



A 3-Step Plan for the Media and Entertainment Industry to Cope with COVID-19

COVID-19 has ripped through the global economy. As people adjust to the new reality of social distancing and remote working, consumer behavior too, has transformed. And, as a majority of global population self-isolates at home, media consumption levels have gone through the roof. [According to a recent report from Global Web Index](#), 87% of US consumers and 80% of UK consumers revealed that they are consuming more content than ever before.

Unfortunately though, these high media utilization rates come at a time when new content production— from live sports to sitcoms and movies—has come to a grinding halt. Cast and crew members are now safely ensconced in their homes, often in separate countries.

But there's good news too. Progressive incumbents in the media industry have taken creative approaches to cater to viewer demand. For instance, traditional sports are increasingly turning to virtual competitions to keep their fans, sponsors and broadcasters engaged. [Major sports and Esports leagues](#) are making it possible for star athletes like Kevin Durant and Charles Leclerc to participate in [live tournaments](#). This lets supporters watch their favorite athletes live, and fills up empty airtime for broadcasters. Even [celebrity talk shows](#) are now playing out of hosts' living rooms and bedrooms.

We Need a Plan

For the media industry, the COVID-19 pandemic presents a unique opportunity: a chance to transform their approach to customer experience management, demand planning and revenue generation. In fact, capitalizing on this moment could lay the groundwork for the post-COVID world. A world that, by most accounts, is going to be dramatically different from the one before the pandemic. According to us, here are the key elements of a well-rounded response plan for media companies:

01 Enable Workforce Collaboration

Migrate your workflows to the cloud: In order to meet audience demand, which is largely homebound for now, content creators have to ensure that production environments are virtualized. Here, media orchestration on the cloud can make a real difference. For instance, cloud-based content workflows can allow content creators and stakeholders to virtually manage the video production chain end-to-end. Migrating to the cloud enables remote teams to integrate and automate workflows for file delivery, transcode videos for OTT platforms and perform seamless, web-based, frame-accurate editing in a virtual environment without having to transfer feeds between physical workstations. Within the media industry, [Esports is leading the way](#) in leveraging cloud-based, virtualized, live-production workflows to [host competitions between players in different locations](#).

02 Enhance Your Customer's Digital Experience

Make your content easily accessible: [Studies say that as page load time increases from 1 second to 3 seconds](#) the probability of bounce increases by 32%. This annoying page load delay or "latency" can be potentially disastrous for content streaming as well. This is where content delivery networks (CDNs) can become a savior for media companies. CDNs serve as globally distributed network of web servers or Points of Presence (PoP) that virtually shorten the physical distance between a user and the origin server, thereby facilitating faster content delivery. Besides improving speed of delivery, CDNs reduce traffic load on the origin server and safeguard it from endpoint security threats. Also, they allow media companies to scale flexibly as the demand spikes and ebbs.

Customize your archived content using AI-enhanced metadata: In order to satiate growing audience demand in the absence of new content, media companies will have to start leveraging smarter metadata to customize and contextualize historical content. Machine learning powered algorithms can identify and retrieve resources in a vast content library through accurate tags and descriptors. This can help a company save valuable employee time by providing intuitive content recommendations basis viewer preferences and temporal context.

Boost CX with multilingual content and personalized audio delivery: Netflix has revealed that two of its most popular recent shows – German “[Dark](#)” and Spanish “[Money Heist](#)”, were received better outside of their home markets. These success stories establish the fact that the world is warming up to non-English/non-native language content. Capitalizing on this trend, an effective video localization strategy with multilingual content can help a media company drive global viewership for regional shows and events.

While multilingual content can help broadcasters and media companies to cater to a wide segment of the audience through a single content format, personalized audio takes the overall broadcast experience to the next level and helps companies venture into new markets for foreign programming. Next-gen audio broadcast systems can help content creators develop and deploy multiple audio formats and channels through a single video stream. Consumers can then customize broadcast audio through interactive control of additional audio elements such as alternate dialogue, ambiance, and extra effects.

03 Create a Future-Proof Operational Ecosystem

Differentiate temporary changes from the ones that will persist: As the economy grapples with the flux in government regulations and consumer trends, it is important to understand what trends are transient, and which ones might last longer. While these factors may differ significantly for each region, two things are quite clear. One, things will take time to return to complete normalcy. In media, this may result in an overhaul in the entire value chain, starting with a leaner production process. Broadcasters and rights-holders must consider remote or at-home production with cloud-based workflows and geographically-separated teams. Secondly, some of the consumer content preferences developed during the lockdown may continue to be relevant even afterwards. For instance, Esports tournaments may achieve mainstream acceptance as an alternative to live sport right now, but it would not be surprising if it became a parallel entertainment entity for the long-term. Planning an infrastructure ramp-up to cater to such growing niches is just as crucial as bringing back the classics.

The current COVID-19 crisis is unprecedented. But the media industry has endured several disruptions before, and has emerged stronger every time. Over the last decade, factors such as the rapid digitization of content, social media and an increase in on-demand video consumption on mobile devices have compelled the industry to recalibrate and adapt.

This time around, things are going to be no different. Industry leaders need to keep their ears and eyes open, adapt quickly to changing consumer behavior, watch out for new trends and technologies, and as always, plan for the worst, and prepare to be surprised.

About Tata Communications:

Tata Communications is a leading global digital and media infrastructure services provider, and works with some of the largest sporting federations, broadcasters, and content producers in the world. Through their network, cloud, mobility, security and media services, Tata Communications is enabling digital transformation for over 300 of the Fortune 500 companies.

As businesses deal with the Covid-19 crisis, circumstances demand adaptability at tailoring your video and digital infrastructure to enable better collaboration among your employees and sustain your audience's experience. Tata Communications can offer a range of video and digital infrastructure services that can transform your content distribution strategy, orchestrate cloud-based virtualized workflows and enable remote production from home, driving operational efficiencies for your business.