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LOOKING TO OLD WAYS TO UNLOCK NEW VALUE

Attention to the metadata allows content owners and distributors to fulfill their true potential

ABSTRACT: As bundles and ad-supported services once again become the new normal for video distribution, the value of metadata cannot be ignored. Content discovery and ad-insertion are impossible without aggregated and enriched metadata. Cloud-enabled metadata processing is the key to ensuring video service evolution.

By Peggy Dau, Marketing Director, MetaBroadcast

The definition of TV continues to evolve as traditional broadcasters also make content available directly to consumers via branded streaming services. Pay TV providers deliver linear and streaming channels. Smart TV providers aggregate free ad-supported TV (FAST) channels. And some streaming services (e.g., Amazon Prime Video, Apple TV+) enable incremental subscriptions to other streaming services. Audience engagement is the name of the game and metadata is the key to unlocking value for the consumer.

As of early 2022, Nielsen listed 817,000 program titles across both traditional linear TV and streaming services in the United States. Many of these titles include hundreds of individual episodes. Now, expand that figure to reflect regional programming around the globe. The investment in content development continues to rise, but how do consumers navigate their video services to find the programs they want?

More importantly, how can video platform providers entice, engage, and retain subscribers as they all face the age-old challenge of subscriber churn. The current strategy is familiar: introduce bundles and advertising.

A Nielsen study indicates that 64 percent of global viewers want bundled streaming services. 46 percent say it is harder to find content because too many

services are available. The industry is responding by making bundles or the ability to bundle available to consumers.

By aggregating a variety of services, the provider hopes to appeal to the varied interests of the target household. For example, Disney's bundle leverages Disney-owned services to combine Hulu's variety of linear on-demand and streaming content, the branded assets of Disney's renowned vault, plus the all-important sports content of ESPN. The consumer household benefits from a cost-effective bundle and access to a wide variety of content.

Alternatively, Amazon Prime Video subscribers can add subscriptions to Amazon Channels such as Acorn TV, Discovery+, Paramount+, Showtime and more. In this case consumers benefit from consolidating subscriptions under one entity, Amazon, while building their own streaming bundle. In the UK, services such as SkyQ and Virgin Media TV enable similar bundles via their pay TV platforms.

The challenge in both scenarios is still federated content search, discovery and recommendation across the various platforms. The solution is the effective use of metadata. Metadata is used by platforms to classify content under different categories such as movies, TV shows, documentaries, etc. Further elements such as genre, artist, producer, and release date are added to help viewers search based on specific criteria. Video service providers must make use of metadata to enhance the way their viewers interact with their platform. When it comes to search, the platform's search engine will use the metadata information provided about each title to make it discoverable based on a viewer's search criteria.

Metadata is also the source for recommendation algorithms to identify a user's consumption patterns based on titles, genres, actors, and other metadata. With thousands of hours of content available, the goal is better and longer user engagement. This is an indication of the consumer's perceived value received from the video service.

The second business model being introduced by

THE CHALLENGES OF search, discovery and recommendations still exist in this ad-supported business model, but a new challenge emerges. This is one of aligning the right ads to the right content and to the consumer's interests.

almost every streaming service is that of advertising. While consumers once indicated that "too many ads" was one of the main reasons for discarding their pay TV subscriptions in the U.S., the aggregated cost of multiple streaming subscriptions is forcing consumers to rethink.

OMDIA research indicates that by 2027 revenue from online video advertising will surpass revenue from pay TV subscriptions, traditional TV advertising and online video subscriptions. It is no wonder that streaming platforms are pursuing ad-based models. There is also a belief that ads found in online video services will be more targeted, personalized and less frequent.

Consumer interest in avoiding increasing subscription fees in exchange for ads has given rise to free ad-supported TV (FAST) platforms. These services (e.g. Pluto, Roku, Crackle) are free to watch, providing both linear channels and on-demand programming in a single user experience. Revenue is derived from ad-insertion. The interest in FAST services has attracted new market participants to an increasingly crowded market — smart TV manufacturers. Vendors like Samsung and LG are integrating video services directly into the core of their user interfaces.

The challenges of search, discovery and recommendations still exist in this ad-supported business model, but a new challenge emerges. This is one of aligning the right ads to the right content and to the consumer's interests. Again, metadata plays a key role in enabling effective ad-insertion. The more robust the descriptive metadata about individual programs the more relevant



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the inserted ad. For example, understanding the program genre helps platforms align complementary ads, while metadata related to specific scenes allows for greater accuracy in ad-insertion.

The importance of metadata and its ability to differentiate video services is clear — particularly as bundling, aggregation and ad-based models evolve. A persistent issue is the quality of the metadata residing within platform content management systems. Most platforms enable ingest of metadata from a single source. However, there is no one source that provides the depth and breadth of metadata needed to support the analytics and algorithms needed for federated content discovery or dynamic ad insertion.

The answer is in the aggregation and enrichment of the metadata describing the content assets. By consolidating structured, semi-structured or unstructured metadata from multiple sources, content management systems become more valuable. Enriching existing metadata with complementary data that provides the who, what, when, where of a program makes content libraries more accessible and monetizable.

The evolution of TV is ongoing. The technologies enabling creation, distribution and consumption will continue to advance and challenge the status quo. However, without attention to the metadata describing the content we all crave, content owners and distributors cannot fulfill their true potential. ■



Elevating the Value of Metadata



Aggregate multiple types of data and images from multiple sources



Normalise, cleanse and enrich data to enhance content discovery and viewer engagement



Easily integrate with Atlas, our SaaS based active metadata platform

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