The Future is Automated

The landscape ahead for M+E looks uncertain. Automation can ease the journey.

WORKFLOWS AND THE CLOUD
From cloud-based productions to unprecedented storage demands, the supply chain has never been more challenging

SMART CONTENT
The questions around AI, metadata, and analytics are endless. But we do have many of the answers already

SECURITY SOLUTIONS:
Cybersecurity and content protection in M&E is always on defense. Can automation can change that?

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CREATING A MORE CONNECTED FUTURE FOR CREATORS

The result of media and entertainment is art. But the process is technology

ABSTRACT: Automation is encroaching on every aspect of our jobs. It means cost savings, fewer headaches, and more efficiency. It means a more equal playing field for a global pool of undiscovered talent. The media industry is democratizing every day, and automation is a key part of that story.

By Matt Cimaglia, CEO, Co-Founder, Alteon.io

Automation is essential to the future of the media and entertainment industry, because, on a fundamental level, all content is just a series of media files, arranged and organized in a precise way. The result is art, but the process is technology.

Nowhere is this more evident than in digital asset management. The thousands of individual video, audio and animation files that comprise any production must be sorted, organized, and tagged before an editor can even begin stringing them together. And as media companies produce ever-increasing amounts of content, leveraging new media and embracing higher resolutions, the challenge of digital asset management will only intensify. DAMs that can automate basic tasks such as uploading and transcoding content natively in the cloud are dramat-

ically saving time and reducing the risk of errors that can occur during manual processes.

But that world is only the beginning. Many industry leaders are envisioning a media-creation future that relies on automation for significantly more than just asset management. Indeed, a DAM that does little more than organize your media files is already outdated, or else needlessly expensive.

We are seeing an increasing number of startups — including my own, Alteon.io — focus on performing numerous tasks into a platform that is greater than just a DAM. Integrating time-stamped comments for review and approval, searchable metatags and speech-to-text transcriptions is the immediate future — and all these are features that are appearing right now around the world, while companies specializing in these technologies are teaming up across the industry. Transcription is a prime example of a task that used to take hours for a human to do, until AI replaced it, albeit while maintaining a hefty price tag. Now the technology has evolved, improved, and become more mainstream, allowing multiple platforms — including virtual recording studios and DAMs — to integrate transcription into their pre-existing products with no additional charge to users.

Those tools can be combined into something even greater, too. Transcription is useful for a myriad of reasons, not least of which is that humans tend to search through documents by text. A logical conclusion is to combine searchable metadata with automatic transcription: the computer will transcribe your file, scan the visuals, and automatically generate descriptive keywords that you can search for. Filmmakers can search for lines of spoken dialogue, or for scenes shot with a certain camera during a certain day. Broadcast journalists can search for choice quotes without combing through entire interviews. This is the vision we have at Alteon — creating a truly comprehensive hub for creation and collaboration, on top of the fundamentals of a secure, cloud-based DAM.

This future is more convenient for media professionals, of course — but it's also more lucrative. Jobs will change without being replaced, and content creators will simply be able to handle more work. If you're saving 10 hours per job without waiting for processes like uploading, transcoding, tagging, or transcribing, that's 10 extra hours your team has to work on a new project. As well, by accurately

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tagging digital assets, it becomes easier to retrieve old assets for future projects or drum up work from past clients.

And yet, this is all still on the topic of asset management and creation. There are broader applications for automation in the media and entertainment industry that can address critical interpersonal pain points — such as social networking.

Computers have already succeeded in automating matchmaking, either for networking professionals or those looking for a life partner. The idea is even easier to process once resumes, portfolios and rates are added to the standard matchmaking mix of geography and descriptive keywords. Directors, producers, editors, and cinematographers could simply search for the kind of help they need — down to the type of camera owned — and find new ways to connect with their perfect fit. The old-school ways of networking by word-of-mouth, while still pervasive, will eventually be replaced by a method that is ultimately more equitable, efficient, and easy.

The hardest part of realizing this automated future will not be the technology; most of what I've described so far is either currently possible or right around the corner. The challenge is industry adoption. Data migration to the cloud has proven an uphill battle all on its own. Many media professionals still transfer large files by shipping drives. Industry veterans, larger companies and those skeptical of new technology will always be wary of changing their ways.

However, in the end, this will be the future of our industry. Automation is encroaching on every aspect of our jobs. As professionals in the creative space, we should embrace it: more automated small tasks mean less time worrying about administration and more time thinking about the art we're creating. It means cost savings, fewer headaches, and more efficiency. It means a more equal playing field for a global pool of undiscovered talent. The media industry is democratizing every day, and automation is a key part of that story. ⊞

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You create.
We do the rest.™

Alteon.io is a powerful all-in-one media hub that consolidates single-purpose apps into a streamlined, simplified workflow.