M+E JOURNAL

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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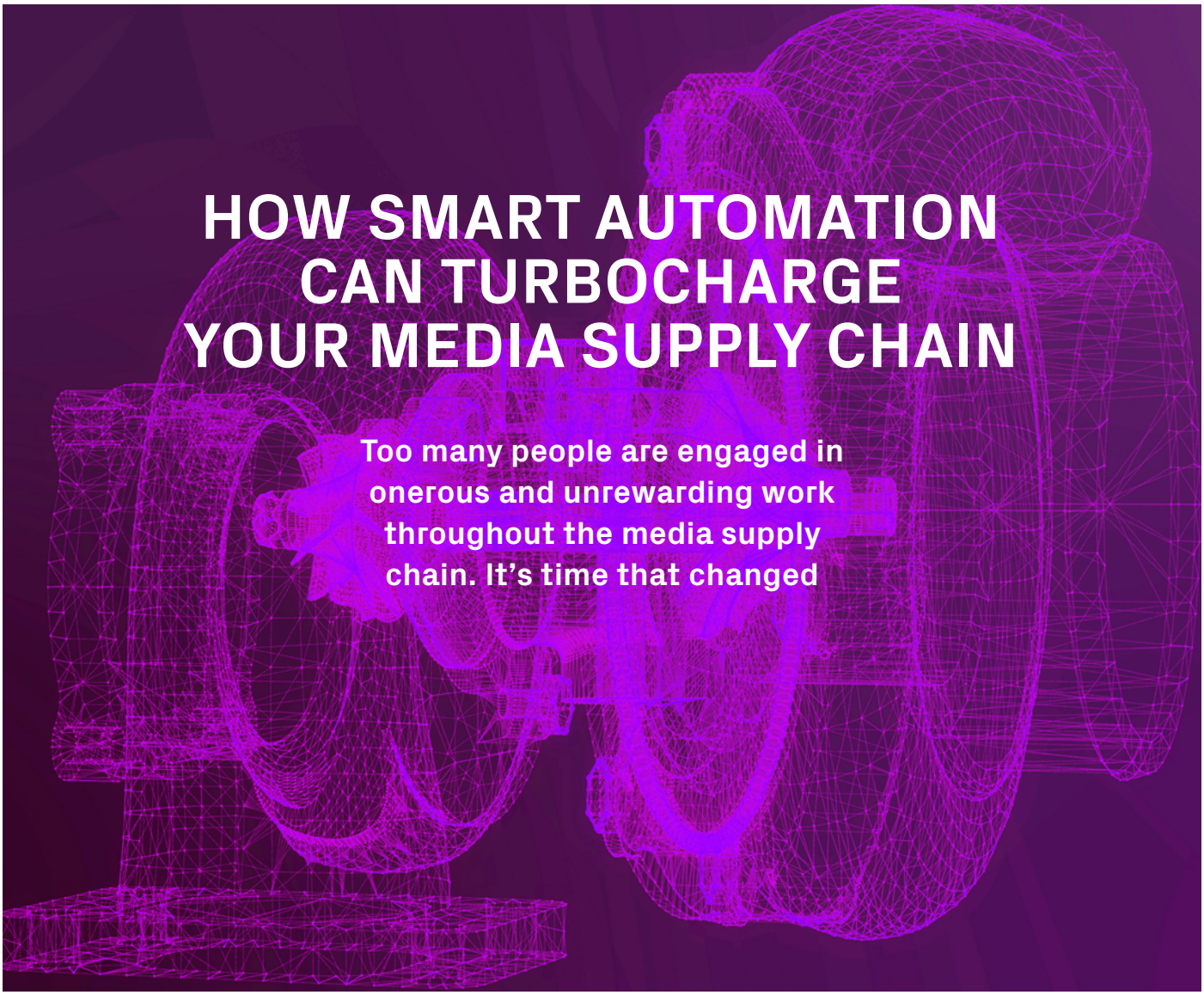

HOW SMART AUTOMATION CAN TURBOCHARGE YOUR MEDIA SUPPLY CHAIN

Too many people are engaged in onerous and unrewarding work throughout the media supply chain. It's time that changed

ABSTRACT: As streaming services face a period of consolidation, the ever-present search for value and efficiency in the media supply-chain has increased in intensity – and thankfully due to automation there are plenty of efficiencies to be found.

By Andrew Holland,
Director, Data Services, Fabric

As streaming services face a period of consolidation, the ever-present search for value and efficiency in the media supply-chain has increased in intensity – and thankfully due to automation there are plenty of efficiencies to be found.

While a huge amount of focus and investment has rightly been poured into improving the asset side of the media supply-chain, the metadata side of the business can often still present numerous challenges in the form of antiquated legacy systems and inefficient manual processes. Slow manual processes cause delivery bottlenecks, but they also present the

ideal scenario for smart automation, and the great leaps in productivity, accuracy, and efficiency that automation can deliver.

At present, there are large numbers of people engaged in onerous and unrewarding work throughout the media supply chain — matching IDs, manually creating image and asset placeholders, cutting and pasting metadata attributes, or laboriously enriching content metadata, field by field. This is slow, costly, and riddled with the potential for human error that can have costly repercussions further down the supply chain.

The media supply chain itself is filled with a multitude of individual 3rd party companies, often performing one task, or delivering one link of the supply chain in a siloed way, without talking to other systems. This lack of communication is the source of considerable inefficiency and delay. The absence of visibility also frustrates delivery and informed decision-making.

A unified data architecture that can integrate with the various supply chain service partners and MAM systems is an essential but often overlooked form of automation. By integrating with a multitude of systems and bringing back key information it is possible to gain unparalleled insights, with reporting across titles, rights, schedules, assets and languages to get ahead of delivery.

As processing power has increased exponentially, so has the possibility for process automation. What is more, anything that can be automated can be moved to the cloud, offering the possibility of immense flexibility and scalability. Once tasks are automated, it becomes possible to quantify time and cost in bulk in ways that were previously impossible. Thus, efficiency breeds even greater efficiency.

The virtuous circle is expanded by the insights that become available from these automations, providing supply-chain transparency and visibility on a level hitherto impossible – allowing for intel-driven decision making on a new level. Numerous real-world examples can follow – automated reports on delivery readiness, automated metadata enrichment, automated duplicate-finding, automated quality reporting etc., or even automated workflow notifications about content readiness.

Cloud deployment of automated processes means that with a properly conceived workflow it is possible to provision architecture so that it can spin up a complex software tool, data enrichment workflow or function (i.e., MAM placeholder creation), deploy it for the duration of a task or process, and then spin it back down again once the task is complete. A scalable cloud platform will give you the elasticity to run this kind of infrastructure.

WHILE A HUGE AMOUNT OF FOCUS and investment has rightly been poured into improving the asset side of the media supply-chain, the metadata side of the business can often still present numerous challenges in the form of antiquated legacy systems and inefficient manual processes.

The direct cost savings of automation are clear - as manual tasks are removed, wage bills can be reduced delivering headline efficiency gains. But the impact of automation is much more far-reaching. For instance, many of the manual tasks will be carried out on outdated legacy systems. Sometimes the efficiencies available from automation will only be accessible via a systems upgrade or a new data architecture that can enable the new automated workflows. Thus, as manual processes are phased out, legacy systems can also be deprecated, removing the need for their subscription fees, support packages or specialized training.

Without a doubt automation is the answer — as evidenced by some of the workflow automation that Fabric has carried out for clients such as Warner Bros. Discovery or Fox — taking manual supply chain processes such as placeholder creation, or EIDR and IMDb metadata enrichment workflows that originally took as long as 75 minutes to complete manually and reducing these processes to a matter of seconds with automation. The efficiency savings are counted in the millions of dollars, with a corresponding increase in accuracy and reliability.

Automated workflows can be deployed or created for a huge array of time-saving processes, for instance: catalog

***Andrew Holland** is VP of data services at Fabric, where he has had role in launching Fabric Origin, a new data service for content owners which won NAB Streaming Product of the Year at NAB Show 2023. Andrew has been with Fabric since 2018 and was a lead author of the Cloud Localization Blueprint in 2022. ah@fabricdata.com @fabricdata*

title matching, third party ID retrieval, record enrichment sequences, draft content localization, localization management and orchestration, image, and asset placeholder creation, third party lookups, and many alternatives.

Looking forward, the inclusion of AI tools such as Chat GPT into automated workflows offers even greater potential for automation. In a landscape filled with such an array of potentiality, it is doubly important to deploy a cutting-edge, world-class title metadata management platform - such as Fabric Studio - to master your entire media catalog, integrate with your supply chain systems and provide the access and visibility that automation can offer. ⊞

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