

M+E

JOURNAL

It's Showtime!

Innovation explodes across every workflow as technology emerges from the pandemic.



Where are you in this accelerated evolution?

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

In the office, behind the camera, and on the screen, diversity is crucial

SECURITY

Remote productions create new security concerns, with assets under siege

SMART CONTENT

Artificial intelligence and machine learning are being applied in new, exciting ways

NEW WORKFLOWS

The cloud is delivering on its promise, powering the future of productions

21.01

TAKING THE DIGITAL SUPPLY CHAIN BACK IN-HOUSE

The cloud is offering workflows at lower costs, and removing the need to outsource

ABSTRACT: Ateliere worked with a high-profile U.S. studio to take its supply chain in-house. Previous to this, the studio's supply chain was outsourced to two service providers, one managing content, the other distribution. The desire to move operations to the cloud under Amazon Web Services also allowed the studio to consolidate its supply chain, gain greater control and ownership while maintaining cost-effectiveness.

By **Bill Admans, COO, Operations, Ateliere**

While outsourcing still has a significant role in the media and entertainment industry, many broadcasters and studios are starting to look at less savings and are thinking about taking the outsourced elements of their workflows back in-house.

The general move towards cloud-based solutions is at the heart of this. Not only is the cloud realizing the savings that previously could be made from outsourcing, it offers workflows at lower costs. The cloud is enabling companies to scale with none of the weighty infrastructure costs that drove the decision to outsource in the first place.

Savings that often ran into the 20-30 percent territory two decades ago are now closer to 5 percent, and outsourcing deals usually come with potentially punitive lock-in periods that can further erode the economics that drove the decision in the first place.

The reduced economics of outsourcing leads many large media organizations to conclude they are better off managing their own workflow. As an illustration of this, Ateliere recently worked with a high-profile U.S. studio on a project to take its supply chain in-house.

INCREASINGLY, RATHER THAN OUTSOURCING as in previous decades, media companies find that automating the digital supply chain is one of the top places where they can make genuine savings.

Previous to this move, the studio's digital supply chain was outsourced to two major companies, one providing content, the other distribution. However, the desire to move operations to the cloud under Amazon Web Services (AWS) also allowed the studio to bring its supply chain under its own roof. This move would see the studio gain greater control, flexibility, and full ownership of the digital supply chain while achieving cost-effectiveness thanks to the solution being placed in the cloud.

The key to the process working was specifying Ateliere Connect to fulfill the workflow's media asset management (MAM) functions from ingest through processing, packaging and delivery. As well as leveraging cloud processing which can, for example, transcode a 2.5-hour high-definition feature film in under a minute, Ateliere Connect's use of the Interoperable Master Format (IMF) is a game-changer for cloud deployments.

IMF works by creating a single master version of a title, whether that be a movie, a TV episode, or a commercial. To make multiple deliverables from the title, all you need are the files representing the differences. The common elements and differences are virtually compiled as new masters using Composition Play Lists (CPLs) that reference the available essence components as required. This componentized approach means it is a quick and simple task to distribute differing copies of a title to an OTT service on the one hand and an airline on the other.

This ability to store multiple versions of titles as a master and accompanying CPL files, rather than separate full copies, can save more than 70 percent on storage space. In the case of the studio the savings represent several Petabytes per year, which translates to millions of dollars over the project lifecycle. This saving is an important consideration when moving from on-premises storage — outsourced or not — where storage costs are often overlooked, to the cloud, where they are a significant component of overall operating expenses.

It's worth pointing out that IMF has other advantages too. For one, it doesn't constrain a broadcaster or studio to specific tools or workflows in the digital supply chain. Because IMF is widely supported by so

many vendors, it means content suppliers can choose different tools for various aspects of a job depending on what best suits them at the time. Instead of, for example, working in a single NLE and having to return to the same timeline at all future points down the path, uploading the content into the cloud under the IMF specification means that a wide variety of different workflow tools and other post processes can access the content master as well.

Where this studio is concerned, more than five million assets have been mapped, cataloged, and ported over to their new supply chain, with the process currently ongoing. Ateliere is used at ingest to alleviate many of the pain points surrounding metadata and for AI-powered content discovery, conformance and indexing. Elsewhere, the platform's extensibility allows for API integration to provide integration with other areas of the studio's overall workflow, providing a high degree of efficiency through automation for tasks such as scheduling operations, licensing content, managing billing, rights management, and more.

Increasingly, rather than outsourcing as in previous decades, media companies find that automating the digital supply chain is one of the top places where they can make genuine savings. And with artificial intelligence and machine learning assistance becoming steadily more powerful, the efficiencies that can be realized via the automation of the digital supply chain and business processes will only increase.

Given the project's sheer scope, several milestones are yet to be reached. However, significant savings are already being realized. Sign-off for the project is scheduled for September. ■



Bill Admans is COO of operations for Ateliere, leading the operations, product development and marketing teams. He develops and executes the growth and innovation strategy that is making Ateliere the premier cloud platform for creative and supply chain workflows. bill.admans@ateliere.com @Ateliere



ENABLE GREAT WORK EVERYWHERE MEDIA HAPPENS.

ATELIERE CREATIVE TECHNOLOGIES EMPOWERS CONTENT OWNERS AND MEDIA COMPANIES OF ALL SIZES TO REACH CONSUMERS ON A GLOBAL SCALE.

You need to store and process digital media assets at scale. You want more visibility and control over your libraries and workflows. You'd love to cut costs and increase revenue. Ateliere does all that, and more, with our cloud-native digital media supply chain platform.

Ownzones is now **Ateliere**.

Find out more at www.ateliere.com or email sales@ateliere.com for a meeting or demo.

ATELIERE