



## In 2017, Content Providers Will Take Control of Their OTT Future

**Jacques Le Mancq**, president and CEO of Broadpeak, looks at quality of service in OTT.

The global OTT devices and services market is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 20.6 percent between 2016 and 2020, according to the latest report from Research and Markets. Going forward

WIn Western Europe, in particular, Parks Associates found that OTT video usage is expanding, with 55 percent of UK broadband households and 51 percent in France watching TV programming and movies online.

As OTT video consumption continues to rise, video quality is becoming increasingly important. One in five viewers will abandon poor experiences immediately, regardless of genre.

Given the explosion in OTT viewing and significance of high video quality, 2017 could be the year that content providers stop depending on pay-TV operators in terms of whether or not they're able to guarantee quality of service (QoS) for subscribers.

Traditionally content providers have relied upon a CDN as a service to make content available to viewers through the internet. However, everything does not always run smoothly once the video leaves the content provider's premises.

### THE GOOD NEWS

So what's the solution? The good news is that solutions do exist for content providers to take control, and they're not only limited to big players.

Content providers don't need to follow in the footsteps of Google and Apple and Netflix and build their own CDNs to deliver a better quality of experience (QoE) to their customers. Through a combination of CDN selection, local cache, and origin server technologies, content providers

can effectively and economically gain control over the delivery of all their video content and find better and better ways to optimise it.

The origin server is a key component in the OTT delivery chain. Origin servers package content together in multiple adaptive bitrate formats.

Having the capability to process content on-the-fly, responding to user requests, content providers can significantly reduce their storage space requirements as well as support advanced recording capabilities for cloud-PVR, catch-up TV, and network time-shifting applications to increase monetisation.

Hosting an origin server also gives content providers the freedom to choose any DRM for content protection – which is important in the OTT multiscreen world.

In addition, they can work with several CDN as a service providers.

### INTELLIGENT DECISIONS

By now, most of us understand that when it comes to CDNs, there is not always one choice that is the optimum for all possible content delivery scenarios.

Using a CDN selection tool, content providers can dynamically gain insight into the instantaneous quality of several CDNs and make immediate, intelligent, and automated decisions depending on the context of various networks, subscribers, and their devices.

Taking into account parameters such as geographical area, QoS, and price, content providers can successfully balance traffic between multiple CDNs to boost QoE and reduce video delivery expenses.

On top of this, content providers can combine several CDNs at the same time for video

delivery, without introducing any overhead or requesting the same piece of content more than once. End-users experience better quality than what could be reached with a single CDN, even if it was the best one.

### GOING FORWARD

We anticipate that content providers will start deploying local caches directly into telecom or cable operators' networks, where the most popular content is stored.

Streaming content from a location closer to the end-users can dramatically reduce latency and network congestion, resulting in higher video bitrates, faster start times, and uninterrupted viewing sessions. Local caches can be used to deliver both live and on-demand content.

Considering that popular content can represent over 80 percent of the video traffic, caching at the ISP level substantially reduces CDN service costs.

### SEIZE CONTROL

To conclude, viewers have a lot of choices today. Delivering a superior QoE and QoS is a key way that content providers differentiate themselves in the marketplace, retain viewers' attention, and generate revenue.

Of course, this task isn't necessarily easy.

This coming year will be the year that content providers finally seize control of the situation to provide an ever improving quality of service to their customers as well as get control of costs, especially those costs related to CDN services. It seems clearer this will be accomplished using a range of technologies, from CDN selector tools to local caches and origin servers. ■