

COMMUNICATIONS  
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BOB DEHAVEN: MICROSOFT

Broadcasting companies need to evolve, and fast. Recognising the change in the way audiences consume content, they are increasingly realising how imperative digital transformation is to their survival in the years ahead. Microsoft is at the centre of this industry shift, providing a secure, yet neutral home for media solution providers and broadcasting companies.

In the following pages, find out why the biggest independent software vendors have chosen Microsoft. And don't miss Steve Guggenheimer's roundup of the recent NAB 2017 event.

# Why broadcasting is better in the cloud

Tony Emerson explains why Microsoft's Azure cloud is proving to be the platform of choice for leading broadcasters who want to stay ahead now and in the future

BY LINDSAY JAMES

The broadcasting industry is in the midst of significant change. "While the move from analogue to digital presents huge opportunities for broadcasting companies, there are also many challenges," explains Tony Emerson, Microsoft's worldwide managing director for Media and Cable. "The biggest challenge is a cultural shift – workflow is much more interconnected and requires different people to be working on different projects at the same time."

Broadcasting schedules also need to be more fluid. "As binge watching streamed content becomes more of a trend, broadcasters are increasingly finding that they need to broadcast more content immediately," Emerson says.

And then there's the challenge of security. "Just recently, the online hacking group 'The Dark Overlord' stole all ten episodes of the yet-to-be-broadcast season five of Orange is the New Black. It wanted a ransom to prevent it from releasing the episodes online. This is the sort of threat that the digital world presents – it's absolutely imperative that broadcasters implement appropriate security measures."

Recognising these challenges, Microsoft is there to help. "Unlike other cloud service providers, we fully embrace a hybrid approach, helping broadcasters to migrate to a cloud-based content and delivery model in a way and at a pace that works for them," says Emerson. "This offers the agility and efficiency benefits of the cloud, without forcing broadcasters to relinquish control and write off investments in existing on-premise infrastructure."

The rate of adoption speaks for itself. Since the beginning of 2017, Microsoft has announced partnerships with three of the biggest independent software vendors operating in the space.

In March, Adobe and Microsoft announced availability of their first set of joint solutions built using Microsoft Azure, Dynamics 365 and Power BI. "Business leaders in every industry are focused on how to better engage their digital customers, wherever they are," said Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft. "Together, Adobe and Microsoft are bringing the most advanced marketing capabilities on the most powerful and intelligent cloud to help companies digitally transform and engage customers in new ways."





The BBC/PBS co-production of Sherlock was edited using Avid solutions



Earlier this year, the yet-to-be-broadcast season five of Orange is the New Black was stolen

And later that month Imagine Communications announced that its playout, live encoding and dynamic ad insertion solutions are now available on the Microsoft Azure cloud platform. “Microsoft and Imagine Communications share the same vision of revitalising media operations through the flexibility, scale and operational efficiency of cloud-based services,” said Steven Guggenheimer, Microsoft’s corporate vice president and chief evangelist. “Together, we are accelerating solutions for the media industry by providing broadcasters, content distributors and others with the ability to reduce time-to-market while moving from a capital-intensive business to a pay-as-needed operational model.”

In April the global media technology provider Avid, whose platform has been used to edit several multi-award winning TV series and feature films including the BBC/PBS co-production of Sherlock, formed a strategic alliance with Microsoft to cooperatively develop and market cloud-based solutions and services. As part of the agreement, Avid has chosen Microsoft Azure as its preferred cloud hosting platform, and will develop

and launch a range of software-as-a-service and platform-as-a-service offerings powered by the Avid MediaCentral Platform (read more in the interview with Avid on page 57).

“With the industry’s preeminent global community of media enterprises and creative professionals that make up Avid’s client base, the company’s unique platform approach and its extensive domain knowledge, combined with our own powerful Azure cloud platform, we believe that this unique alliance is well-positioned to lead the media industry into the cloud,” said Scott Guthrie, executive vice president for Microsoft’s Cloud and Enterprise Group. “Microsoft is pleased to collaborate with such a market leader in media and entertainment, and feels strongly that together our companies will produce something powerful for the industry – creating an intelligent, media-savvy cloud solution.”

Emerson says that these three partnerships will help Microsoft to grow its business and create a secure, yet neutral home for media solution providers for years ahead. “Microsoft is the safer place to be, both now and in the future,” he concludes. ■

# At the crux of digital transformation



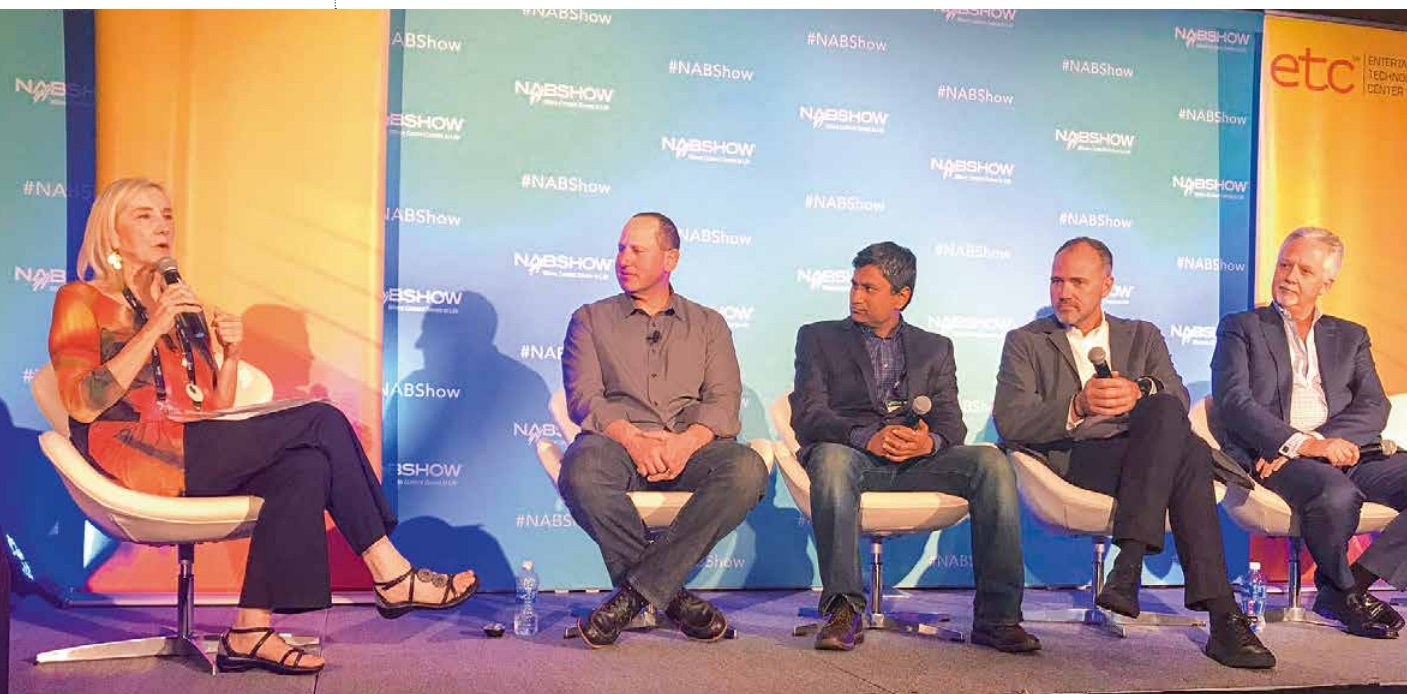
STEVE GUGGENHEIMER: MICROSOFT

At NAB 2017, Microsoft shared how it is partnering with companies across the media and entertainment industry to enable digital transformation

From working with NBC Sports to power the 2016 Rio Summer Olympic games live-stream across devices, to delivering content storage, media encoding, rendering, advanced analytics and more, Microsoft is partnering with companies across the media and entertainment industry to help enable digital transformation. At the National Association of Broadcasters Show (NAB 2017), we announced several new partners and customers who have chosen Microsoft's cloud to power their digital transformation.

As well as announcing that Avid has selected Microsoft Azure as the preferred platform to power its business (see Tony Emerson's future of broadcasting feature on page 52), we announced that Verizon Digital Media Services offers integrated Microsoft Azure Storage. This comes following our recent announcement that Verizon Digital Media Services will make cloud-based storage from Microsoft Azure available to all Verizon Digital Media Services Edgecast Content Delivery Network (CDN) customers.

Steve Guggenheimer represented Microsoft at the recent NAB 2017 event





Microsoft Booth at the 2017 NAB Show

Azure Storage will now power Verizon STORE, the cloud-based origin storage offering on the Edgecast CDN, providing a more convenient option for resilient, infinitely scalable object storage that is ideal for media and metadata.

**“Microsoft is partnering with companies across the media and entertainment industry to help enable digital transformation”**

Crackle, a unit of Sony Pictures Television Networks, has also selected Microsoft Azure as a streaming service partner. Crackle is an online streaming service for Hollywood movies, popular TV shows, original series and feature films for the world’s connected audience. Microsoft Azure helps power the streaming network’s services and allows consumers to view content at anytime, anywhere on every connected device.

We also announced the availability of Skype TX for Radio with partner Broadcast Bionics

– an industry first enabling the delivery of high-quality audio giving producers the capability to bring on guests from Skype’s network of hundreds of millions of users across the globe – a significant improvement for radio broadcasters and podcasters worldwide. Additionally, one of our innovative partners, Newtek, released the TriCaster TC1, the first affordable end-to-end 4K IP video production system that offers multiple studio-grade Skype TX channels for adding remote video guests to live broadcast.

With a diverse and growing set of ways in which audiences can consume media and entertainment, it is not only important to ease the creation of content but also ensure that data is serving up smart insights about what content resonates with audiences. In 2016, global internet advertising revenue surpassed global TV ad revenue for the first time. As our world becomes more digital, advertisers, content creators and distributors will move past general demographic information and increasingly require more granular customer details for TV like they do for the internet. Over-the-top (OTT) solutions will help here but it is also important that there are end-to-end

## VIEWPOINT

monetisation strategies that go with it. At NAB, some of our customers and partners demonstrated how they are evolving their businesses to take advantage of intelligence to create more meaningful connections with their customers.

Ooyala, a Microsoft partner and leader in premium video platforms, media logistics and advertising, demonstrated how Ooyala Flex, its media logistics platform, integrates with Microsoft Cognitive Services to simplify metadata capture by extracting transcripts, detecting faces within videos, and analysing text to detect key topics. Ooyala then uses that rich metadata to recommend relevant videos to viewers and to deliver targeted advertising.

Meanwhile, UFA one of Germany's oldest and most distinguished entertainment brands, has brought its archive and content distribution into Microsoft Azure – with the aid of the Microsoft partner Interlake and nexx.tv. Using Microsoft's Cognitive Services, UFA is able to make its video content actionable and accessible in completely new ways, such as automatically translating and tagging the content, to see inside the video. The vision is to bring the entire production process into the cloud, from recording to play out. ■

*Steve Guggenheimer is corporate vice president of Microsoft's AI Business*

## x.news makes its mark at NAB 2017

x.news information technology, the young start-up with the ever-growing client base which includes Red Bull Media House, BBC, Government of Dubai Media Office and Heute, has a clear goal: to accelerate the pace of journalistic research and to improve its quality.

At this year's NAB show, x.news information technology was showcasing x.news 1.8 with many great new features including the MOT (More on This) functionality which simply and efficiently assists the journalist's verification of incoming news feeds –

helping to avoid the pitfall of 'fake news' sources.

Running on secure Microsoft Azure servers, x.news constantly monitors and indexes a wide range of external and internal sources so journalists can use only one browser interface to search for and monitor story information in real time, and all in one place.

The x.news stand at the Microsoft booth was crowded during the entire NAB show. News organisations from all over the world were excited to learn how technology can successfully address their most critical challenges.



# Moving media to the cloud

Jeff Rosica, president and chief marketing officer at Avid, discusses his company's new strategic cloud alliance with Microsoft

BY SEAN DUDLEY

## Tell us more about Avid.

Avid is a leading media technology provider for the creation, distribution and monetisation of media assets, serving the needs of media enterprises and creative professionals worldwide.

Since its inception 30 years ago, Avid has been at the forefront of innovation – from leading the revolution in non-linear editing to transforming the media industry with the introduction of Avid Everywhere. Avid Everywhere is powered by the Avid MediaCentral Platform – an open, tightly integrated, and efficient platform designed specifically for the media industry.

## Why did you decide to partner with Microsoft?

Avid and Microsoft's strategic alliance was announced this April at Avid Connect 2017 in Las Vegas, US, which is the annual meeting of the Avid Customer association and brings together more than 1,300 industry leaders. The partnership is a comprehensive, multi-year strategic agreement to cooperatively develop and market cloud-based solutions and services aimed at the media and entertainment industry. Avid has chosen Microsoft Azure as its preferred cloud hosting platform and is developing a wide range of software-as-a-service and platform-as-a-service offerings powered by the Avid MediaCentral Platform.

To support Avid's product development efforts and investments, Microsoft will invest additional resources and funding to help accelerate time-to-market for targeted cloud-based solutions and specific Azure-based cloud services for the media and entertainment industry.

Both companies will also work in close cooperation on the overall go-to-market approach, which will help clients migrate to the cloud easily

and more cost effectively, and allow them to work with Avid and Microsoft seamlessly.

## How else will customers benefit from the new partnership?

The partnership will enable Avid to fully deliver on its Avid Everywhere vision by making the MediaCentral platform and many of the company's tools and workflow solutions available as a cloud service to media organisations – using practically any device – all from a single platform.

Customers will have maximum flexibility to move at their own pace and orchestrate workflows across on-premise and cloud-hosted environments. The cloud will enable innovation around new media workflows, operational capabilities and business opportunities by unleashing a new generation of capabilities for distributing and optimising media.

## How do you see the partnership developing?

We expect to see a constant stream of innovations and cloud-based solutions during the term of the partnership. Customers can look forward to new hosting and cloud service offerings over the next 18 months, with the first wave slated for a phased release during the second half of 2017.



“Customers will have maximum flexibility to move at their own pace”

A black and white photograph of several runners on a track, captured from behind. The runners are in motion, with their hair and clothing slightly blurred, suggesting speed. The background is bright and out of focus, likely a stadium or outdoor track setting.

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