

The Future of Media Distribution

Optimising the media supply chain with fast, secure and scalable solutions

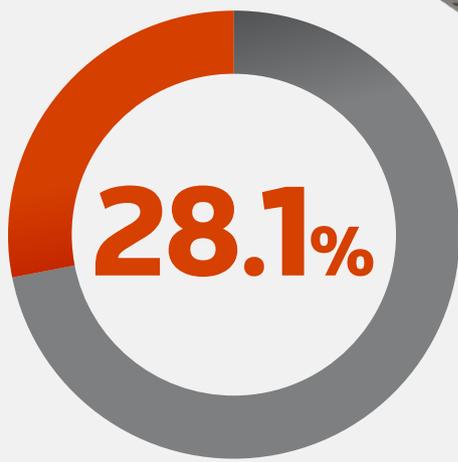


Introduction

Demands on sports and media content producers to deliver content to broadcasters, OTT channels and partners fast, accurately and securely are at an all-time high. This is driving a need for efficiency in the media supply chain.

In the past, when programmes and films were produced on film and tape, the steps in the media supply chain were separate and self-contained. But today, with so much content available in so many channels, being viewed on many different devices, a smooth and interconnected media distribution workflow is vital if media producers are to deliver programmes fast and efficiently to the channels and devices consumers are watching on.

The technology landscape today is changing and innovations by vendors in the media supply chain are providing solutions to these challenges, with new ways to deliver video content to broadcasters, OTT channels and partners.



The OTT market is expected to grow to **\$1390.8 billion by 2032**, at a CAGR of 21.8%.

Source: <https://www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2024/11/26/2987551/0/en/Over-the-top-OTT-Market-to-USD-1390-8-Billion-by-2032-Owing-to-the-Rising-Popularity-of-Streaming-Services-and-Consumer-Demand-for-Content-Flexibility-Research-by-SNS-Insider.html>





So, what's the problem?

Delivering large video files, or any volume of content, is often at the mercy of reduced data security, high latency, restrictive size limits and transfer failures.

This highlights a lingering problem — the reliance on inefficient technology to share video content, especially when they offer little control over how the content is viewed by the receiver, or what happens to that content once it has been delivered.

Sports and media businesses invest considerable time, effort and money to create high quality video content. Therefore, it makes sense to adopt a strategy that takes advantage of the latest tools to secure this content, protect it from piracy, store it for possible use again later, and ensure it is brought to market as fast as possible.

This white paper explores the benefits for content producers and rights owners in choosing a secure media asset management platform for managing, packaging and distribution of assets in the media supply chain. The main benefits are:

- Storing high-resolution video content in one easily searchable archive
- Creating automated content-push workflows for preparation, packaging and distribution processes to broadcasters and OTT channels
- Enabling permission-based content-pull access to people inside and outside of the organisation to find and use content, with statistics provided on how users engage with it (including how long they watched and when)
- Delivering convenient access to previews for buyers and reviewers in licencing sales, while protecting sensitive media from content leaks caused by shared access, accidental delivery to the wrong person, and system hacks

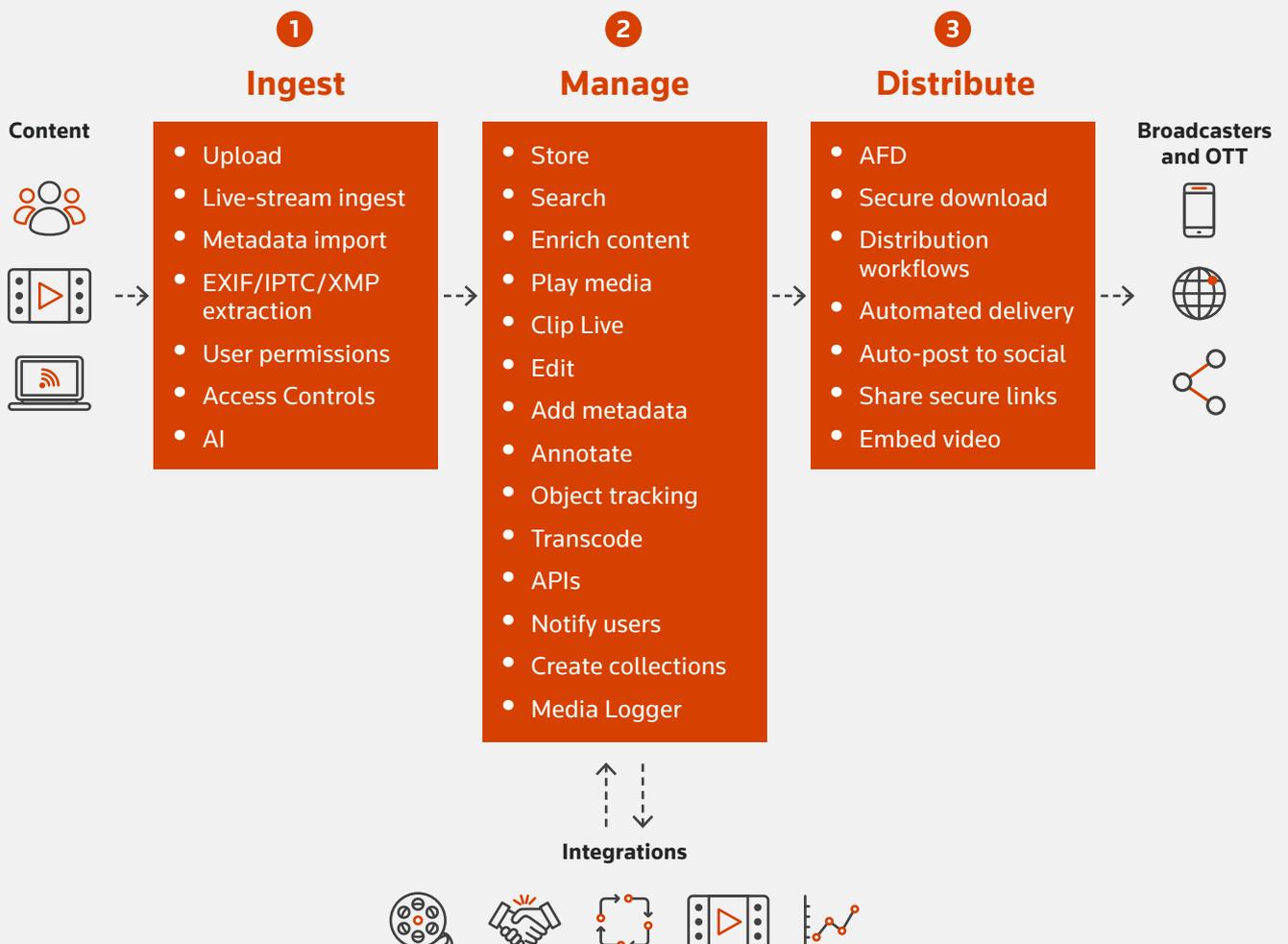
“ We use Imagen for video production work, uploading rushes and screeners, while restricting that content to only the people who need to see it. The platform's configurable permission structures allow us to set up a range of features and controls for both internal and external users allowing them to download, create collections, clip and share, leave comments and update online.

Banijay

The media management and delivery workflow

Creating or acquiring, managing and distributing content creates complex workflows. Multiple stakeholders, business units and technology processes can be synchronised seamlessly and securely and orchestrated with a media asset management platform. There are three stages:

- 1 The content producer makes (or the distributor licenses) the content and ingests it into the media asset management platform either through live stream feeds, manual or automated upload, with user permissions and access controls applied.
- 2 Content is managed centrally in the system. Metadata and speech-to-text transcription is added and integrations with 3rd party systems enrich the content with editing, subtitling or key event markers.
- 3 Content is auto-transcoded and transformed into multiple correct formats for broadcast and OTT endpoints





Optimising the media supply chain

How media asset management solves content management, distribution and delivery challenges

As illustrated in the media management and delivery workflow, a media asset management platform is a vital part of the media supply chain, ensuring a joined up process when delivering content. There are five benefits to consider when choosing one...

1. MEDIA DELIVERY

As a one-stop shop to display, store, share and deliver content, using an enterprise-level media asset management system removes the need for outdated and insecure third-party services for content delivery and creates a seamless media delivery workflow.

Granular Access Control Lists, limiting who can access what content, are used to set individual or group user access to a media asset management platform. In addition, segmentation by organisation and job role, as well as powerful administrator tools allow managers to specify what each individual user or group can do with any media asset or groups of assets, meaning that valuable assets are safeguarded at every step.

Users are looking for fast and easy clipping, packaging and distribution of content to broadcasters, OTT channels or even social media channels. Workflows enabling video files to be packaged up automatically at the click of a button to meet the exact requirements of the receiving OTT or other broadcast platforms, save time and reduce human error.

Content is packaged in the correct resolution, framerate, bitrate, subtitles, metadata, aspect ratio and so on saving time that may be spent manually creating files that adhere to detailed specifications. It all happens instantly and automatically in the platform.

“ A media asset management platform like Imagen allows us to be more collaborative by setting up work groups for the production of specific shows.

Banijay

2. CLOUD-BASED STORAGE

With the ever expanding roles and responsibilities of content owners in the digital age, the streamlining of workflows and processes becomes ever more essential. A centralised cloud storage library paired with a robust media asset manager can serve as the hub of operations, encompassing the full lifecycle of media workflow from ingest and edit to delivery and final archive.

Access

Cloud provides dispersed teams with unprecedented access to their media. The cloud takes data out of silos that stifle availability and efficiency. Content owners and editors can immediately search their entire library on demand from anywhere in the world, made possible by metadata tagging within the media asset management platform. The ability of the cloud to connect a dispersed, global workforce is essential in a post-pandemic economy. On-set producers can ingest dailies, editors can assemble rushes, and stakeholders can review them all within the same media asset management system. The cloud also provides a launchpad for content leaving owners' hands. From the cloud it can easily be shared with third parties for review and encoded and sent to OTTs for delivery.

Security

The cloud provides an offsite repository for media storage that remains protected should your primary site data be unavailable. In fact, data security best practices suggest keeping three copies of your data on at least two different formats with one offsite, also known as the 3-2-1 rule. The cloud fulfils two of these requirements, being a separate format and offsite. Additionally, many cloud object storage providers have options for immutability which makes certain files unable to be altered or deleted, protecting them from malicious or accidental deletion.

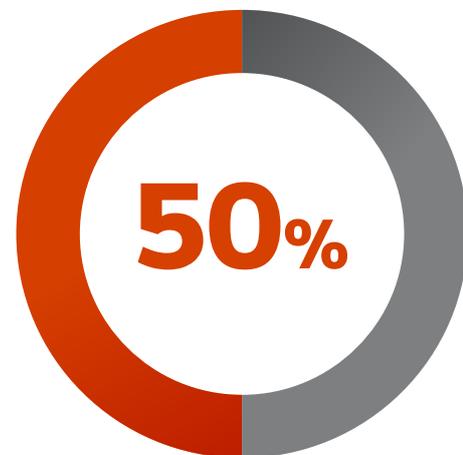
Scale

The power of the cloud lies in its scalability. Traditional on-premise storage solutions require hardware infrastructure to be purchased up-front, with an eye toward managing the next year's avalanche of content. These devices require regular maintenance, accrue power and cooling expenses, and necessitate the purchase of additional devices when they inevitably fill up. With more content being generated every year, keeping up with the rate of production is an uphill

battle. Cloud storage grows elastically with your data needs, so there's no need to purchase hardware in anticipation of what your needs might be. With the cloud, you can free your organisation from the regular upgrade and maintenance cycle that hinders growth and take the task of running a data centre out of your hands—simply store what you need and the provider will handle the rest.

Price

Cloud storage's reputation as expensive is mainly attributed to its unpredictability. According to a **survey by Wasabi Technologies**, 48% of an organisation's public cloud storage bill is attributed to fees associated with simple API operations: PUTs, GETs, READs, and WRITES. Fees like these cannot be accounted for in advance—you won't know in a given month how many times you'll need to retrieve a certain file—which is why 50% of organisations exceeded their budgeted spend on cloud storage in 2022. If you plan on accessing your content regularly as with a media asset manager, it is imperative to choose a cloud storage solution that does not charge usage fees (ingress, egress, API calls, etc.).



Half of organisations surveyed by Wasabi exceeded their budgeted spend on cloud storage in 2022.



3. BEST-IN-CLASS SECURITY AND ENCRYPTION

A dedicated media asset management platform solves security issues by enabling content owners to set media access timescales, so access to content can automatically be revoked after a designated time has passed.

Although there is no way to completely protect video assets from potential leaks or piracy, if there is a need to distribute them to others outside a company, there's much that can be done to strengthen security. Using a cloud-based media asset management platform, companies can expect powerful options for identity management and authentication of users. All media available on the platform is stored in data centres around the globe that are best-in-class for security.

Files are delivered with a built-in expiry time by digitally signing and dynamically updating links to media every

six hours. This also prevents unscrupulous users from uncovering and publishing the URL of the media object from the source code.

Making content time-sensitive and available only to certain groups of people or individuals for a set time (e.g. in scenarios like during a licensing agreement, or when sending out previews ahead of a release date) also improves security.

Businesses can block traffic from specific global locations using GEO-IP filters, allowing them to control which media is exposed to which territories. Should they be needed, a good media asset management platform should also allow for the easy addition of watermarks before content is delivered, and all downloads can be enabled via the encrypted HTTPS and HSTS connections for added protection.

PROVIDING ENHANCED ACCESS AND SECURITY

“ BBC Studios International Productions were looking to acquire an online content management application to share video content with our colleagues and clients. Imagen supplied us with a system that could cope with a very high volume of multimedia content plus a large number of users, all with different access and security requirements. It allowed us to customise content to fit in with our bespoke company branding. Its interface is user-friendly and the site is easy to maintain.

Jayne Stanger, BBC Studios

4. FAST AND EASY ACCESS TO VIDEO CONTENT

If a media company's business model relies on selling its content to others, making interaction with the content as positive as possible increases engagement. Convenience and the ability to find and stream broadcast-quality content fast are the watchwords. Functionality enabling media decision makers to save content to view later, save searches, and receive email alerts when new content based on saved searches becomes available, contributes to better experiences.

Distributors the world over have been making investments of various sizes into new digital distribution channels. While some have built their own bespoke distribution and screening platforms, many within the industry have turned to existing services as they look for online sales expertise and secure sharing of content.

Imagen ran research alongside **Television Business International (TBI)** to explore how media distribution execs were transitioning their organisations away from events and face-to-face meetings to enable programme licencing and sales during the pandemic.

The research looked at how digital solutions such as media asset management platforms, enabled the

industry to continue program sales and ultimately keep audiences entertained with packed content schedules.

Interviews with 153 respondents in more than 50 countries across the globe revealed that online distribution platforms are now an increasingly common way for media distribution execs to buy and sell programming, with all the sharing and security benefits outlined over the next pages.

Before the pandemic, we found that more than one in ten media execs had never used an online distribution platform, while 25% rarely used such services. Covid lockdowns not only accelerated adoption, but normalised digital distribution and the systems needed to manage it effectively.

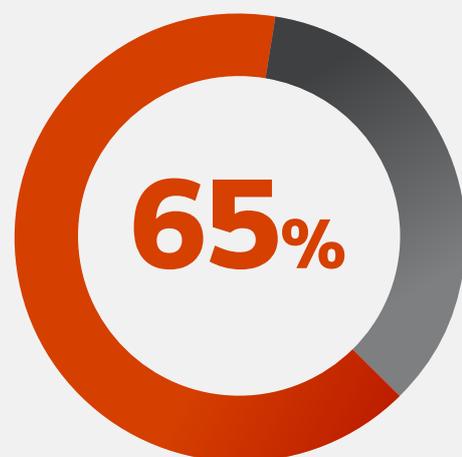
It is perhaps not surprising that our research found overwhelmingly that these platforms have become entrenched for large swathes of the distribution business, but there is certainly more growth expected.

Our survey revealed that 57% of respondents expect to be using online distribution platforms more in the future and only 5% expect to be using them less.

5. VIEW STATISTICS

If supplying content by encryption keys and other methods, sports and media companies have no visibility over the number of times their files have been watched. Or if they have been watched.

A media asset management platform provides statistics that show repeated views, drop-off points, or reveal no interaction at all can provide key insights into which pieces of content are generating the most interest, and which audiences are engaging the most with the content shared. This powerful information can help sports and media companies make smart and informed decisions, sending the right content to the people most likely to respond and engage positively with it.



The increase in respondents who now use digital distribution platforms frequently or almost exclusively, compared to 2020



In conclusion...

From Australia, Canada and China to the UK, Korea and the US, the way that sports content and media programming are distributed and delivered has changed for good. Small fortunes are often sunk into production costs and using a dedicated media asset management system ensures that the resulting media can be previewed, and that high-value content can be protected, easily accessed, delivered, re-used and monetised.

The future of premium video distribution and delivery is media asset management. The advantages include considerable time savings, especially when it comes to sharing and finding content. And a better way to engage sponsors, journalists, reviewers or buyers, as well as broadcasters and OTT channels, providing a great user experience, satisfying clients, and replacing insecure third-party content storage and delivery systems. All of which can add value to a sports or media company's bottom line and provide a true ROI.

About Reuters Imagen

Imagen is the leading cloud-based media asset management platform. Used by media companies, sports brands and enterprise organisations who own and manage large amounts of video content, it enables them to drive more value from their content libraries.

All these organisations face the same challenge: how to store, manage and distribute media content fast and securely across borders and boundaries.

Imagen provides a convenient and cost-effective way to manage, market and securely deliver large volumes of high-resolution video content.

Media executives can manage content easily, find footage fast, and get it out to stakeholders around the world with ease, even at huge file sizes. With lightning quick, secure and highly controlled cloud-based access to video content, Imagen protects the past and preserves media for the future.

Companies like the English Premier League, Chelsea Football Club, WTA Media, IMG Replay, MLB, MLS, NHL and many other large media & sports organisations use Imagen to get the most out of their video.

Get in touch with us

To discuss your video management, delivery and distribution requirements, please contact us and one of the team will be in touch.

✉ **UK:** Imagen@thomsonreuters.com

US: ImagenUS@thomsonreuters.com

👉 www.imagen.io

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