Channel 4 Enhance All4 Offering with M2A VOD

Already making full use of M2A Media's cloud-based M2A LIVE solution to capture, package and deliver its late and live content (such as flagship programme, Channel 4 News and tier 1 sporting events), UK public service broadcaster, Channel 4, was looking for a solution to process and publish a back catalogue of 20,000 hours to all platforms under the All4 brand. M2A VOD was chosen by the UK broadcaster, based on the product's technical agility, accuracy and operational efficiency.

The Challenge

Re-processing a vast and diverse catalogue of high value assets brings with it a number of unique challenges. Initially, M2A went through the process of requirements gathering, vetting a sample set of source assets to lockdown input expectations based on media format, resolution and audio track configuration. The bespoke aspect of this project required; stitching media parts together to output a seamless programme, correcting display aspect ratio (when required), exporting a suite of renditions based on Android, iOS, and Xbox

platform specifications, handling subtitle offset correction for iOS packages, and referencing an associated subtitle within the manifest metadata of DASH packages prior to delivery to C4.

In order to reduce operational overhead, M2A was also keen to add a source validation step in the workflow, which would probe source media against requirements within a transcode request, and either accept or reject the job. The desire for this step was two-fold; firstly to reduce costs by preventing any unnecessary transcodes, and secondly to help Channel 4 triage issues quickly.
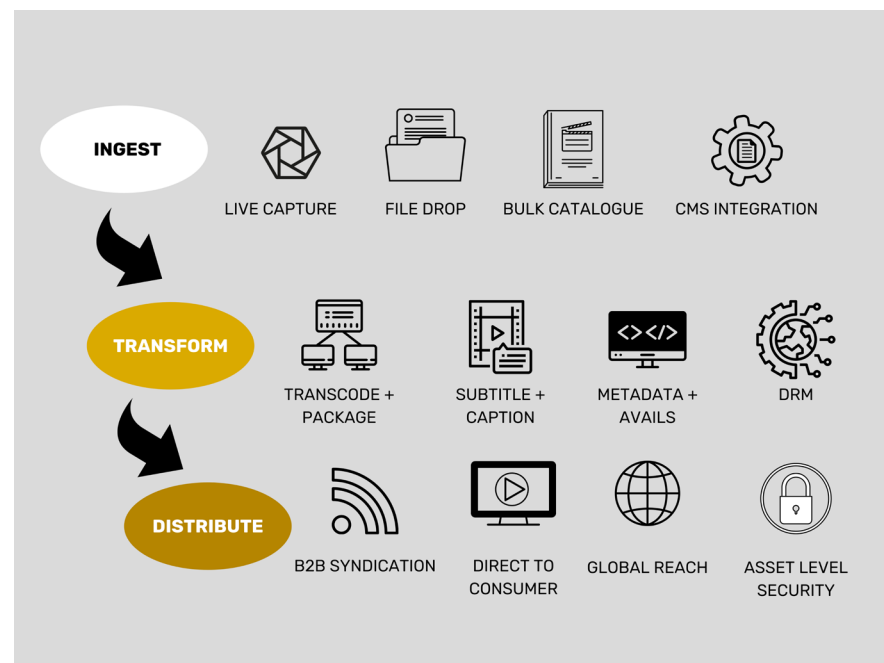
The Solution

To ensure a timely and agile delivery, Channel 4 and M2A strategically prioritised the build, testing and delivery of each profile. Subsequently, all assets were processed and re-published to a variety of C4's partner platforms, including Roku, Xbox, Virgin and Tivo, meeting several hard deadlines within the time-span of a few months. Focusing on one platform specification at a time, and using AWS MediaConvert and AWS scaling policies, M2A was able to iterate each profile to improve efficiencies in the workflow,

reduce bottlenecks and also ramp up deliveries back to Channel 4, processing over 2,500 hours of media per month.

Conclusion

Using M2A VOD and the expertise of the M2A engineering team to implement additional customised logic, Channel 4 benefitted from a robust solution. M2A VOD was able to scale on demand and deliver quality assured outputs using AWS services, and re-publish the entire back catalogue to Channel 4 VOD partner platforms, maintaining customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Always looking ahead to new advances in technology, M2A has since been updating its VOD product stack to incorporate AWS Step Functions. To improve the orchestration of sequenced AWS Lambda functions and reduce the challenges of debugging failures within the workflow, these updates will promote automatic error handling, retry logic, and in turn, further reduce operational overhead.

INGEST
LIVE CAPTURE   FILE DROP   BULK CATALOGUE   CMS INTEGRATION

TRANSFORM
TRANSCODE + PACKAGE   SUBTITLE + CAPTION   METADATA + AVAILS   DRM

DISTRIBUTE
B2B SYNDICATION   DIRECT TO CONSUMER   GLOBAL REACH   ASSET LEVEL SECURITY

"M2A VOD was the perfect solution for this particular project. It was able to flex with the demands of the workflow and provided us with the high quality outputs that we required. The M2A team were a pleasure to work with and the project was completed efficiently and in good time."

Andy Bell
Chief Engineer at Channel 4