

M+E

JOURNAL

Risks & Rewards



The opportunities before media and entertainment are unprecedented. So too are the threats.

OUR CHANGING INDUSTRY

The roadmap to media and entertainment's future is paved with innovation

LOCALIZATION

Content localization is a worldwide, need-it-now business. Here's how to keep pace

WORKFLOWS AND THE CLOUD

Cloud workflows are proving crucial for media productions today

SMART CONTENT

It's a data-driven content reality, and all the tools are there to realize success

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MAINTAINING A PERMANENT STATE OF AGILITY FOR M&E SUCCESS

Meeting localization demands amid today's onslaught of content means embracing new tools ... and collaboration



ABSTRACT: It's no longer simply about meeting the demand for content. Evolving trends surrounding data security, a changing workforce, advancing technology, complex delivery requirements and a hyper-competitive market are raising the stakes in media and entertainment. Content owners and solutions providers must maintain a permanent state of agility for continued growth.

By Simon Constable, SVP, Global Language Services, Visual Data Media Services

If the past 18 months have taught us anything, it's that embracing change is the only way forward.

We've all learned to adapt in every aspect of our lives: our social interactions, our work and how we consume our entertainment. Viewers have certainly become more agile when it comes to accessing content, moving between traditional broadcast TV to mobile devices and creating a surge in multi-platform content consumption. To keep pace, content owners and solutions

providers in the media and entertainment industries have responded with the same agility.

It's no longer just about meeting the demand for content. Evolving trends surrounding data security, a changing workforce with heightened expectations, new technologies requiring new skills, complex delivery requirements and a hyper-competitive market with compressing timelines are all raising the stakes for media and entertainment professionals.

OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, more employees and companies have realized the benefits of hybrid working. The pandemic has simply amplified and accelerated this trend, and the change has been massive for both content owners and solutions providers.

Agility is no longer a reactionary response. It's now a permanent state of being. Let's look more closely at each of the trends reshaping media and entertainment.

INCREASED COMPETITIVE PRESSURES

If we go back to the beginning of the pandemic, when content owners turned their full attention to streaming platforms, we've since seen a big uptick in localization volumes as well as a push to get content out to the market faster.

Look at what's been happening in the theatrical world over the last 12 months, where titles have been released to streaming platforms and cinemas simultaneously. The deadline to get dubbing, subtitling and media processing supplied for content has really changed and that acceleration is not going away. Access to better, more efficient solutions is now more important than ever.

NEW WORKFORCE, DEEPER TALENT POOL

Over the past few years, more employees and companies have realized the benefits of hybrid working. The pandemic has simply amplified and accelerated this trend, and the change has been massive for both content owners and solutions providers. This new workforce, working remotely around the world, has created both benefits and challenges for many organizations.

Some workers have embraced the change, with many relocating to other cities, states and even countries. This shift can be seen as an advantage as we've been able to pursue talent in regions that we wouldn't have been able to access pre-COVID-19. We don't see that trend changing in the future. It's simply a new model, one that gives us the ability to find the best people regardless

of where they live.

Having teams in different global time zones helps us scale up our localization services and gives us more opportunity to work with the best talent, regardless of location. This is another trend we don't see changing and, frankly, now that we've transitioned to a more efficient way of doing things, why would we even want to revert?

Of course, there is still a significant core of professionals who will continue to work on site. Remote solutions for media supply chain tasks are improving but they don't fit all the necessary workflow requirements. We are still very much working in a hybrid environment and will be for a while.

THE TOOLS

The increasing number of remote workers and production teams also increases the need for embracing more cloud-based technologies. The available tools must continually improve to provide the flexibility for employees to work collaboratively, feel like part of a team and still securely access the data and content they need to do their jobs.

This issue impacts the entire industry: content owners, streaming platforms, media servicing partners and software developers. It is not uncommon for there to be upwards of 20 different tools in use at one time on any given project. These tools all have value, often fulfilling a single part of the supply chain. But as these tools multiply there is an even bigger need to have systems talk to each other to improve the process for all the stakeholders in the supply chain. As an industry, we need to work collaboratively on better ways to integrate these tools and processes.

Balancing the needs of a security-focused industry with the open environment



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required for remote work is also a challenge. Using unsecured home networks and a host of other “daily communications” technologies can create a whole new set of vulnerabilities.

For the industry to make its next quantum leap, we must get over the interchange issues between all these tools. More importantly, from a security perspective, there’s a great deal of protected data in these systems that must be safe-guarded, creating an industry-wide challenge requiring continual attention and innovation.

None of these issues we’ve addressed are occurring in a vacuum. Rather, many overlap with others to present perfect storms of continually emerging content and supply chain dynamics.

For example, with our industry’s ever-condensing timelines to get content to market, more complex delivery requirements and a greater focus on timeliness, we are constantly adjusting our own roadmap and workflows to help our customers meet their goals.

In the end, everything still needs to be delivered on time, and somehow all the companies involved always manage to make that happen. But let’s not fool ourselves, deadlines will become even tighter and the workflows will continue to become more complex.

Why? Because we are all addressing the moving target that is our end user, the viewers. And they are a demanding bunch. I know this because I am one.

For an end-to-end solutions provider like us, all of this means taking on a bigger role within the entire media supply chain for our clients, creating toolsets and workflows to support an environment that didn’t exist 18 months ago, but is here to stay. ■