtel launched earlier this year and is designed to bring together TV and online video.

The next-generation iQ3 aims to offer a seamless viewing experience across live TV, catch-up TV, over-the-top (OTT) video, and on-demand programming from a single device. The iQ3 is available in two versions so that it is accessible to both Foxtel's cable and satellite subscribers and combines set-top box maker Pace's hardware and Elements software platform. This software platform is modular and lets Foxtel integrate new services into its offering. It also incorporates an HTML5 user interface framework that can be adjusted and adapted.

The iQ3 PVR comes with a 1TB hard drive that can record up to 172 hours of High Definition content. It can also record up to three programs at the same time while the viewer watches a fourth.



The device contains eight built-in tuners, and offers a 'start over' viewing option for when a show has started and a 'look back' function for content broadcast in the past 24 hours.

It can also stream content to other devices in the connected home via an IP connection, while the remote control uses Bluetooth technology instead of a traditional infrared connection.

The launch of the device marks the latest phase of a long-running relationship between Pace and Foxtel that dates back to 1996.

S3 Group for StormTest Warning Center

S3 Group's StormTest Warning Center is a test automation system, designed to give video service operators a comprehensive understanding of the Quality of Experience of their live video services.

Unveiled last year, the cloud-based platform provides remote service monitoring, validation and real-time analytics of video services across connected devices on live networks. StormTest Warning Center provides network operations teams with continuous, automated monitoring of service availability and performance. This includes coverage of linear TV services, on-demand services, interactive menus, set-top box applications and EPG validity.

"What's special about StormTest Warning Centre is that it's completely focused on continuously testing the end-user experience in the live network. In particular, it's conscious that in a modern, agile, 'dev-ops'-driven organisation structure, where we have software changing constantly and constantly new features being released onto the network, it's no longer good enough to just statically monitor a fixed set of test points; we need to be able to update the test infrastructure itself," says S3 Group's chief strategy officer, John Maguire. The service is already used by customers including UK satellite TV platform Freesat and security specialist Irdeto. The latter did a pre-launch trial of the platform, monitoring customer service levels around the FIFA World Cup.

"In the majority of our deployments of Warning Center we use Amazon Web Services as the host site for the service and customers log straight into that. I think for us, where this scales in the future is the number and complexity and variety of services that operators are going to be delivering to end-consumers is growing," says Maguire.

Screenz for Real Time Entertainment (RTE) platform

Screenz is a digital entertainment company that makes digital products and formats for the TV industry, with its Real Time Entertainment (RTE) platform its key offering.

The RTE allows a real-time two-way conversation between broadcasters and viewers, and can handle up to 2.8 million interactions per second and 100 million per minute, according to Screenz. The modular platform can be customised in line with different shows' content, is deployed using cloud-based servers and can be synchronised with live programming. The RTE offering also includes end-user smartphone and tablet apps, which can be customised.

Screenz says it has worked with more than 30 broadcasters and production companies worldwide across a range of programming genres, including reality, news, cooking and game shows.

The firm has produced digital experiences internationally for shows such as *Master Chef*, *101 Ways to Leave a Game Show*, *Million Pound Drop*, *Hell's Kitchen*, and *The Taste*.

Screenz's ethos is based around the belief that, in order for TV to be interactive, formats need to be created as a collaboration between technologists and creatives. As such, the company is split between technology professionals and entertainment professionals, such as format creators and producers.

The firm was founded in 2012, originally as part of The Box Group, an international content and advertising company.

Screenz is headquartered in Tel Aviv, Israel, and has offices in London, Munich, New York, Los Angeles and São Paulo.



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Multiscreen TV Award

More and more people want to view content on tablets and smartphones, and pay TV operators around the world are stepping up to the challenge.

KPN B.V. for KPN iTV

In 2010, KPN was the first Dutch service provider to offer multiscreen TV applications to extend its TV services to mobile devices. Since then, the telco has grown its digital TV market share from 23-29%, with 1.6 million customers. Now it is taking its multiscreen video platform – powered by Accenture Video Solutions (AVS) – to the next stage.

KPN's existing multiscreen service was already capable of delivering 100-plus OTT live channels and on-demand content to users inside of the customer premises. Recent extensions to the service have significantly improved the freedom and the functionalities for its customers by introducing a cloud-based PVR system and the capability to watch linear and nPVR content outside of the customer's home.

"iTV Online is a highly appreciated multiscreen app among our customers for both in and out of home usage," explains Kjeld Beijer, proposition manager, KPN. "Having not only access to live TV wherever they are, but also to their recordings helps our customers to be in control of their TV-moments. Families can watch live together on the sofa or they watch their own favourite show individually on different devices whenever they want."



A forthcoming OTT service, also powered by AVS, adds new features like personal recommendation, personal folders and Chromecast support. "This will create an offering that is unprecedented in the Dutch market," says Beijer. "A full OTT service that can be offered to anyone with a mobile or fixed internet connection. This bold move demonstrates the power of multiscreen innovation at KPN."

Liberty Global for Horizon Go

Horizon Go, the multiscreen version of Liberty Global's advanced TV platform, offers access to live TV, catch-up and video-on-demand content across much of the operator's European footprint – most recently launching in Slovakia.

Customers access the service via an iOS or Android app, or via a web browser on computers or laptops. In the 10 countries where Horizon Go is available, the product offers access to up to 110 popular live TV channels. The majority of these channels are also accessible out of the home via WiFi or 3G/4G.



Liberty Global says Horizon Go is the market-leading platform for out-of-home TV viewing in markets including the Netherlands, where viewers have access on the go to over 80 channels. In the Netherlands, Switzerland and Poland the app also provides access to MyPrime, Liberty Global's subscription video-on-demand service with thousands of movies and TV series episodes. In Austria, meanwhile, local affiliate UPC Austria reported 2.8 million streams on the service in the six months after it launched.

The platform enables users to schedule recordings remotely and push videos playing within the app to their TV screens. In the Netherlands, local Liberty Global affiliate Ziggo recently launched the ability to access its Replay catch-up TV service via the app.

Liberty Global offers a uniform user experience via the app in all the countries in which it is available, although the content offering will differ significantly between markets. The app supports multiple local broadcaster languages and is designed to be adaptable to new markets wherever the company decides to launch. Liberty Global worked on the app with partners including EPAM for user interface design and development, and Píksel for platform integration.

Nemo Telecom Limited for Nemo TV

Latvia-based OTT TV service Nemo TV has amassed over 700,000 registered users in Russia and the CIS since launch in 2014 and credits this achievement – and the potential for growth in the face of the region's traditional media ecosystems – to its innovative user experience.

Available on connected devices and platforms including smart TVs, smartphones, tablets and the Nemo STB, the SVoD service provides customers with linear channels (on live and catch-up or nDVR) and VoD offers within one application. Users can watch their favourite shows across five devices within one account. It is also possible to watch various kinds of content on two different devices simultaneously.

The built-in recommendation system groups content into sections like Videoteka (VoD – films), Amediateka (VoD – premium series like *Game of Thrones*) and Planet (educational programming). A personal assistant function permits users to set show alerts and the payment

process is declared “simple, easy and friendly”. A soon-to-be-launched personal recommendations system will compile VoD selections based on users' preferences.

“Nemo TV is a dramatically new format of family-oriented television, aiming to fundamentally change the way modern audiences in Russia and CIS perceive television,” said Dmitry Mineev, chief content officer and head of business development, Nemo TV. “We resist the half-asleep addiction to clicking and browsing over dozens of humdrum TV channels.”

He continued: “Unlike TV viewers in Russia who unfortunately can only watch national scheduled broadcasting, Nemo TV users get absolute freedom to choose among 200 channels (including international broadcasters) and 5,000 titles of VoD – all within one application.”

Sky Deutschland for Sky Online

Sky Deutschland's digital service, Sky Online, lets viewers access the pay TV operator's programming from a wide range of web-connected devices.

Targeted at customers who want to access Sky's programming in a flexible way, Sky Online viewers can cancel the service on a month-by-month basis and use it to access movies, series and the full range of Sky's sports offering.

The service launched at the end of last year and builds on Sky's existing Sky Go and Snap digital offerings, allowing people without a classic Sky subscription to experience Sky's content without needing a set-top box or a long-term subscription.

Similar to Sky UK's Now TV offering, Sky Online viewers can access the service via the internet, iOS and Android tablets and smartphones, Xbox One games consoles, Roku-powered Sky Online TV Boxes, and smart TVs from Samsung.

Sky Deutschland offers two monthly packages through the service – The Sky Starter Monatsticket, and Sky Film Monatsticket – as well as a pay per-day sports option, Sky Supersport Tagesticket.

The Sky Starter Monatsticket is priced at €9.99 per month and offers first-run series premieres, full-series box sets, documentaries, kids' programming, along with the full Snap programming catalogue.

The Film Monatsticket package offers first-run blockbuster movies as well as exclusive programming from Sky Atlantic, the home of HBO, and costs €19.99 per month.

The Sky Supersport Tagesticket gives 24-hour access to Sky Deutschland's Sky Sport and Sky Bundesliga channels and launched at a price of €19.99 per-day.

Talpa for The Voice Global App

Production company Talpa created The Voice Global App to accompany its hit singing competition franchise, which has now been localised for 60 markets and airs in 180 countries.

The Voice app offers free streams of the music that features in the show and also lets users vote directly through the app.

Talpa developed the new app to respond to audience feedback from recent seasons of *The Voice* in a number of the countries where the talent series is active.

In an effort to keep music at the heart of the offering, Talpa provides news, information about the talent and coaches, pictures, videos and all the show's music through the app. As a result, it claims that the app fits the TV format better than ever before.

Fans can stream all the music directly from the application, share content with their friends and support their favourite singers during the live shows. TV performances are uploaded right away and news updates posted throughout the week.

During the broadcast, users can list their favourite performers and receive personalised content based on their selections and preferences.

The Voice Global App launched in time for the fifth series of *The Voice of Holland* last autumn and resulted in the highest app download numbers for *The Voice* to date.

The Voice sees singers compete through a series of blind auditions and sing-offs. The four judges, who are experienced artists, sit with their backs toward the stage so they can hear each audition but not see what is happening.

The Voice aims to judge each contestant based solely on their voice, avoiding bias from the way they look, their personality or stage presence.

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Cirkus

Subscription video-on-demand service Cirkus was designed as a hedge for operators worried about the advance of Netflix and its OTT brethren, allowing pay TV incumbents to launch a strong, branded SVoD alternative to the headline-grabbing streaming services.

The service, which offers a mix of British content for an international audience, was created just over 18 months ago.

“What we see everywhere is that platforms, particularly the big telcos and cable operators, are looking for SVoD content,” Former Talk Talk, Tiscali and BBC executive, and Cirkus co-founder, Hugh Williams says. “They have discovered they are overweight in linear channels and underweight in VoD, and what customers want is content they can view on demand.”

Fellow co-founder Mark Bradford, a former Flextech executive, adds that major pay operators are in many cases looking to trim their linear channel offering and supplementing that slimmer line-up with on-demand. He says: “There is a lot of talk about skinny bundles and operators getting rid of tier two channels because they are no longer cutting the mustard and operators can’t ignore the threat of customers trading down and need to put more value into packages. That means

M7 Group

Luxembourg-based pay TV provider M7 Group is continuing to follow an ambitious growth path, both in terms of its market reach and service offering across multiple territories in Europe.

While extending its range of services beyond traditional linear TV to a fully hybrid multi-play offering, M7 Group has also rapidly expanded its reach from the Benelux into various new European growth markets and now serves more than three million homes in the Benelux, central and eastern Europe and German speaking markets with satellite and IP-based services including VoD, OTT and multiscreen TV.

As part of its new hybrid strategy, M7 recently acquired Online.nl, providing multiplay solutions including IPTV, VoD and OTT services to Dutch consumers, while in Germany IPTV platform meinFernsehen was launched following the acquisition of cable TV platform KabelKiosk last year.

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more than adding another four or five linear channels, it is adding SVoD from various suppliers.”

Cirkus joined forces with ITV Global Entertainment and secured multi-year output deals with UK distributors, showing content from the likes of All3Media, BBC Worldwide, Endemol Shine, Content Media and DRG.

Cirkus has secured carriage with Nordic pay TV platforms, Com Hem, Boxer, Get, TeliaSonera and Vodafone Iceland.

The service is now looking to expand beyond its base in the Nordic markets and to look to genres beyond drama, including documentary programming.

The company, still relatively small in global terms, is an example of a firm successfully identifying a global opportunity that could be realised through tapping into the skill and resources of the UK TV industry.



In 2013 M7 Group acquired Netherlands-based Stream Group, providing it with enhanced interactive video, OTT and multiscreen services through its Solocoo platform. The rollout of IP based platforms in the Netherlands and Germany will be followed in other markets where it already has a DTH subscriber base. Initially targeting the Benelux market via Canal Digitaal in the Netherlands, TV Vlaanderen in Flanders and TeleSAT in Wallonia, in 2010 M7 Group entered the Austrian market with HD Austria and followed up with the acquisition of Skylink, now a market leading pay TV operator for the Czech and Slovak market. Last year the group launched AustriaSat Hungary and acquired cable TV platform KabelKiosk from Eutelsat.

M7 Group has also launched M7 Platform Services, providing broadcasters with distribution services, providing distribution to third party cable and IPTV operators in Europe

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Videocon d2h

Videocon d2h is the fastest growing pay TV operator in one of the world's fastest growing markets: India. The company has been the market leader for four consecutive years based on gross and net subscriber additions, and now has a subscriber base of 13 million.

The company launched a successful IPO on NASDAQ in April, becoming the most valued Indian company to be listed on the US exchange with a market cap of US\$1.15 billion (€1.02 billion), and US investors, led by media entrepreneurs Harry Sloan and Jeff Sagansky, invested US\$273 million in the business.

Operational highlights this year included the launch of India's first 4K Ultra HD Channel in January. The company has invested in MPEG-4 and DVB S2 and has ramped up the number of channels, including HD services, that it offers.

Videocon d2h's growth has been impressive, to say the least. The service launched in 2009 and a year later had one million subscribers.

The company is confident it is extremely well-positioned to make the most of India's transition to digital TV services. The company has grown its share from about 9% of the DTH market four years ago to 20% as of March this year.

According to Rohit Jain, Videocon d2h's deputy CEO, in a market where operators cannot offer content on an exclusive basis, the company's growth has been based on its ability to execute – on building an efficient distribution network and providing superior

customer service. While existing distribution networks made use of local independent franchise operations, Videocon d2h built its own wholly-owned network, giving it more control. The company's growth is underpinned by solid achievements in customer service, with about 97% of its subscribers having their set-top boxes installed on the same day. With its parent company's legacy in consumer electronics, the operator has maintained control of its set-top supply chain.

Jain told *DTVE* that Videocon d2h had also succeeded by offering a much simpler packaging structure than rivals, based on three tiers – a basic local channel offering, an additional sports tier and a sports plus English-language channel tier.

"We kept it simple – maybe it helped that we did not come from the media business. In terms of packages in India, it was very confusing and we studied the various offerings and simplified it all," he says.

While adoption of services such as DVR, multiscreen and video-on-demand is still in its infancy in India, Jain says that Videocon d2h has also innovated in its linear offering, providing pay-per-view programming.

Looking to the future, "for the next three to five years the focus will be on organic growth," says Jain. However, the company will continue to innovate and seed the market with advanced non-linear services. With six operators in the market, it is also well-positioned to play some sort of active role in the likely consolidation of the market.

Yip TV

US-based YipTV earlier this year launched a new OTT TV service aggregating channels from around the world to distribute to multilingual consumers in the US.

The YipTV service – an acronym for Your Individualised Personalised TV, according to the company – provides access to a range of 50 international services on a rolling contract for US\$14.99 (€13.36) a month. The service is available online, on smart TVs, on Android and iOS devices and on Google Chromecast devices.

YipTV describes itself as "part of an internet-enabled revolution in the way TV programmes are delivered". Its target market is people that have never subscribed to cable or satellite TV services and are interested in viewing content primarily on a mobile device.

The company says it is focused on the 40 million US residents who were not born there or are still attached to their home countries – and bring them the content their friends and families can watch back home.

There is a strong emphasis on the Hispanic audience – the fastest growing US demographic – supplemented by a growing range of

Asian content. Channels on the platform include beIN Sports, Hola!TV, 52MX, LAS Latin American Sports, NTN24, LateleNovela Network, and MiMusica.

YipTV also offers free access to 17 TV channels that can be shared with the family on up to five devices.





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Best Content Distributor

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Content Media



London and LA-based indie Content Media Corporation sells scripted and unscripted programming and works across digital distribution. Telemovie *Dead Rising: Watchtower* is now in 117 territories a year after its launch at MIPCOM 2014, cementing the firm's digital reputation.

"Content Media has built a solid reputation within the distribution business as the outlet of choice for 'game-to-screen' properties. Our strength and impressive growth in this area has resulted in the company now being responsible for the increasing number of high-profile brands in this genre, including *Dead Rising: Watchtower*," says the company.

Based on the popular Capcom videogame franchise *Dead Rising*, *Dead Rising: Watchtower* features a cast starring Jesse Metcalfe, Meghan Ory, Virginia Madsen, Dennis Haysbert and Rob Riggle. Content Media secured the distribution rights for TV, all home video, download-to-own, subscription video-on-demand, plus transactional video-on-demand ahead of launching the title at MIPCOM 2014 with a marketing package that included printed graphics, advertising campaigns, a glossy brochure, press and PR, bespoke presentations, property outline documents, data packs and trailers. The group's sales team also worked out a detailed windowing release strategy across the media platforms the company represented. Once the licensing agreements were agreed the group's content marketing team closely monitored the progress of *Dead Rising: Watchtower* to make sure brand guidelines were adhered to.

The title is now available in more than 117 territories in multiple languages. In addition to the television and home entertainment deals, it was made available to rent or own on all major digital platforms on selected dates worldwide.

Endemol Shine International

The merged Endemol and Shine Group sales team has one of the largest catalogues in global television, totaling 38,000 hours.

In a year of consolidation for the Endemol Shine Group, ESI's full-service approach has kept format and finished sales on track.

"Endemol Shine International (ESI) is part of Endemol Shine Group, the new joint venture bringing together Endemol, Shine and CORE Media, to create a global content creator, producer and distributor with a diverse portfolio of over 600 revenue-generating titles," the company says.

Titles in the Endemol Shine catalogue include *Broadchurch*, *Peaky Blinders*, *The Fall*, *Humans*, *The Frankenstein Chronicles*, *Code of a Killer*, *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell*, *Grantchester*, *Kingdom*, *Home and Away*, *MasterChef*, *One Born Every Minute*, *Mr Bean* and many others. The company has one of the largest English language programming libraries, outside of the US Studios.

Endemol Shine places a lot of emphasis on effective marketing and a back-catalogue strategy designed to ensure a programme is constantly marketed through the various cycles of its distribution life. The company says this is critical to producers that "can earn significant revenues through second and third cycle sales of their titles".

The company also has proven expertise in multiple forms of rights exploitation including across television, video, format, licensing and increasingly on-demand TV, mobile and new media.



Global Agency

Izzet Pinto's fast-growing firm is the best-known Turkish sales house. Focusing on entertainment and Turkish drama, it has carved out a significant niche regions, and is developing its own formats.

"Global Agency was founded in the second half of 2006 with only one project and a team of two people. It now has 120 projects and a team of 25. Our company slogan is 'content that creates buzz', and we live up to it through distribution of our hit content," the company says.

Working from the tagline 'Content that Creates Buzz', its catalogue includes formats and series from around the world, such as *Magnificent*

Century, *1001 Nights*, *Keep Your Light Shining*, *Perfect Bride* and *Shopping Monsters*. With an international team, and bases in Turkey, the UK and the US, the company emphasises its ability to find and sell cutting-edge formats that can be adapted in territories around the world, and on its high-profile marketing strategy, with attendance at over 12 international markets a year. In September 2012, Global Agency entered the business of finished content distribution, trading under the banner of World Wide Entertainment, after acquiring the brand rights to the Australian factual entertainment distributor.

ITV Studios Global Entertainment

ITV Studios Global Entertainment distributes a catalogue of over 40,000 hours of television content and works with over 3000 partners across linear TV and platforms including Netflix, Amazon, iTunes and Google.

The distribution unit of the leading UK commercial broadcaster takes productions from ITV Studios teams, with a small but experienced international sales team working to build relationships and ensuring that content is acquired for primetime, while the company's marketing team produces cutting-edge campaigns to build global brands. ITV Studios Global Entertainment has already won a multitude of awards, including Promax Marketing Awards, recently winning Best Entertainment Promo Gold for *I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out of Here!*

At MIPTV, *Texas Rising* was successfully premiered, while *Aquarius* was sold to clients including Sky Atlantic UK, Sky Italia, Sky Deutschland, NBC Universal France and Seven. The company has also had success with foreign language dramas including *Jordskott*,



on SVT in Sweden and ITV Encore in the UK. *Thunderbirds Are Go* has also met with success in the UK, Australia and New Zealand, with a further 40 territories are expected to launch in the coming year. The marketing and sales campaign for the latter included the first-ever MIP Junior premiere screening last October.

TCB Media Rights

TCB Media Rights is the boutique un-scripted content distributor launched in 2012 by former Cineflix Rights chief Paul Heaney, who has used his network of contacts in the UK, Australia and the US to build a disruptive factual-focused vendor with a fast-expanding portfolio of revenue-driving programming.

"Proof that our vision of relationship-driven, 360-degree distribution has a place in today's complex and competitive market can be seen in the fact that TCB regularly competes with the distribution superstores for content and clients – it's not just about the huge advance," says the company.

Heaney launched the company to fill what he saw as a gap in

the market, where he believed that small and medium-sized indies and creative start-ups, particularly those operating in the factual entertainment genre, were not well-served by new-generation super distributors with global clout that worked well with big drama and format players.

TCB Media Rights, which began as a one-man operation, now employs nine people providing support, acting as a commercial partner, forging links with like-minded producers and broadcasters, steering development and helping deliver new revenue streams. The company recently appointed Kate Llewelyn-Jones from Heaney's old outfit Cineflix as managing director.

International Production Company of the Year

This award recognises a programme maker that has helped shape the international TV industry in the past year.

Entertainment One

Publicly-listed Entertainment One (eOne) delivered over 250 hours of TV last year and has a library of more than 4,500 hours.

The group sees its ability to garner local market insight from an independent distribution network as a key asset. The network provides global scale to enable the company to maximise its return on investment in programming with a global appeal. As a distributor, eOne has a catalogue of some 40,000 film and TV titles and delivers over 200 theatrical releases annually. Key properties include kids character *Peppa Pig*, for which it has over 700 international licensing agreements worldwide. In 2013 eOne struck a multi-year output deal with AMC Networks and Sundance TV to handle international distribution for scripted series.

eOne also has a solid record for renewed series, with the likes of *Hell on Wheels* and *Rookie Blue* reaching their respective fifth seasons.

This year, eOne strengthened its investment in content by announcing a partnership with The Mark Gordon company for US scripted content and a partnership with Creative England to attract and nurture new and original UK content creators and to develop, finance and produce drama content for a global audience.

Recent production successes for the group include *You Me Her*, ordered by DirecTV, *Havana Quartet*, currently in development with Starz, *Growing Up Hip Hop*, a documentary series for WEtv, and mini-series *The Book of Negroes*, which as aired on Canada's CBC and BET in the US.



The Book of Negroes

MarVista Entertainment



The LA-based independent telemovie house, MarVista hit the headlines this summer with its Lifetime film *A Deadly Adoption*, which stars A-list comic actors Will Ferrell and Kristen Wiig.

Originally founded in 2003 as a global television distributor, MarVista expanded into original TV production under the leadership of CEO Fernando Szew and now produces, co-produces or co-finances some 50 movies per year.

The 2014-2015 period has been prolific for the production company, with *A Deadly Adoption* joined by titles such as *An En Vogue Christmas*, *Bad Blood* and *Pants on Fire*. Also in development are two telemovies for Hallmark Channel and for Disney XD, the second property from a multi-picture development deal.

A Deadly Adoption – a dramatic thriller about a couple who care for a pregnant woman during the final months of her pregnancy with the hope of adopting her unborn child – attracted 2.1 million viewers during its premiere on June 20 and grossed more than six million total viewers over six telecasts, according to Nielsen stats.

MarVista also announced several broadcast partners across the globe for the movie, including Shaw Media in Canada; Channel 5 in the UK; Lifetime UK, Poland and Africa; TF1 in France; SBS Discovery TV in Sweden; NBC Universal Australia; and NBC Universal (Diva) in Asia. For the 2014 holiday season, Lifetime debuted *An En Vogue Christmas*, which starred the members of 90s R&B girl group En Vogue. Targeting the tween demographic, *Pants on Fire* debuted on Disney XD in the US in fall 2014, while *Bad Blood* premiered on Lifetime in March.

New Media Vision

It has been a bumper period for Todd Lituchy's New Media Vision, which broke into US network TV by selling Spanish procedural format *The Mysteries of Laura* to NBC.

New Media Vision was formed in 2009 to help international media companies with format scouting, product distribution, and expansion of their international channel portfolios. In 2014, the company launched its production arm, which has bolstered the company's position in the global TV landscape.

The Mysteries of Laura, produced in partnership with Warner Bros, was the only new NBC series to get a season recommission earlier this year. The comedy-drama series is a police procedural about a smart New York detective who juggles crime, a soon-to-be ex and twin boys.

New Media Vision also produces reality adventure series *Zoltan The Wolf Man* for Discovery Europe/Animal Planet.

UK-based New Media Vision works with producers around the globe and represents formats from numerous countries including Spain, Belgium, Finland, Lithuania, Norway, Singapore, South Korea, Poland, and France.

The company also now has scripted projects in development with Sony Pictures Television, Electus and ABC Studios.

New Media Vision founder Todd Lituchy has been in TV for the past 20 years, working across three continents in high-level exec positions at companies including Viasat Broadcasting and Star TV.

He founded New Media Vision as a media-consulting firm and worked with clients such as Discovery Networks International, BBC Worldwide and Walt Disney Studios. As the company grew, New Media Vision expanded the team to cover content distribution, format development and sales, factual development and production.

The company now claims to represent more than 5,000 hours of content as well as a growing format catalogue with programmes from Spain, Belgium, UK, Poland, Bulgaria, Singapore, South Korea, Norway, Denmark, Finland, and Lithuania.



The Mysteries of Laura

New Pictures



Indian Summers

Skins and *Shameless* producer Charlie Pattinson and funding partner All3Media launched New Pictures in September 2013 as a premium British drama label.

During its launch period it produced two notable dramas: 1930s-set period drama *Indian Summers*; and *The Missing*, which explores the emotional fallout of a child's abduction both on the family and the community.

Indian Summers was Channel 4's best-performing drama in more than two decades, with the opening episode of the 10-hour returning series drawing a consolidated audience of over 5 million viewers. A second season is now in the works for the UK broadcaster and WGBH in the US.

A second season of *The Missing*, the company's first production, is also due to go into production later this year. The eight-hour thriller for BBC1 and Starz was four-time BAFTA and twice Golden Globe nominated after it first aired at the end of last year.

Both shows have now sold throughout the world via distribution partner All3Media International.

Charlie Pattinson was previously joint MD of Company Pictures. The company's previous credits include award-winning shows such as *Skins*, *Wild At Heart*, *The Village* and *Elizabeth I* – a mini-series starring Helen Mirren and Jeremy Irons.

At New Pictures, he Pattinson is joined by key executives and acclaimed drama producers Elaine Pyke and Willow Grylls. Pyke was previously controller of Sky Atlantic and before that was head of drama at Sky. Grylls has worked with Pattinson since he launched Company Pictures in 1998.

Best Series Launch

This award recognises the new TV series that launched with the most buzz and which created the greatest ratings, marketing and social media impact.

BBC and BBC Worldwide for *Wolf Hall*



The BBC and BBC Worldwide faced challenges in launching *Wolf Hall* to viewers in the UK and to international buyers respectively.

In the UK, as the series was aired during the crowded New Year period, the consumer marketing challenge was to establish it as a piece of must-see television. The campaign focused on Thomas Cromwell's unlikely rise to power, with a multifaceted campaign that resulted in the series becoming the most successful launch for BBC Two in a

decade, with an audience of six million for episode one.

The challenge for BBC Worldwide in marketing the show, which told the story of Thomas Cromwell's rise and fall from power based on Hilary Mantel's novels, was to establish a distinct identity and a sense of event television, while making it feel relevant for international audiences. The show was presented to trade buyers at BBC Worldwide's Showcase annual TV sales market in Liverpool. While the campaign featured trade promos, an email campaign and marketing and sales materials, BBC Worldwide placed key highlights within the conference building and live event. Walls within the building held imposing posters taking a key line from the script to describe each character. This was intended to make the show feel relevant, modern and cinematic, while giving the trade audience a grasp of the plot. This was followed up by an invite-only evening event for over 650 people in Liverpool Cathedral. This was a first for the cathedral, and BBC Worldwide, including drinks in crypts and secret spaces, a live performance of the score and a grand feast on long banquet tables with stars and the show's creators in attendance. A number of sales were made as a direct result of the Tuesday evening event.

Discovery Networks CEEMEA for *Dynamo: Magician Impossible* (season 4)

To promote season 4 of *Dynamo: Magician Impossible*, Discovery brought the British performer to five key markets – Poland, Hungary, Romania, South Africa and Italy – and into real life encounters with his audience in the CEEMEA region. In each market Dynamo visited, local Discovery teams engaged fans and business partners in promotional activities before, during and after his visit, to build awareness for its upcoming premiere.

The magician appeared on local media, performed at Polish service provider-focused trade fair PIKE, met viewers and advertising clients, took part in live Q&A sessions on Facebook, performed at Discovery's South African upfront presentation and engaged in many other press-friendly activities. Following the campaign, the show went on to score big ratings successes across its markets in the CEEMEA region, according to Discovery. The marketing campaign increased brand awareness of the show dramatically across the region and helped build relationships with advertisers and affiliate broadcasters.

"*Magician Impossible* is a series that is very close to my heart. It was many years in the making and I am thankful to Discovery for being

able to tell my story globally. I especially enjoyed working with the marketing and PR teams who took the show to new heights in terms of popularity and awareness, through their stellar promotional efforts, and most importantly helped me to connect with all my fans," says Dynamo.



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Best Series Launch

HBO Europe for *Wataha*

HBO Europe created a concentrated multi-platform campaign to promote its original drama, *Wataha*, which was shot in the Polish Bieszczady Mountains region.

Living in Poland and missing *Wataha* last year would have been tough: an promo campaign starting six weeks before series launch, a limited edition *Wataha*-branded beer and a pullout supplement in a leading newspaper were all part of an extensive operation.

“The *Wataha* campaign was the most successful in HBO Poland’s history with 1.6 million viewers, 175 print cuttings, 501 internet articles and more than 1,000 social media stories. To summarise, we achieved our marketing goal: to protect essential communication borders, you have to cross boundaries,” says the company.

Wataha, which relates the events that follow a bomb attack on a Polish border post, premiered on HBO Poland on October 22, 2014. The main promo campaign was preceded by an on-air communication programme starting six months before the premiere. The goal was to generate a buzz around the series to drive up the viewership, to strengthen HBO’s image as a producer of cutting edge entertainment, and to promote HBO services HBO On Demand and HBO Go. Alongside the regular 360-degree campaign, the team took advantage of the reputation in Poland of the Bieszczady Mountains as a magical, iconic region, with a special website – the ‘Magical Bieszczady Mountains’ – highlighting its natural beauty, unique geography, little-



known forest paths and unusual stories about the local people. The limited edition beer was produced in a Bieszczady brewery. Other parts of the campaign saw the creation of a dedicated issue of the weekly *Duzy Format* a pull-out section of the leading Polish newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza*, a *Wataha*-themed event at the Gdynia Film Festival and a full-scale press conference. According to the company, the *Wataha* campaign was the most successful in HBO Poland’s history, and the series attracted 1.6 million viewers.

Spike for *Lip Sync Battle*

The media campaign around US cable channel Spike’s hit *Lip Sync Battle* helped the Viacom network record what it describes as its best-ever unscripted launch.

A format hit on both sides of the Atlantic, *Lip Sync Battle* was launched internationally at MIPTV in the same month as its broadcast debut, and several deals have been struck since. In the US, the show took 198 million cross-platform streams and has 711,000 Facebook fans, while YouTube views currently total 121 million.

“In the three months since *Lip Sync Battle* hit the international radar, the series is a ratings and multiplatform superstar for Spike in both the US and UK, and is the most-watched original series in the network’s history,” according to the company.

The show, which features celebrities going head-to-head lip syncing the song of their choice, launched on Spike in the US and the UK in April. Contestants have included Anne Hathaway, Emily Blunt, Mike Tyson, Dwayne ‘The Rock’ Johnson, Justin Bieber and Queen Latifa.

In the same month it launched on air, Viacom presented the show

for international syndication and local production at MIPTV 2015.

Claiming a global ratings success, Viacom has struck four local production deals to date and confirmed a raft of signed option deals for the series.



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