

MediaWeava: Streamlining Mobile Entertainment Publishing

In an increasingly mobile-savvy marketplace, consumers expect a similar experience with audio and video content as they enjoy on larger platforms. With a third of 16-24 year olds now listening regularly to music on a mobile phone, the pressure is on media owners to quickly and cost-effectively convert files to mobile-friendly formats, a task many still do manually. Glenn de Smidt, director of mobile technology developer Destar, explains how the company's MediaWeava product eliminates this problem, freeing up media owners and record labels to become more streamlined, productive and, ultimately, profitable.

UK consumers are getting used to enjoying digital content on their mobile handsets. For example, almost a third (28 per cent) of 16-24 year olds listens to music at least weekly on a mobile phone, according to British music trade organisation the BPI.

Audio, video and image files need to be reformatted to make them compatible with mobile handsets which have far smaller capacity for storage, limited processing power and limited bandwidth capacity.

To add to the complexity, device vendors, network operators and retail storefronts demand a variety of different file formats. This is because of the variety of operating systems, browsers and media players that exist on mobile devices, together with differing views on quality, and strategic relationships between operators, handset vendors and software suppliers.

Therefore, a single track can end up in as many as 130 different formats to satisfy the requirements of just 30 mobile storefronts and aggregators, together with the differing requirements of the accompanying meta data files.

Record labels, distributors and other media owners are presented with a three-point challenge: file conversion (or 'transcoding'), management of meta data and file distribution. Manual practices can be error-prone and managing meta data and scheduling via spreadsheets is unwieldy.

The Status Quo

As mobile devices cannot accept the large file formats produced for broadcast, CD and DVD distribution, record labels and media owners have been laboriously converting files manually into appropriate formats. Not only are there many different requirements for file formats to factor in, but also for the accompanying meta data. Some mobile aggregators or storefronts may require a few key items of meta data in a .csv file, while others will demand complex, formal XML documents. Missing or inaccurate meta data means that the deliveries may be rejected by the storefront or that content is not promoted fully on the storefront. The net result is thousands of man hours spent manually converting files that could be otherwise spent on more business-critical activities. Manual conversion is a massive drag on resources and, as the number of music, film and photo files which needs to be converted is only set to increase dramatically as sophisticated handsets enjoy deeper market penetration, the burden on media owners will only get more intense.

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Record labels and media owners cannot realise the full potential of the mobile marketplace while files need to be converted manually, which is why Destar developed MediaWeava, a mobile media platform which provides sophisticated and flexible tools to give the media owner complete control over its meta data and media assets.

Introducing MediaWeava

Media owners seeking to distribute their content over mobile platforms need to facilitate file conversion (or 'transcoding'), accurately manage the meta data of files and then handle distribution. MediaWeava is a media transcoding platform which enables record labels and media owners to easily and swiftly convert audio, video and image files into mobile-ready formats.

The platform can be used by labels and digital distributors – often the aggregators of content – to transcode files and push them towards other content aggregators and mobile storefronts. It is designed to streamline the mobile media distribution process via a simple Web interface. MediaWeava works with all common file formats and supports more than 30 distributors.

Meta data management is one of the core concerns for media owners. Rights management is a key element of content distribution, so being able to simply manage where files can be distributed and in what format over an easy-to-use Web interface is one of MediaWeava's unique selling points. MediaWeava validates meta data whether from an automated feed or when entered manually, to reduce the potential for errors in the distribution process. The platform also supports automated handling of take-down notices, email notification and click-through confirmation.

File distribution can be immediate, scheduled or volume-based depending on the requirements of the record labels or storefronts.

MediaWeava brings new operational efficiencies to the mobile audio, video and image file format market, freeing up record labels and media owners to focus on core business activities.

MediaWeava in Practice

Indie Mobile, part of the PIAS Entertainment Group, is a mobile marketing and digital distribution company for independent record labels. Indie generates revenue from the creation of ring tones, full track downloads and video tones, as well as creating interactive campaigns for bands and labels.

Indie first approached Destar looking for a more efficient way of converting its music for mobile distribution. The company's manual, PC-based practices for the editing, scheduling, transcoding and distribution of ring tones were no longer scalable enough to keep up with Indie's growing success in the mobile music market. They were time-consuming and prone to error, the management of meta data was becoming an increasing burden and, with an ever expanding operation, the company needed a platform which would deliver automated, high-quality, error-free transcoding of its files.

Destar's MediaWeava was that platform.

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The Destar logo features a large, stylized, dark grey graphic element resembling a musical note or a stylized 'D' on the right side of the page. Below this graphic, the word 'Destar' is written in a yellow, handwritten-style font. The 'e' is lowercase, and the 'a' is lowercase. The 's' is lowercase, and the 't' is lowercase. The 'a' is lowercase, and the 'r' is lowercase. The 'r' has a small asterisk above it.

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There were six core elements to the project:

- 1) Ingestion: Automated feeds deliver meta data and content to the platform
- 2) Task Management: Event notifications, such as the availability of new content or completed codes take place over email and via Google Calendar. MediaWeava's comprehensive Web interface allows full visibility and control over tasks, allowing distributed activities and remote workers to be coordinated and progress monitored
- 3) Asset Management: Provides ability to make additional edits and other tasks to be carried out
- 4) Media Transcoding: Mobile media files are generated based on available assets and governing meta data, such as territories
- 5) Distribution: Assets are packaged and delivered electronically based on a volume or time out
- 4) Media Transcoding: Mobile media files are generated based on available assets and governing meta data, such as territories
- 5) Distribution: Assets are packaged and delivered electronically based on a volume or time metric, subject to optional manual authorisation
- 6) Reporting: Comprehensive reports are provided via the website showing pending tasks, work in progress, current deliveries, delivery history and take-down notices

Indie also uses Destar's scheduling and management modules, which allows label managers to control all aspects of a delivery including release dates, territories and distribution outlets, and entering take-down information via a simple Web interface. The MediaWeava platform can then monitor the progression of a delivery, alerting stakeholders when necessary.

Destar's MediaWeava platform has completely altered Indie Mobile's processes, saving hundreds of man hours each month and enabling a distributed workflow across different physical locations. Retail outlets that were previously unprofitable due to the costs of production are now new opportunities for revenue generation.

For the MediaWeava technical specification, please visit http://www.destar.co.uk/media_specification_guide.pdf

If you feel that the MediaWeava platform could benefit your business, or to find out more about Destar's other products, please call us on **+44 (0) 1189 332 578** or email **contact@destar.co.uk**



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