

A black and white photograph of Batman in his suit, standing in a dark, industrial setting. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of his suit and the contours of his body. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting a large, metallic structure.

COMMUNICATIONS  
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# TheRecord



**BOB DEHAVEN: MICROSOFT**

Exponential technology advances, greater consumer power and increased competition are putting huge pressure on traditional comms and media companies who are having to adapt and change at a phenomenal rate to guarantee their survival.

In this issue, Rikke Helms tells us about the pioneers in the telco industry who are adopting Microsoft Office 365 to help them transform into digital service providers. Meanwhile, Dario Scacciati explains how the Microsoft Cortana Analytics Suite can help broadcasters to better reap the rewards of their digital vision. Plus, don't miss our in depth look at how Warner Brothers leveraged Microsoft solutions to ensure a hitch-free premiere of the *Batman v Superman* movie.

# Know your audience



DARIO SCACCIATI: MICROSOFT

The Microsoft Cortana Analytics Suite can help broadcasters to better understand their audience and prepare themselves for the future

As more and more people opt for video on demand and live streaming services, the traditional broadcasting business model is being turned on its head. Pioneers in the industry are having to adapt and change at a phenomenal rate, delivering the new, digital experiences that many customers expect, while at the same time meeting the needs of their traditional TV audience.

What's happening is that broadcasters, cable providers and satellite companies now have the challenge of following their audience wherever they are while, at the same time, competing with internet advertising. As a result, they need to find new ways to better identify their audience so that they can offer advertising agencies and marketers a more targeted method of distribution. Once this is accomplished they can apply all that informa-

**“The TV industry needs to understand each viewer’s footprint and preference across all mediums”**

tion to optimise the different TV advertising buy/sell processes and increase revenues.

This careful balancing act can only be achieved with the effective use of data. The TV industry needs the tools to quickly understand which shows are popular, which medium is most effective and how effective advertising campaigns are across all platforms. They need to understand each viewer’s footprint and preference across all mediums and have access to information that is clear and transparent.

Historically this has been difficult to achieve. Broadcast TV is measured and valued based on ratings systems which are mostly focused on demographics. The rest of the data comes from digital sources.

They need a solution that combines big data, machine learning, cloud and analytics technologies with cutting edge intelligence capabilities, that sanitises and normalises all data (from traditional and digital advertising) against ratings systems and provide actionable insights that will directly impact advertising revenue, yield optimisation, scheduling, planning, content creation and content acquisition.

The Microsoft Cortana Intelligent Advertising Analytics Suite is delivering all of this and more. It enables the television industry to turn data into intelligent action. They can gain far better visibility into customer needs, personalise customer experiences using advanced analytics and make accurate predictions to increase advertising effectiveness and boost revenue. What's more, Cortana Analytics suite will provide an intelligent over-the-top (OTT) platform to capture audience loyalty and learn brand preferences.

It's an exciting time to be involved in broadcasting. While it's understandable that many enterprises operating in this field are concerned about what the next few years hold for them, it's clear that those that relish this huge opportunity to transform will be the ones that succeed. TV will not disappear, but it will evolve. Don't stand by and play witness to the evolution, be a part of it. ■

*Dario Scacciati is senior director of business development for Microsoft's Media and Entertainment division*

# The telco transformation



RIKKE HELMS: MICROSOFT

Modern cloud-based services are enabling telco firms to transform into digital service providers, paving the way for a very successful future

Today's telco companies are at the epicentre of the digital revolution. Recognising that they need to transform into digital service providers if they want to succeed in the future, they are increasingly turning to the cloud in order to rapidly deliver the services that customers demand.

Microsoft is at the crux of this change in the industry. In fact, 11 out of the top 14 telco companies are using Microsoft Office 365 to help them stay ahead.

Take Telstra in Australia, for example, who is enabling its customers to have the full scope of Office 365 cloud productivity and collaboration apps, video conferencing and meeting broadcast capabilities, along with Telstra's voice services,

delivered either in the cloud or on-premise. Skype for Business will be paired with Telstra provided managed voice services and network assessments to deliver a comprehensive productivity and collaboration solution.

Vodafone in India, meanwhile, is also enabling its enterprise customers of all sizes to access Microsoft Office 365 from the cloud. "We are confident that the pay-per-use Software as a Service (SaaS) model will make our customers' business future-ready by giving them predictable IT costs and taking care of the technology upgrades and scalability worries," said Nick Gliddon, director of Vodafone Business Services.

And Canadian telco Telus is committed not only to effectively delivering Skype for Business to its customers via Office 365, but to supporting its adoption with a range of services to help companies create a more collaborative workplace.

By transitioning in this way, telco firms are securing themselves a successful future. While I've heard many people comment that the end of the telco is near, I would argue that the opposite is in fact true. Telco companies have two big assets: their massive infrastructure and networks; and their datacentres made up of years-old customer billing relationships. By transforming themselves – and extending solutions like Office 365 out to other parts of their business, for example to over the top (OTT) services, they can keep hold of these assets and truly thrive. ■

*Rikke Helms is Microsoft's managing director of industry solutions for communications and media*



# A hitch-free premiere

With help from Microsoft, Warner Brothers premiered *Batman v Superman* to the masses without a hitch

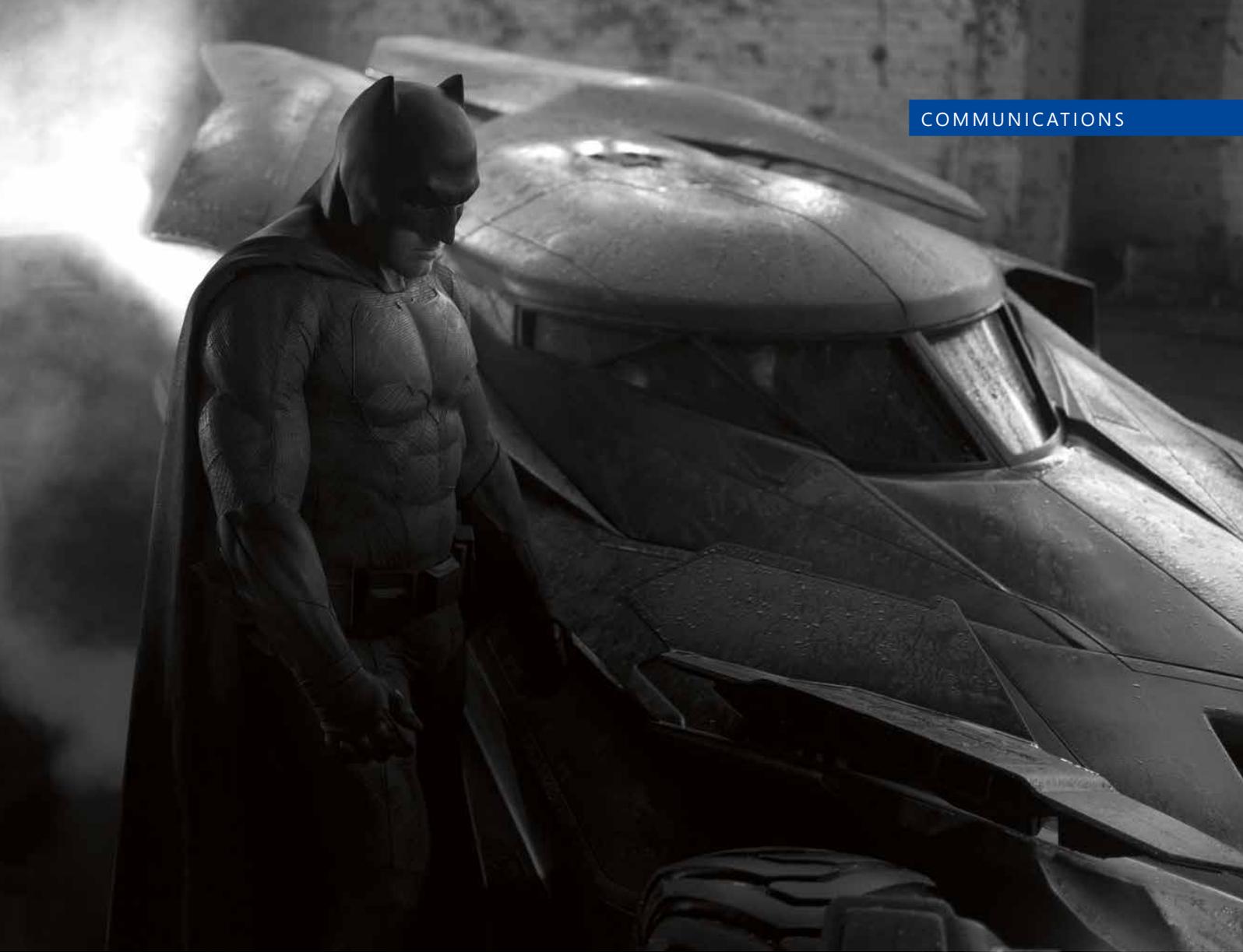
Last year, Microsoft was a key partner at the red-carpet premiere of *Batman v Superman* at New York's Radio City Music Hall. Premiere events are an increasingly important part of movie campaigns, especially to generate buzz and engagement before a release. The live stream of a premiere extends the reach of such events, so fans around the world can feel they're a part of it. But for *Batman v Superman*, the stakes were unusually high and there was only one chance to get it right.

*Batman v Superman* was one of the most anticipated movies of the year and one that went on to break box office records. Its massive premiere event was one of the largest domestic events Warner Brothers had ever attempted. The DC Comics universe has a global fan base and Warner Brothers wanted to give all those fans the feeling they were at the event. It needed a battle-tested enterprise grade platform to make this happen.

Warner Brothers turned to an innovative partner with a history of supporting premieres: Microsoft. The company may be the only one with the breadth of technologies that Warner Brothers needed to pull off the live stream of the premiere: Xbox as the 'TV station in a box' platform, Microsoft Azure for global reach and scalability, and Skype for video conferencing.

Microsoft planned and implemented a world-class, broadcast-quality, fibre-based live-stream solution in Radio City Music Hall in just two weeks. The red carpet experience featured a Skype in Media booth for the stars of the movie to interact with Skype fans from around the world, the live feed from New York City was sent to the Xbox Live studio in Redmond, Washington and was then encoded, packaged and delivered via Azure Media Services and CDN to create a seamless viewing experience for the tens of thousands of fans from around the world.





Multiple 48-megabits-per-second cables delivered the must-have reliability that Warner Brothers needed for the one-time-only live event, along with the quality and multiple speeds to run on every popular web browser and mobile device – and on the 60-inch monitors inside the Music Hall.

Bringing the live feed into the theatre helped to amplify the overall premiere experience for Warner Brothers' guests, giving them 'red-carpet access' and providing entertainment while they waited for the movie to begin.

Warner Brothers used Skype to magnify the global impact of the event. Some of the top *Batman v Superman* influencers got to ask questions of the talent on the red carpet while streaming live to a global audience. This was more than just capturing and distributing the premiere. This was shaping the premiere to maximise global attention and engagement.

Warner Brothers found that the right technology for its premiere event was crucial – but

**“The Microsoft event had three times the audience that Warner Brothers typically sees during a live stream”**

not enough. It needed more, and Microsoft delivered once again. The Microsoft team provided excellent service and quickly pulled together the resources to make the premiere a success. It met every editorial request that Warner Brothers made.

Warner Brothers measures the success of a live-stream premiere through the amount of editorial coverage and viewership it gains. The Microsoft event had three times the audience that Warner Brothers typically sees during a live stream and generated major editorial coverage. That coverage amplified awareness and led to one of the most successful superhero movie opening weekends of all time. ■

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