

# **B** BROADCAST & FILM

GLOBAL MEDIA FOR BROADCAST,  
FILM, POST & INFOTAINMENT  
TECHNOLOGY & BUSINESS

JULY - AUGUST 2021

NÜRNBERG MESSE

## THE OTT CONUNDRUM



### ENTERTAINMENT HUB - THE BIG PICTURE

LIVEU ACQUISITION  
BY CARLYLE

BIJU'S VFX  
JOURNEY



REGULATORY CURBS



QUBE WIRE MOVIE  
DELIVERY ON AWS CLOUD

**2021**  
Media Kit

**BROADCAST & FILM**  
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# BROADCAST & FILM

- Your #1 Resource to Reach

**Broadcast, Film, Post & Infotainment Technology Markets in India**



Broadcast & Film – [www.broadcastandfilm.com](http://www.broadcastandfilm.com) – is a leading online publication serving the broadcast, film, post and infotainment technology markets globally. From being published since 1991, to its shift to the online platform in 2013, the magazine has established itself as a credible source for industry news, analysis and technology trends in the broadcast and entertainment technology industry. We cover the emerging new technologies and trends, including the transition to the digital phase of the ever-evolving media and entertainment sector.

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If your company wants MAXIMUM visibility in the broadcast, post-production market, then Broadcast & Film is your #1 Resource. Broadcast & Film will provide your company with an effective package of advertising via our industry leading online digital media, E-newsletter, broadcast e-mail service, mailing lists, and website to reach the broadcast markets.

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- ❖ News & Feature Page - \$150 per month

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- ❖ Dedicated broadcast e-mail \$ 200 – 1 round
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### Web Requirements

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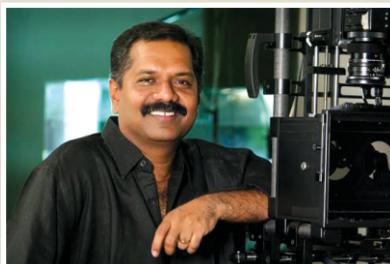
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**MANOJ MADHAVAN**  
*Editor*

***The pandemic impact has been felt by the television, cable and DTH, but not to the extent of the theatre industry. OTT has flourished and proliferated.***

***The vendors in the broadcast business are now looking at measures to keep themselves afloat, so, the mantra for them is to re-invent and re-establish and think out of the box.***

***Some of them are attempting that and will succeed.***

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## From the Editor's Desk

*The Entertainment Hub – The Final Picture is the theme of the cover of this issue where we have tried to show the various cross-sections of the ecosystem which co-exist to support the end result ie the final picture. Now how the final picture gets created, distributed with the right mix of VFX, colour grading is the visually aesthetic visual or picture what we see. The medium of distribution, whether through OTT, Satellite, Theatrical... etc all land up with the final picture.*

*We have attempted to touch the various aspects of the ecosystem in this issue. Be it the VFX, OTT, Movie Delivery to the Theatres by Cloud, Linear Television Channel Expansion. All of this makes this a very interesting issue. And finally we touch the critical aspect of the Regulatory Curbs or the regulatory zeal of the Govt to ensure that the content falls in line within its justified parameters as defined by them. Whether the regulatory policies are correct, I think the judiciary of this country will decide and it will drag on for years.*

*The point I am trying to make is that its time to have things streamlined within the entertainment ecosystem and have one nodal body probably set up by the I&B Ministry which can oversee the critical issues plaguing the industry. Something similar to the role of the Chief of the Defence Staff which oversees the issues of the Army, Air Force and Navy and plays an integrating role. So, the Nodal Authority can oversee the smooth functioning of the OTT, Television, Theatrical and Social Media and Film Industry. I guess even the Telecom industry can be included in this. With the onset of 5G it will be interesting to see how the industry progresses further*

*The pandemic has hit the theatrical industry very badly. The impact has been felt by the television, cable and DTH, but not to the extent of the theatre industry. OTT has flourished and proliferated.*

*The vendors in the broadcast business are now looking at measures to keep themselves afloat in the midst of this deadly pandemic. So, the mantra for them is to re-invent and re-establish and think out of the box. Some of them are attempting that and will succeed because the entertainment industry is one such segment which will bounce back. As the saying goes 'The Show must go on'. And so the Show shall go on.*

**Manoj Madhavan - Editor**

## DISCOVERY NEW CORPORATE SPORTS BRAND



Discovery has unleashed a new corporate brand to represent its portfolio of sports brands, channels and platforms.

Discovery Sports will encompass Eurosport, Global Cycling Network (GCN), Global Mountain Bike Network (GMBN), Golf Digest and GOLFTV powered by PGA TOUR, as well sport on discovery+ and Discovery's free-to-air networks.

The new group will be headed by Eurosport's Andrew Georgiou under the new title of President of Sports. He will continue to report to Discovery International CEO Jean-Briac Perrette.

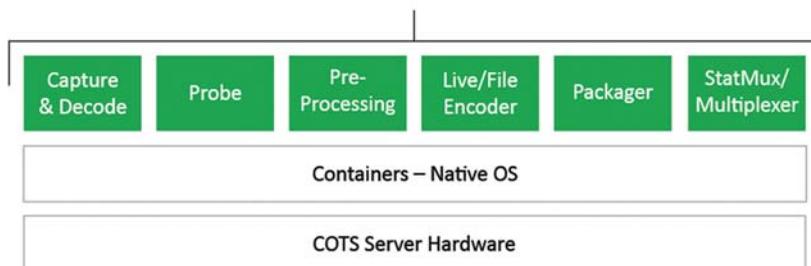
In addition to his work at Eurosport, Play Sports Group and Discovery's Global Sports Rights, Georgiou is adding responsibility for GOLFTV and Golf Digest.

Eurosport is being included on discovery+ as part of the phased international rollout of the service. Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 will be available to watch on discovery+ in Denmark, Finland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Spain and the UK. In all other European markets, except Russia, Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 will be available on Eurosport digital services.

## ATEME'S TITAN LIVE ENABLES TCCL TO LAUNCH CONVERGED HEADEND IN INDIA

ATEME, the leader in video delivery solutions for broadcast, cable TV, DTH, IPTV and OTT, today announced that TCCL (Thamizhaga Cable TV Communication Pvt Ltd), one of the largest cable distribution companies in India, with a strong emphasis on quality of service and content, has chosen to implement ATEME's TITAN Live solution for its cable TV platform.

The leading multi-system operator in Tamilnadu, TCCL has recently upgraded its headend platform to complement its existing cable service offering. ATEME's TITAN Live is being used to deliver a high-quality cable-TV offering to TCCL customers.



TITAN Live enables TCCL to improve its subscribers' viewing experience while reducing operational costs, by ensuring exceptional video quality at very low bitrates. It also makes operations easier thanks to its full software approach, which simplifies deployments and operations: profile reconfigurations, automatic switchovers, and fast updates become much easier. And it reduces CAPEX as it runs on any COTS or virtualized server.

Mr Sakilan, Managing Director, TCCL, commented: "We have always had a strong emphasis on quality of service and content. ATEME's TITAN Live met our need for the best quality of image coupled with the most efficient bandwidth saving – better than any other vendor. We are very pleased with our choice – both in terms of the product, and the unparalleled support we received from the ATEME team, which understands our priorities and our need to provide content of the best quality to our current and future audiences."

Gautier Vandomme, VP Sales – APAC, ATEME, added: "We are very excited to be on this journey with TCCL. Viewers in India have such a rich variety of content to choose from; it is a great satisfaction to be helping them view this content at the best quality."

## MX PLAYER DEPLOYS NEW BREAKTHROUGH



MX Player has upgraded its encoding and compression technology and delivering a new breakthrough technology. The online video accounts for 80% of consumer internet traffic and the user experience continues to remain highly dependent on data usage and network speed. MX Player has become the world's first OTT platform to upgrade its video encoding and compression technology to H.266 (Versatile Video Coding) that slashes data usage for streaming videos by more than half. MX Player as well as MX TakaTak users will be the first in the world to experience the benefits of H.266, enabling them to consume higher quality HD video streams with significantly less data consumption.

With H.266, MX Player users will be able to stream more content with less data and network bandwidth - video streams will load faster and buffer less since they require only half (or less) the data it would need otherwise. H.266/VVC is the world's most advanced video codec designed to succeed H.264/AVC and H.265/HEVC used by most of the streaming video services worldwide today.

Karan Bedi, CEO, MX Player and MX TakaTak, said, "Video consumption dominates internet usage wherever you go across India, but the quality of experience deteriorates in areas with inconsistent data networks. The new standard is an opportunity for MX Player to give millions of users, regardless of where they are, an exceptional streaming experience that allows them to consume content the way content creators intended: faster loading, buffering-free, and true-to-life HD quality."

## IABM LAUNCHES BAM ZONE™ - The Digital Engagement Platform for Broadcast, Media & Entertainment



IABM launched the BaM Zone™ IABM BaM Live (bamzone.online) - the digital engagement platform and meeting place for the entire Broadcast, Media & Entertainment industry.

The BaM Zone™ is designed to be a destination where all IABM members, partners, stakeholders and subscribers can meet, exchange ideas, discuss trends and technologies, collaborate, and access the latest innovations in technology to help them do better business. The BaM Zone™ also offers the ability for participants to set up private meeting rooms, focus groups and even host their own events.

IABM research has highlighted how much the industry has missed the face-to-face contact that in-person events deliver. However, the industry has also adopted digital communications as a partial 'workaround' – the success of which is leading it to keep using this new way of working in future, alongside in-person, as part of a more efficient and eco-conscious approach post pandemic. As a result of its initiatives to bridge the communications gap during lockdowns, IABM became one of the trusted global sources for the industry, BaM Live!™ events being a prime example. The BaM Zone™ builds on this and extends the collaborative, information-sharing spirit of these events into an 'always on' interactive platform for continuous engagement with all the facilities required for people to communicate and get together.

"Business models are rapidly changing to continuous engagement – it naturally follows that relationships will move to being 'always on' as well," said Peter White, CEO at IABM. "In-person regional events will of course continue to play a vital role as cadences within this continuum. The BaM Zone™ is conceived to continue those engagements throughout the year and in every geography."

## TEDIAL TAPS TWO OF ITS OWN FOR LEADERSHIP ROLES

*Manuel Martínez named Business Development Manager,  
Jose Luis Montero increases sales management responsibilities*



Tedral, the leading independent MAM technology solutions specialist, has tapped two of its own to assume larger roles in the Company's hierarchy as it continues to develop its next generation Media Integration Platform. Emilio L. Zapata, Tedral founder, has

## NETFLIX'S FIRST GLOBAL POST-PRODUCTION UNIT IN MUMBAI



Netflix's first fully owned, live-action, full-service post-production facility globally will be set up in Mumbai and will be fully operational by June 2022. The facility will have 40 offline editing rooms designed as a flexible, collaborative and inspiring environment for showrunners, directors, editors and sound designers to create their best work.

With innovation and collaboration as the key focus, the facility will pioneer advanced media management workflows that will allow a seamless partnership with India's post-production community.

Netflix invested Rs 3,000 crore in local programming over 2019 and 2020 to build a universe of Indian stories. This March, it announced a line-up of 41 titles featuring more variety and diversity — from the biggest films and series to gripping documentaries and reality, and ingenious comedy formats. It launched NetFX last year, a platform that enables multiple Indian artists to work on VFX for titles globally. It is investing in the latest technologies and skill development through multiple certifications and training workshops in post-production, script writing and other aspects of creative production.

announced that Manuel Martínez has been promoted to Tedral's Business Development Manager from his position as Regional Sales Director, Spain; and José Luis Montero has increased his sales management responsibilities from Regional Sales Director of LATAM / Middle East to include Spain and Portugal as well. Both appointments are effective immediately.

"We are fortunate to have such talented and experienced professionals on our team as the industry transitions to a new era driven by Cloud, AI and SaaS, and the company moves toward a next generation Media Integration Platform," says Zapata. "Manuel's comprehensive insight of the challenges the M&E sector faces in this time of unprecedented change, along with his deep knowledge of customers' expectations will be invaluable when we roll out our groundbreaking platform. And José Luis's vast proficiency and deep understanding of the industry mixed with his proven track record will be key assets for Tedral customers in Spain and Portugal as they have been for those in LATAM and the Middle East."



**JOSÉ LUIS MONTERO**

Martínez, who is based at company headquarters in Malaga, has assumed the responsibility of developing business and marketing strategies for Tedral's next generation of services. He will work with Tedral's senior management, sales and marketing to assess market reach, evaluate opportunities and put best practices in place to build new business channels.

"New technologies and operational needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic have caused a disruption in the M&E market. Tedral is at the forefront of this technology transition and is well prepared to offer new services that meet the M&E industry's evolving needs, enabling next generation user experiences. I am proud that Tedral trusts me to lead this new challenge, aligning the different areas of the company



**MANUEL MARTÍNEZ**

involved in the business development of these next generation services, including sales, marketing and partnerships." says Martínez.

Montero joined Tedral in 2017 as Regional Sales Director, LATAM. His proven track record in strategic planning and customer development led to the swift expansion of his regional responsibilities to include the Middle East. Montero will now add Spain and Portugal to his current role as Manuel Martínez moves into the position of Business Development Manager.

## NEWS12 CHOOSES POLYGON IPSUM AND UNREAL ENGINE FOR ADDITIONAL MASTER CONTROL ROOM GRAPHICS CHANNELS

Polygon Labs, an innovative studio pushing the boundaries of interactive

## WALT DISNEY APPOINTS JOPEK



Walt Disney has roped in Malgorzata Jopek as marketing director CE, Media Networks at the Walt Disney Company.

Jopek was most recently the managing partner at Good Good Group, prior to which she held senior positions at ATM Grupa, TV Discovery Polska (11 years and four months), Warner Bros (8 years and three months),



**MALGORZATA JOPEK**

HBO and (again) TVN Discovery Polska.

She began her career at Grupa RMF in 1993. In her new role she will be responsible for the marketing of Disney channels in Central Europe.



3D creation platform, Unreal Engine. News12 Networks, consisting of seven local cable news channels in the New York area, owned by Altice USA, uses Polygon Ipsum, a cloud-based, enterprise-level application that enables streamlined management, data curation and centralized scheduling, to centralize its master control graphics solution for its seven stations.

Recently, News12 expanded its Master Control graphics operations with seven additional Unreal Engine graphic outputs controlled by Polygon Ipsum. News12 wanted to expand its ticker operations across multiple channels while increasing its sponsorship capabilities and efficiency with the latest real-time graphics render technology.

The network chose Polygon Ipsum and Unreal Engine to run multiple on-air tickers, weather graphics, channel branding and events-based graphics. Ipsum seamlessly aggregates all News12's incoming data feeds, controls multiple Unreal Engine outputs, and provides a simple, efficient, and highly scalable interface for its producers and journalists to manage, curate, share and playout these feeds from any browser at any location.

"It's important for us to establish look and feel that can be informative and dynamic because we want to engage our viewers to the fullest extent and distinguish ourselves from the competition," explains Travis Machacek, Director of Technical Operations, News12. "Polygon Ipsum gives our graphics that unique look plus it's cost-effective, scalable, and gives us unlimited graphics control and coordination."

## SOUTH AFRICA'S ELDOS FM MOVES TO AOIP WITH CALREC'S TYPE R FOR RADIO



Community radio broadcaster Eldos FM in Johannesburg, South Africa, is the latest broadcaster to take advantage of the benefits of IP with Calrec's Type R for radio console. The station, which launched in 2008 and has 60,000 listeners and growing, now has one Type R console with 6-fader panels and a large soft panel in each of its two new studios. The studio build was handled by Experience Audio Solutions, chosen by Calrec's South Africa partner Wild & Marr.

Lorreal De Lange, Station Manager at Eldos FM, said, "The MDDA (Media

## ORBAN REORGANIZES PCN1600 SALES

Orban Labs, the global leader in audio processing for AM, FM, DAB+, HD Radio, TV and Internet broadcasting, announced that it is reorganizing sales of its PCn1600 audio processing software. For several years, Modulation Index and StreamS had an exclusive license to sell PCn1600 processing; that exclusivity ended this week.

“All Orban dealers worldwide can now add our PCn1600 to their Orban product portfolio,” said David Day, Orban President. “PCn1600 users have enjoyed the clarity and intelligibility that only Orban can provide, and we want them to continue offering this high quality to their listeners. We will also honor the outstanding balance of any Modulation Index and StreamS support contract free of charge,” said Day.

PCn1600 was developed by Bob Orban to bring the company’s legendary audio processing technology to audio streaming operating natively on Windows PC platforms. Orban has used variants of the PCn1600 in its acclaimed XPN-AM processor and in the Linux-based Ross RSAP.



its multi-faceted and futuristic infrastructure.”

Both of the station’s Type R cores have the ability to handle 8 x 6-fader panels which gives them a total of 48 physical faders, and with the fader panels being dual layer, the station has access to 96 channels at the push of a button.

Eldos FM provides social, economic, cultural and political coverage for people of Eldorado Park and surrounding communities. Listeners tune in to news, interviews, music, and a wide range of shows.

“Our team built a full turnkey studio solution which included wiring the entire studio. We designed and supplied custom-made furniture, double-glass windows, acoustic doors and panels. The system was fully tested before the handover and it sounded superb,” said Tumelo Maimela, owner of Experience Audio Solutions.

“IP in the broadcast environment is becoming more widespread in South Africa as evidenced by this latest deal with Eldos FM. We’re so excited that Type R is quickly becoming the go-to IP console in the region, with its rich feature set, minimal cabling and its simple touchscreen interface,” commented Graham Murray, International Sales Manager, Calrec. ■

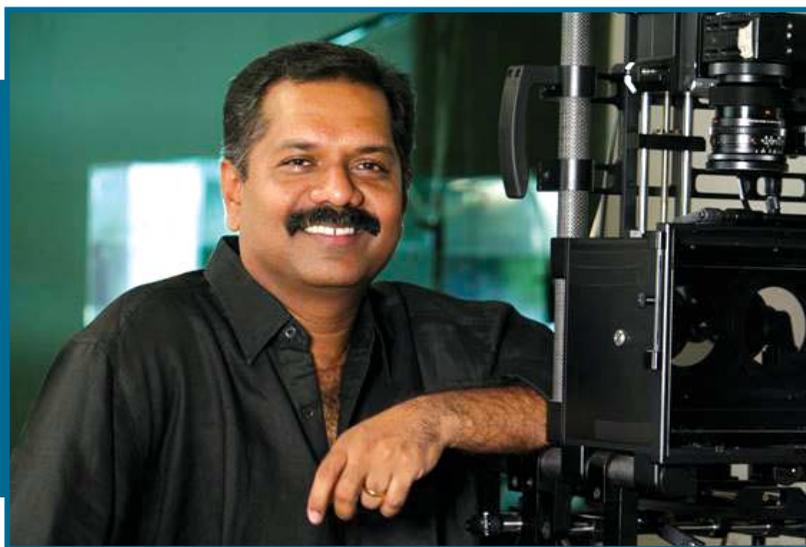
Development and Diversity Agency) granted Eldos FM funding to build two new studios and our installer/service provider, A b u n d a n t Media, took us to Wild & Marr to explore the latest technology. We decided on the Calrec Type R for Radio because of

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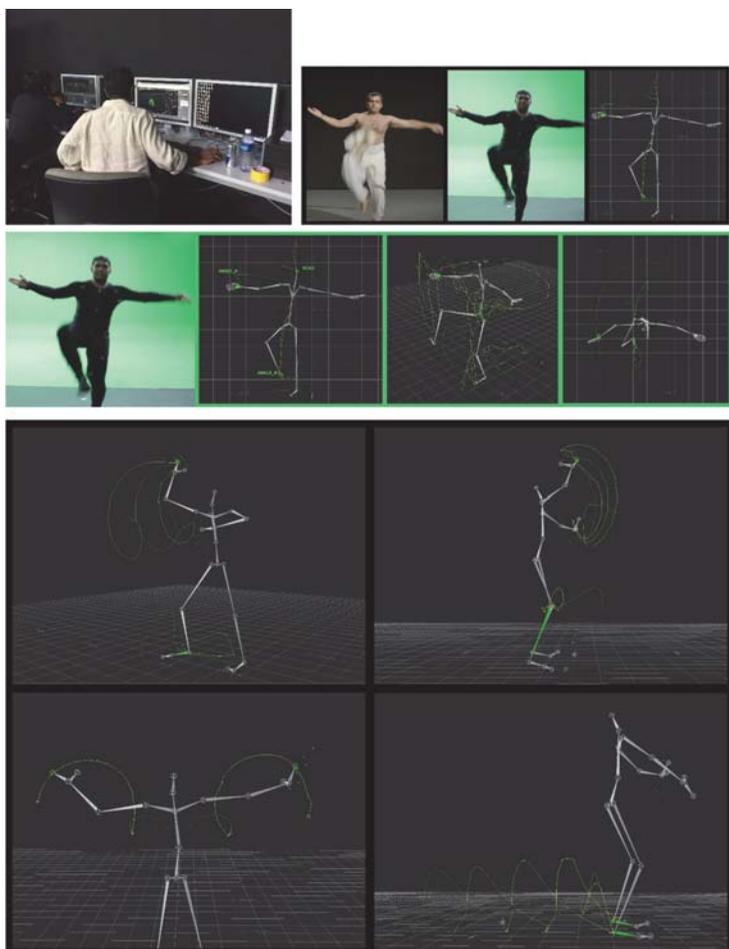
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## ON A VFX JOURNEY WITH BIJU DHANAPALAN



Kathakali motion analysis at School of Art Design & Media, NTU, Singapore

*Biju Dhanapalan* – the name evokes an immense amount of awe and respect in the VFX arena by the sheer magnitude of his track record. As animation and visual effects (VFX) supervisor, Biju has successfully contributed to 120 films across Bollywood, UK, Hollywood, and French productions, winning several awards and nominations. His artistic and technical collaborations with contemporary artists have resulted in interactive art installations that have exhibited at prestigious international venues, including Solomon R Guggenheim Museum, New York, and Kochi Muziris Biennale. In parallel with his industry experience, Biju has been a faculty at the School of Art, Design and Media (ADM) at Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore, during which he designed and offered courses in motion capture, digital animation film-making as well as virtual production. His research projects pivoted around the integration of visual effects tools and methodologies with

diverse fields such as classical dance, digital art history, aerospace, and pure sciences. Biju's experience and expertise in the animation and visual effects industry has enabled him to contribute significantly to the industry. Designated as Subject Matter Expert for Singapore Government's SkillsFuture program, he was instrumental in framing the Skills Framework (SF) blueprint for the fields of animation, film-making, and gaming industries in Singapore

In an exclusive tete a tete with Manoj Madhavan, Editor of Broadcast & Film, Biju shares his VFX journey spread over a span of over two decades



**Q.1: Tell us about your journey as a VFX Director. What attracted you to this field?**

**BD:** Visual Effects (VFX) is predominantly an interdisciplinary art form – an amalgamation of pure sciences, fine art, technology, performing arts and, loads of common sense. This attracted me to VFX and it has served as a platform for me to collaborate with artists and technicians hailing from diverse

disciplines which has been extremely enriching.

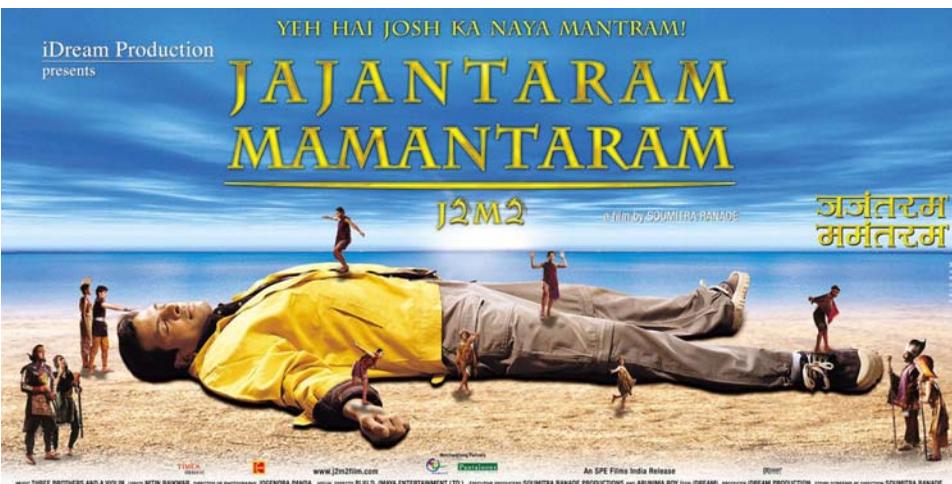
My journey spanning twenty-eight years in the industry has been that of learning and unlearning, challenging as well as exciting and at times boring in parts.

I began my career as an animator for a daily business news show; next, I headed the graphics team for India's first sci-fi TV series, and then of course feature films was the natural progression.

**Q.2: Please highlight some of your most creative and challenging VFX work. What were the major technical challenges you and your team faced for the VFX creation and how did the team overcome them?**

**BD:** Almost every film comes with its own sets of challenges that demand novel methods and methodologies, a unique set of tools, and of course unlearning to address them. If I have to cite one project, in particular, it would have to be 'Jajantaram Mamantram'. The challenges were in multitude and to begin with, it was the sheer scale of the project. We had over 700 VFX shots to be executed. To put it in context, a couple of decades ago the highest capacity hard drive available was 40GB. Thus, we had cupboards stacked with hard drives storing layers upon layers of 'Jajantaram Mamantram.' Of course, today petabyte data servers have replaced the wooden cupboards.

Another challenge in this project was filming the Lilliputians. I





Documenting history of Kathakali at the very own birthplace of Kathakali – Temple of Killimangalam Mana in Kerala

was certain I didn't want to digitally scale down the actors during compositing; instead, we filmed them 'small' by positioning the camera away from the characters 'proportionately'. The primary challenge was to maintain the precise camera angle for all the layers filmed for a given shot. This was easier said than done and more so in the absence of hi-tech angle measuring instruments for the thousands of layers filmed. I did try using professional protractor but the precision and the parallax reading errors were unacceptable. The solution came from observing a carpenter getting his angles correct by using a simple measuring tape! Knowingly or unknowingly, he was applying 'similar triangle' principles of geometry taught in school. In a similar triangle, if uniformly scaled, all the angles will remain the same and hence, there was no need for a

hi-tech angle measuring instrument to replicate the angles precisely. We managed aiming cameras with extreme precision using the humble measuring tape thousands of times. Of course, there were many more hi-tech challenges that we faced and mitigated for this feature.

**Q.3: There is a feeling that Indian Studios are not capable of delivering a VFX laden movie like Avatar, Interstellar, and Avengers. Etc. Where do you think Indian studios falter when compared to the Hollywood VFX Studios? Do we lack technical and creative manpower when compared to the West?**

**BD:** Hollywood attracts the brightest minds from across the globe that creates brilliant VFX as we all see in their movies. So, comparing Hollywood VFX studios to Indian studios would be highly

unfair. But Indian studios and technicians have made considerable contributions to Hollywood VFX blockbusters as well as to Indian cinema. Having said that, Indian studios do have a long trek ahead for sure. As you have rightly put, there is a shortage of technical and creative manpower in our studios. One look at our demography reveals that there is no dearth of either creativity or manpower in our country. We just have to figure out how to attract them.



**Q.5: Film technology has undergone major changes, right from the Kodak & Fuji film to digital cameras now used for shooting. Your take on these changing trends?**

**BD:** The sheer power of mathematics and the number-crunching prowess of modern computers have dramatically reshaped our world, and cinema is no exception. The ability to represent colours spatially across time in numbers exposed moving imagery to the world of computing. The possibilities of altering imageries and synthesizing through the computational process became accessible to the artists, and then there was no looking back! An entire ecosystem was born, right from image acquisition to manipulation to exhibition and consumption. As we all know digital technology is here to stay. The challenges are to create intuitive digital tools for the creative fraternity, be it cinematographers, illustrators, editors, musicians, editors, and so on. I think the techno-artists as I would like to call them who can harness technology to express themselves would gain tremendously. It is an ever-evolving process and I believe it will continue to be so.

**Q.6: Tell us about your current role/projects and what are your future goals?**

**BD:** All of us are aware that the VFX industry is exploring the possibilities offered by the virtual production technologies. During my tenure as faculty at Nanyang Technological University (NTU), I led a few research projects investigating the integration of real-time rendering engines (primarily games engines) with diverse fields such as classical dance, digital art history, aerospace, the natural sciences, as well as traditional filmmaking.

Some of the experiments revealed very interesting possibilities to create highly collaborative environments particularly in VFX heavy projects. VFX laden projects often call for long schedules of green screen filming and all that we see is green screen all around. Few days down the schedule, a 'green-screen fatigue' sets in and the key contributors - director, actors, cinematographer, etc. tend to break away from the collaborative/creative process of filmmaking. As a result, the onus for all creative decisions falls largely upon the VFX supervisor, where he is constantly facing a barrage of 'what do you want me to do now?' from all departments. At this point, the filmmaking process becomes highly non-collaborative, breaking the important creative flow. As a VFX director, I had been seeking means/tools to bring all the creative stakeholders back to filmmaking in the context of a VFX-heavy project. The real-time engines looked very promising in creating tools and processes mitigating the aforementioned challenge to a large extent.

For an upcoming VFX heavy project which I am involved



Kathakali motion capture at School of Art Design & Media, NTU, Singapore

in, I have been developing an extended pre-visualisation process using game engines. We did our first round of proof-of-concept filming and the results are very encouraging. We were successful in creating a platform where all the creative stakeholders could seamlessly collaborate. But yes, we do have a long road ahead. I believe Virtual Production and real-time technologies have the potential to transform the way we create content.

**Q.7: How do you look at the future of film production in the post Covid era? What are the changes you see in the VFX and the production pipeline due to the Covid pandemic?**



Experimenting with short animation films using virtual production techniques



Setting up of virtual cinematography

production to home delivery of content itself. Many new possibilities have emerged out of this crisis. Some of the artists I know have been able to work for various studios across the globe from the comfort of their homes. I am also aware of various studios employing artists from across the globe the same way. Rugged connectivity and robust data security have been the backbone of this transformation. Yes, the visceral quality of working together in the same physical space has been compromised but the commute time, as well as the flexible work timing, has amply compensated. I think a hybrid model of working in the studio and work-from-home would be the norm. More tools for a collaborative environment will evolve to aid this pipeline. Recently I have been involved in a project where artists from different continents worked on one single shot using one physical workstation simultaneously. This has been a first for me.

**Q.8: Which are the directors you have enjoyed working with most in your journey so far? And which are the global VFX director you are impressed with?**



Academy award winner Prof Ben Shedd filming with the Virtual Camera developed at NTU

**BD:** I have had the privilege and pleasure of working with many outstanding artists and technicians primarily from our film industry and a few from Hollywood as well. Collaborating with auteurs such as Raju Hirani, Sriram Raghavan, Ram Madhvani, Rajesh Mapuskar to name a few, has been an enriching as well as a learning experience. Working with Tom Stern as well as Joel Hynek had been an absolute delight. Among VFX supervisors, I admire many but I would like to mention Roger Guyett and Dennis Muren.

**Q.9: You have been involved as a professor in one of the leading media colleges in Singapore for over 7 years. Please share your experience of the same and how can Indian media education sector evolve in the aspects of filmmaking, cinematography, VFX and animation.**

**BD:** I was always fascinated by the synergies involved in the interdisciplinary nature of VFX as well as film making. NTU's wonderful infrastructure and environment for research and education allowed me to dive deeper into this space. As an animator, classical dance forms has been a constant source of inspiration for graceful motion. This led me into engaging Motion Capture technology to encapsulate the spatiotemporal data of classical dance forms, primarily Kathakali, a 500-year-old Indian dance form. The motion capture data served as a base for analysing the kinesiology of classical dance and material for emerging media artists to utilize for kinetic art. Further, the motion capture data served as a digital archival of tangible and intangible heritage. Visual effects tools and methodologies were also engaged in other areas like aerospace, art history, paleontology and so on. All of them yielded encouraging results.

I remember Iridium, the satellite phone company had once said 'Geography is History,' and I believe it largely holds for today's information age. Abundant knowledge abounds and is a push or a touch away; focus shifts from where to procure the knowledge to what to embrace. It is imperative to learn how to retain the relevant and discard the inconsequential. The methods, tools, and techniques of animation and visual effects are continuously evolving. The cycle of constant learning and unlearning is what will keep us alive in this space. In India, we have a tendency to emphasise on just the craft rather than the art and craft of a discipline as a whole. I believe it is imperative to focus and strengthen the fundamentals to endure the shifting landscape of media and emerge as game-changers. ■

# QUBE CINEMA TAKES MOVIES FROM STAGE TO SCREEN FASTER ON AWS

## Bringing Movies to Market Quicker via Digital File Delivery

Qube Cinema, Inc is a provider of end-to-end digital cinema technology and solutions. Among its extensive product portfolio is a self-service, single-window system for global theatrical distribution called Qube Wire. Built on Amazon Web Services (AWS), Qube Wire is used to send movie files via electronic transfer from distributors to theaters in 133 countries.

## Enabling Global Day-and-Date Releases in as Little as 12 Hours

In the past five years, day-and-date releases—wherein globally coordinated movie releases occur on the same day—have become a standard for Hollywood studios. This has succeeded in combatting piracy as movies are legitimately available in foreign markets at the same time as Hollywood, thus reducing the incentive and demand for pirated versions online.

Based in India, Qube has its roots in the domestic film industry. The company was the first among its peers to enable global day-and-date capabilities for producers in India, so audiences abroad could enjoy same-day Bollywood releases. After achieving dominance in the Indian industry, Qube expanded to Hollywood, where it now serves most major film distributors.

Hard drive delivery takes an average of two days, often longer with multiple stops needed to reach theaters



Compared to the prior industry standard of digital media content saved on secure hard drives and delivered by mail to theaters, Qube Wire substantially reduces the time and logistical complexity of releasing movies to theater chain partners. Electronic transfer via Qube Wire on AWS also saves costs, simplifies the transfer process, and reduces the carbon footprint for transporting digital movie files.

Day-and-date releases previously required physical infrastructure in multiple countries and the involvement of numerous middlemen, including delivery drivers and shipping personnel. But Qube Wire has changed that with AWS. “Using AWS has made global day-and-date releases a lot more affordable with a lot less infrastructure,” says Mark Waterston, senior vice president at Qube Wire.

in smaller markets. Planning deliveries is also more challenging when dealing with various shipping intermediaries and their unpredictable schedules. But with Qube Wire, movies can ship direct from distributors to theaters in as little as 12 hours. “By connecting theaters to AWS, we can deliver movie files directly to customers globally and avoid regional shipping hubs or hops. This has been invaluable to our customers as they take advantage of

increasingly shorter delivery timelines,” Waterston says.

### **Saving the Environment While Preserving Film Quality**

The positive impact on the environment is huge, as electronic file transfer eliminates the carbon emissions generated in the delivery of hard drives via airplanes and road vehicles. Many theaters still opt to receive films via hard drives, but even in that scenario Qube can send electronic files over Qube Wire to a local agent, shortening the distance to deliver the drives.

Theaters no longer have to store bulky hard disks, and there’s a corresponding reduction in non-biodegradable waste—a topic that has garnered substantial discussion and criticism in the film industry in recent years. Theaters receiving electronic movie files directly also save at least 1–2 hours of work per film, as their employees don’t need to receive, load, and transfer hard drives onto local servers. Less human interaction leads to fewer errors during processing, less risk of file corruption, and little to no risk of files going missing during transfers or shipping.

### **Cutting Costs by 80% with Archival on AWS**

Qube benefits from a substantial decrease in cost for storing and archiving films on AWS. Movies are large digital assets with average file sizes of around 150 GB. Considering that most movies are archived for dozens of years, if not forever, the industry has immense storage requirements. To keep costs down while satisfying long-term storage needs, Qube is using Amazon Simple Storage Service (Amazon S3) Glacier and Amazon S3 Glacier Deep Archive. These services offer fast file retrieval options for efficient access to current movies or those archived in years past.

After a movie is uploaded to

Qube Wire, it stays in Amazon S3 for 45 days. This covers the initial delivery period and ensures content is readily available if it needs to be resent or sent to new locations added later in a movie’s release cycle. Then, the film is transitioned to Amazon S3 Glacier for archival. With Amazon S3 Glacier and Amazon S3 Glacier Deep Archive, Qube saves 80 percent in storage costs. The company currently stores 2.4 PB of files in Amazon S3 Glacier Deep Archive and 107 TB in Amazon S3

**“By connecting theaters to AWS, we can deliver movie files directly to customers globally and avoid regional shipping hubs or hops.”**

**Mark Waterston**  
*Senior Vice President, Qube Wire*

Glacier. For each file sent end-to-end electronically, Qube saves about \$125 on the physical hard drive and protective packaging in addition to shipping costs.

“Amazon S3 Lifecycle policies transition content from Amazon S3 Glacier to Amazon S3 Glacier Deep Archive after 45 days, which saves cost and frees us from having to develop and maintain this logic in our services. This has turned out to be a perfect solution for theatrical content that sees a lot of use around its release and then is rarely sent again,” Waterston says.

Archival digital movie content on Amazon S3 Glacier and Amazon S3 Glacier Deep Archive is also superior to hard drives or tape to maintain data integrity, as the latter entails a higher degree of risk from damage to physical

equipment. Waterston says, “The durability offered by Amazon S3 enables us to provide solid guarantees to our customers who are relying on us to store their high-value content.”

### **Securing High-Value Content during Storage and Transfer**

Qube uses Amazon CloudFront for electronic file transfer of dynamic movie and ad content from Amazon S3 to theater locations. With Amazon CloudFront, Qube and its customers benefit from advanced security capabilities, including field-level encryption and protection against DDoS and other types of attacks.

To further streamline security, the business leverages AWS Certificate Manager for efficient administration of Transport Layer Security (TLS) certificates, which are used to deliver web content securely between distributors and theaters. Qube uses AWS Identity and Access Management (IAM) and AWS Single Sign-On (SSO) to maintain fine-grained access control to its infrastructure and stored content.

### **Expanding and Experimenting without Barriers**

Qube continues to build on its product offering, taking advantage of the AWS pay-per-use pricing model to experiment with new services on AWS that could enhance theatrical content delivery. The company has expanded its reach into the Middle East and Asia Pacific region, without barriers to scalability or cost-effectiveness.

“As we contemplate expanding our services into a new region, AWS Global Cloud Infrastructure enables us to proceed with little or no concern about having to build out the backend infrastructure. This has been a significant factor in our successful expansion into traditionally challenging regions like the Middle East and Asia Pacific,” concludes Waterston. ■



# THE OTT CONUNDRUM

*The rise of OTT viewership and its growth has been phenomenal in the last few years. So has been the technology. Broadcast & Film attempts to get a perspective of the OTT business.*

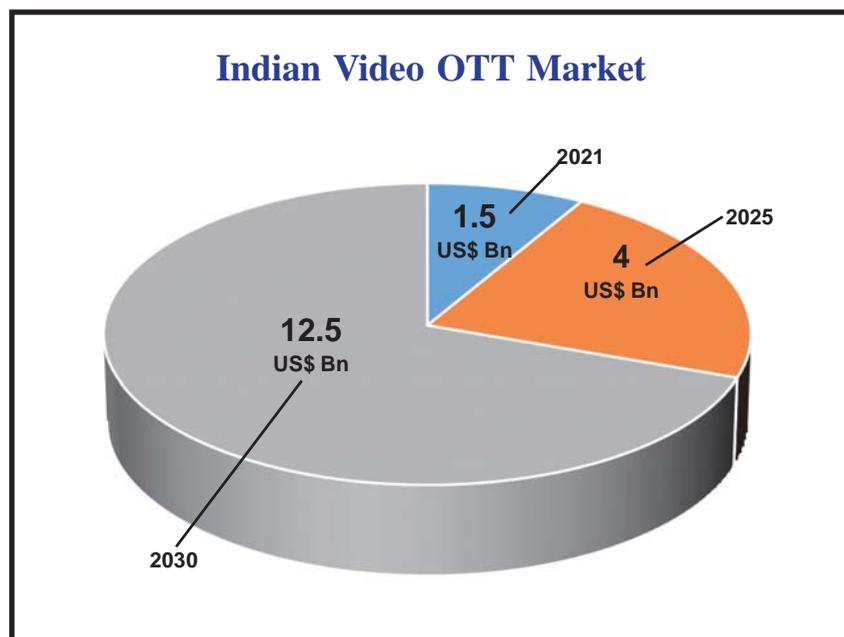
Gone are the days when family members fought for screen time of choice on family's singular home devices. An undeniable trend surfaced in this period with the adoption of OTTs. OTTs offer a never before consumer experience – choice of content, ease of access, choice of device / mediums (hand phone, laptop, tablet or TV screen), liberal censorship policy.

Over the Top (OTT) Entertainment is burgeoning into a multi-billion-dollar industry in the country. The size of the Video and Audio OTT market in FY 2020 was in the range of US\$ 1.7 Billion.

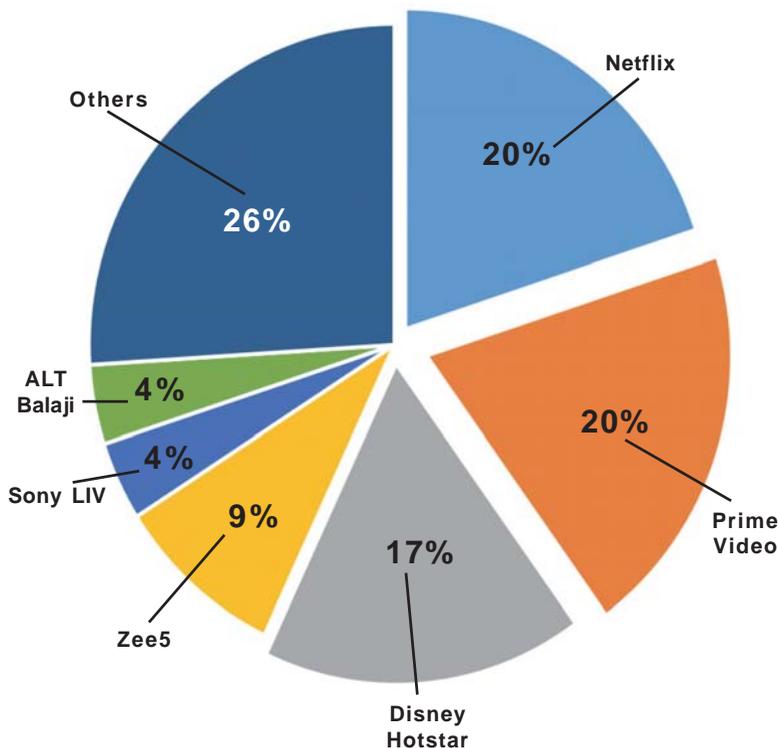
With access to better networks, digital connectivity and smartphones, OTT platforms in India have been increasingly attracting subscribers on a concurrent basis. Apart from top favorites viz Disney+ Hotstar, Amazon Prime Video and

Netflix, the space is seeing a plethora of local and regional OTT players, such as SonyLIV, Voot, Zee5, ErosNow, ALTBalaji, Hoichoi and

Adda Times, to name just a few. The OTT market in India is expected to grow at a CAGR of 28.6% over the next four years.



### Video OTT Market Share 2020



### Video OTT Market Key Segments

- ❖ **Subscription-based video on demand (SVOD)**  
Users pay subscription charges to get access to the content repository
- ❖ **Advertising-based video-on-demand (AVOD)**  
Users watch content for free and platform earns revenue through advertisements
- ❖ **Freemium**  
Users watch content for free upto a certain limit and platform earns revenue through both advertisements and subscription
- ❖ **Transactional video-on-demand (TVOD)**  
Users pay one-time payment per view instead of subscribing to the OTT packages
- ❖ **Telecom Revenue**  
Users need to pay telco charges and receive complimentary access to the OTT platforms

## What future holds for OTT industry

OTT Industry is poised for aggressive growth prospects with access to better networks, digital connectivity and smartphones. OTT platforms in India have been increasingly attracting subscribers on a daily basis. Apart from top favourites Disney+ Hotstar, Amazon Prime Video and Netflix, the space is seeing a plethora of local and regional OTT players, such as SonyLIV, Voot, Zee5, ErosNow, ALTBalaji, Hoichoi and Adda Times, to name just a few. The OTT landscape is expected to get hyper competitive in next 4-5 years and the OTT service providers

will strive to emerge as the preferred platform among the consumers.

The massive investments made by OTT services like Netflix, Amazon, Disney+ Hotstar and others in originals as well as acquired content will help subscription video-on-demand make up 93% of the total OTT revenue (as compared to 87% globally), increasing at a CAGR of 30.7% between 2019-2024. Further, the next wave of growth in OTT landscape will come from Tier 2,3,4 cities and the Indian language speaking population.

The quality of content will always remain a major driver of consumer growth. In the recent

years, we have witnessed a massive rise in original content being aired on OTT platforms. Back in 2018, Netflix and Amazon alone had spent more than 40% of the overall production budgets of the world. Apart from creating original content and facilitating binge watching, networks and production houses have also begun to see value in getting rights to live events and performances. Audiences in India recently saw Filmfare and a streaming social network join forces for the first-ever OTT awards. This was a landmark event for India's media and entertainment industry in many ways.

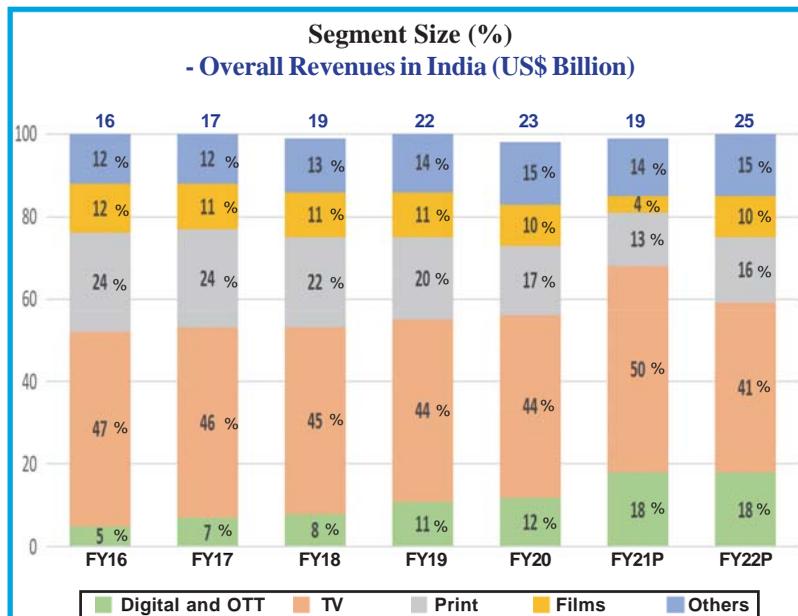
### Video OTT Industry - Key Highlights

- ❖ ARPU in the OTT video segment in India is projected at US\$ 7.2 in 2021
- ❖ MNCs and Indian firms fiercely compete and each control about half of the market
- ❖ User Penetration will increase from 25.8% in 2021 to 32.0% by 2025
- ❖ OTT users are expected to be at 462.7 Million by 2025
- ❖ Globally, US is the largest OTT market with expected revenue of US\$ 76.7 Billion in 2021

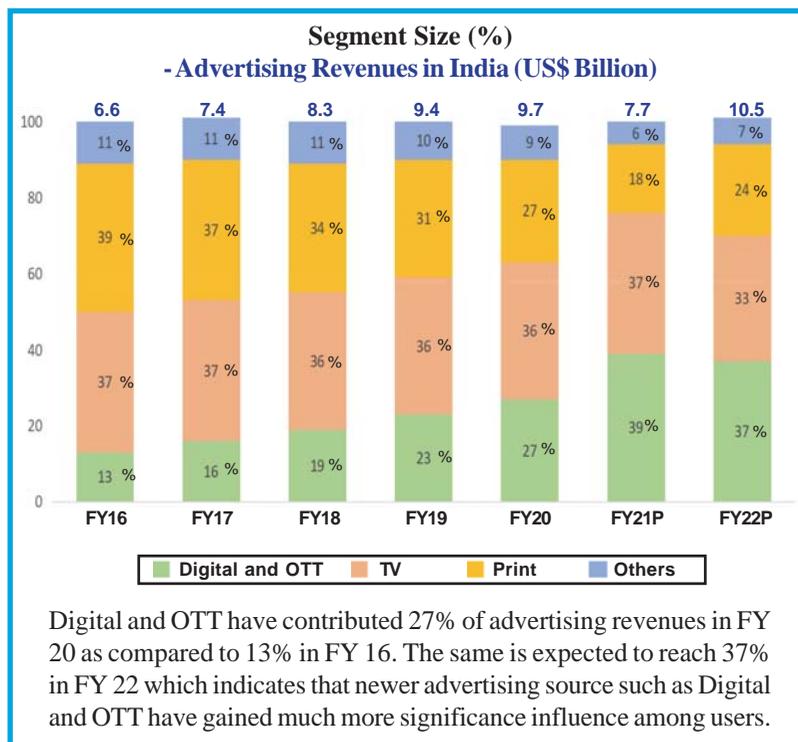
### Key Growth Drivers for OTT Platforms

- ◆ Second highest per capita consumption of online video in the world
- ◆ Cheapest mobile data in the world at INR 18.5/GB
- ◆ Growth in rural internet penetration to 24 per cent in 2018
- ◆ The number of smartphone users in India was estimated to reach over 760 million in 2021, with the number of smartphone users worldwide forecasted to exceed to 3.8 billion users in 2021.
- ◆ The average monthly data usage per user in India increased 20% year-on-year to 13.5 GB in December as Indians spent about five hours daily on a smartphone, as per the Mobile Broadband India Traffic Index (MBIT) 2021.
- ◆ A new study from Ookla ranks India 131st globally when it comes to average mobile internet speeds. The average mobile internet download speed in India is 12.41Mbps. India ranks 65th worldwide in the fixed broadband market, with an average download speed of 54.73Mbps.

### Overall Media & Entertainment Sector Analysis



Digital and OTT have contributed 12% of overall revenues in FY 20 as compared to 5% in FY 16. The same is expected to reach 18% in FY 22 which indicates that incremental market share is moving towards Digital and OTT compared to other segments.



Digital and OTT have contributed 27% of advertising revenues in FY 20 as compared to 13% in FY 16. The same is expected to reach 37% in FY 22 which indicates that newer advertising source such as Digital and OTT have gained much more significance influence among users.

## OTT Platforms - Future Outlook

### Affordable Data

Smartphones with affordable data have also brought the vibrant native speakers base of 22 scheduled Indian languages from Tier 2, 3, 4 cities online and created a massive opportunity for the domestic OTT players.

### Opportunity in tier 2, 3 and 4 cities

The next wave of growth in OTT landscape will come from our very own Tier 2,3,4 cities and the Indian language speaking population.

### Intense Competition

The OTT landscape is

expected to get hyper competitive in next 4–5 years and the OTT service providers will strive to emerge as the preferred platform among consumers.

### Viewers' habit is evolving

The viewing habits of Indian consumers have evolved a lot in the last few years. While on the one hand, short-form video content consumption on smartphones and social platforms has been on the rise, binge-watching shows on various OTT platforms have also become more common on the other hand.

### Massive Investment by OTT players

The massive investments made

by OTT services like Netflix, Amazon, Disney+ Hotstar and others in originals as well as acquired content will help subscription video-on-demand make up 93% of the total OTT revenue (as compared to 87% globally), increasing at a CAGR of 30.7% between 2019-2024

### COVID-19 pandemic is game-changing

OTT video streaming platforms including Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Disney+ Hotstar, Voot, and SonyLIV, among others, gained immense popularity in India. NASSCOM stated that OTT viewership in India is at an all-time high now.

## Key Competitive Strategies

### **NETFLIX**

**Revenue Model** - Subscription  
**Subscriber Base** - 12 Million  
**Revenue** - US\$ 120 Million (FY20)  
**Parent Company** - Netflix US

### **PRIME VIDEO**

**Revenue Model** - Subscription  
**Subscriber Base** - 12 Million  
**Revenue** - NA  
**Parent Company** - Amazon US

### **DISNEY+ HOTSTAR**

**Revenue Model** - Freemium  
**Subscriber Base** - 10 Million  
**Revenue** - US\$ 160 Million (FY19)  
**Parent Company** - Star India

### **MX Player**

**Revenue Model** - Advertising  
**Subscriber Base** - 200 Million  
**Revenue** - NA  
**Parent Company** - Times Internet

### **VOOT**

**Revenue Model** - Freemium  
**Subscriber Base** - 1 Million  
**Revenue** - NA  
**Parent Company** - Viacom 18

### **Eros Now**

**Revenue Model** - Freemium  
**Subscriber Base** - 19 Million  
**Revenue** - NA  
**Parent Company** - Eros International



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## MARKET SEGMENTS

### Subscription-based video on demand (SVOD)

Users pay subscription charges to get access to the content repository



### Advertising-based video-on-demand (AVOD)

Users watch content for free and platform earns revenue through advertisements



### Freemium

Hybrid OTT business model combining features of AVOD and SVOD



### Transactional video-on-demand (TVOD)

Users pay one-time payment per view instead of subscribing to the OTT packages



### Telecom Revenue

Users need to pay telco charges and complimentary access to the OTT platforms



# RAISING THE BAR

*In Conversation with PRANALI RAUT,  
Asst. Director – Projects, NürnbergMesse India Pvt. Ltd.*

*PRANALI RAUT is a key member of the Broadcast India and ABIS Show. Having handled the BI show for more than a decade, she is aware of all the nuances of the show. Here in an exclusive spotlight, she shares her journey in a brief rendezvous with Broadcast & Film*

**Q:** *Tell us about your association with the BI show and your professional journey.*

**PR:** Having prior experience as a Production Manager for a leading Photographer/Cinematographer and later as an Assistant Director in the film industry, I always knew that I would make my career in the broadcast, media and entertainment industry.

I started off as an intern at the Broadcast India Show during some time off between two film assignments. That was more than a decade ago! Seeing the latest technology and innovations in the industry first hand was an extremely satisfying experience. The entire process of putting together an exhibition, that too of a topic so close to my heart, was so exciting and fulfilling that when I was offered a full-time position, I took it up without batting an eyelid. It's been more than ten years that this show has been the centre of my professional life.

While the show has grown from strength to strength over the years, if you had to compare the show today to



PRANALI RAUT  
Asst. Director – Projects,  
NürnbergMesse India Pvt. Ltd.

the show from ten years ago, the one thing that stands out the most, is the diversity of exhibits on offer. The way new technology has made its way into the show, just goes to show the dynamic nature of the industry. The acceptance of the show as an industry game-changer is a testimony to the fact that we are on the right path.

Seeing the show grow the way

it has, to exploring new verticals and opportunities within the industry is what makes me certain that a choice I made a few years ago was the right one.

Even though working at the Broadcast India Show happened quite by accident, it is serendipitous that this eventually became a stepping stone to my professional career.

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

**Q:** *Among the people you've worked with, who do you admire and why*

**PR:** An industry like ours (the trade fairs/exhibitions industry) is a complete people's industry. It is entirely dependent on the seamless working of a number of people from varied profiles to ensure the successful execution of an event.



For me, it's all about the team and what each member brings to the table that matters. Thankfully, I am part of a team where our strengths and weaknesses are so aligned that we are able to support each other to get the job done. I've had the pleasure of working with colleagues who have become friends, friends who are now colleagues; and that just adds to the satisfaction at the workplace. It might sound preachy, but I do believe that it is team work that makes the dream work!

**Q:** *What's something great about your current role? Why? What motivates you to work?*

**PR:** One of the things that I like about my current role at NMIND is knowing that my opinion matters. When I am asked for my perspective or thoughts on something, I know that it will be heard and considered.

The fact that the company management encourages freedom of expression is a huge motivating factor. Knowing that the door is always open to healthy discussion, gives me the opportunity to explore new ideas and avenues.

**Q:** *Tell us about your plus points and strengths.*

**PR:** Considering our industry is people oriented, it works well for me that I am inherently a people's

person. This is something that has helped me build and maintain relationships over the years with our exhibitors and partners.

I have also had the pleasure of gaining experience in all departments of an exhibition organizer's profile, which has helped me in getting an overall wholesome perspective on the processes and challenges of each department.

**Q:** *What are some things outside of work that you're passionate about?*

**PR:** When I do get the time outside of work, I usually spend it honing my creative skills. Calligraphy, lettering, paper craft, fluid art are some of the things I try my hand at. Perfect stress-buster at the end of a busy work week!

**Q:** *Tell us about the fun part of your job?*

**PR:** Well, let's just say not many people get to go to Las Vegas and Amsterdam for work! Jokes aside, visiting industry exhibitions around the world is such an interesting and exciting part of the job. It widens your perspective on not just the broadcast, media and entertainment industry but also the exhibitions industry. Getting to network with colleagues from all over the world, see what the global industry leaders have to offer and what potential the Indian market has to grow towards makes it that much more fun. Plus, you get to explore new places and cultures – who would say no to that?!

**Q:** *What is the craziest thing on your bucket list?*

**PR:** Get my advanced certification and go scuba diving with beluga whales! ■

# NEW REGULATORY MOVES INCREASE GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT

*A column on significant developments in the media world  
By Ashok Mansukhani*



*The past few weeks have been very active for a comprehensive overhaul of Communication and Media Regulation by the Government. Some key developments are discussed below. These will bring about a uniformity in the regulatory regimes and hopefully help the legacy media/digital media and social media have clarity on the role of Regulation in steering their businesses in this exciting multimedia era.*

## 1. AMENDMENTS TO CABLE RULES 1994- WELCOME STEP TO SELF-REGULATION WITH STRONG GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT

On **17.06.2021**, the Press Information Bureau issued a press release from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting amending the **Cable Television Network Rules 1994**. This was accompanied by a tweet from the Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Mr Prakash Javedkar, stating: by amending the **Cable Television Network Rules 1994**, (has) developed a **statutory mechanism** to redress citizens grievances and complaints against programmes of T.V. channels. The @MIB India has also decided to recognise the **statutory bodies** of T.V. channels under **CTN Rules**.”

A detailed Press Information Bureau release of **17.06.2021** provided the highlights explaining that at present,

- ◆ “There is an **institutional mechanism** by way of an Inter-Ministerial Committee to address grievances of citizens relating to violation of the **Programme/ Advertising Codes under the Rules**. Similarly, various Broadcasters have also developed their **internal self-regulatory mechanism** for addressing grievances.
- ◆ However, a need was felt to lay down a **statutory mechanism** for strengthening the grievance redressal structure. Some Broadcasters had also requested for giving **legal recognition** to their associations/bodies.
- ◆ The Hon’ble Supreme Court, in its order in **W.P. (C) No. 387 of 2000 in the matter of “Common Cause Vs Union of India & Others”**

while expressing satisfaction over the existing mechanism of grievance redressal set up by the Central Government, had advised framing appropriate rules to formalise the complaint redressal mechanism.

- ◆ **“The above notification is significant as it paves the way for a strong institutional system for redressing grievances while placing accountability and responsibility on the Broadcasters and their self-regulating bodies.”**

The main changes are intended to finally shift **responsibility** for adherence to the **Advertising and Programme Codes** to the Broadcasters. The Cable Act was enacted by an Ordinance in **1994** and

became an Act in 1995. In the same year, the Supreme Court in the (1995) 2 SCC 161 Cricket Association of Bengal judgment ruled that

- ◆ Airwaves or frequencies are public property. Their use has to be controlled and regulated by a public authority in the interests of the public and to prevent the invasion of their rights. .... The Central Government shall take immediate steps to set up an independent, autonomous public authority representative of all Sections and interests in society to control and regulate the use of airwaves.

Three efforts at Broadcast/Converged Regulation in 1997/2006 and 2001 failed to pass in Parliament.

Finally, in 2008, self-regulatory bodies were set up by the Broadcasters -Indian Broadcaster Federation (IBF) and News Broadcasters Association (NBA) named Broadcast Contents Complaints Council (BCCC) and News Broadcasters Standards Authority (NBSA). A breakaway News Broadcasters Federation also set up a self-regulatory body named Professional News Broadcasters Standards Organisation -PNBSO in 2020. Unlike the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), they lacked statutory recognition till June 17, 2021.

The issue of media trials in ongoing criminal investigations has been coming up often in the Courts. In the case of Siddharth Vasisth@Manu Sharma vs State NCT of Delhi judgment in Criminal Appeal 179 of 2007 dated 19.04.2010, the Supreme Court observed that

- ◆ The freedom of speech protected under Article 19 (1) (a) of the

Constitution must be **carefully and cautiously used** to avoid interference in the administration of justice and lead to undesirable results in the matters sub-judice before the Courts.

The Bombay High Court, while hearing a batch of PILs to ban or restrict **media trials**, recently acknowledged that the self-regulatory bodies set by Broadcasters did exist. It strongly felt that it was for the Government to act under the **Cable Act** for violations of the **Broadcasting and Programming Codes**. In the **Nilesh Navalakha** and related judgments, the

under **Section 5** of the **CTVN Act** and **Rule 6** of the **CTVN Rules**, it would be a **mandatory obligation** of such authorities to **immediately act upon the complaints received against the T.V. channels which are alleged to be violating the Programme Code** or any other provisions of the **CTVN Act** and the **CTVN Rules** and take the **necessary action** as provided for thereunder.

Notwithstanding this strong judgment of the Bombay High Court, the Government has amended the

**Cable Rules 1994** and given **statutory status** to Broadcaster self-regulatory bodies. By doing so, the future path the Government will take is now clear. **All forms of media (barring newspapers Government by Press Council guidelines) will now have a triple tier self-regulatory code with robust government oversight.** The first will be by the Broadcaster



itself; the second tier will be Broadcaster Self-Regulatory bodies like IBF/BCCC; NBA/NBSA; NBF/PNBSO, and the third will be an Interministry Committee which will be the top tier.

Government oversight on Broadcast Content has been tightened by giving a lot of power to the **Inter-Departmental Committee** under the newly amended **Rules**. These include:

- ◆ The Committee shall meet periodically and hear complaints regarding violation or contravention of the **Programme Code** and the **Advertising Code** that may:
  - arise out of appeal against the decisions taken at the **Level I** or **Level II**, as the case may be, or where no such

Bombay High Court, in its judgment No PILST. 92252/2020 dated 18.01.2021 stated,

- ◆ “We do not approve such abdication of substantive power (by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting) conferred by the CTVN Act and the CTVN Rules by such authorities in favour of a voluntary organisation (private body), which is formed by the channels themselves, namely, the NBA and which has constituted the ‘NBSA’.
- ◆ In view of our conclusion that matters which are pending investigation on a criminal complaint clearly fall within the restriction as contained in the Programme Code, contemplated

decision is taken within the specified time; or

(ii) **be referred to it by the Central Government.**

◆ The **Inter-Departmental Committee** shall examine complaints or grievances received by it and make any of the following recommendations to the Central Government, namely:

(i) **advising, warning, censuring, admonishing, or reprimanding** such Broadcaster; or

(ii) requiring an **apology** of such Broadcaster; or

(iii) requiring such Broadcaster to include a **warning card** or a **disclaimer**; or

(iv) requiring such Broadcaster to **delete or modify the content** or take the channel or a programme **off-air** for a specified time period where it is satisfied that such action is warranted, for reasons to be recorded in writing.

◆ After considering the Committee's recommendations, the Central Government may issue appropriate orders and directions for compliance by the Broadcaster.

◆ **Suppose the Central Government is satisfied that the programme of any channel is not in conformity with the Programme Code or that the advertisement of any channel is not in conformity with the Advertising Code. In that case, it may, after giving an opportunity of hearing to the cable operator, and by an order in writing, prohibit the transmission or re-transmission of any such channel or programme in accordance with the provisions of Section 20 of the Act.**

At the same time, the Government has entrusted the **self-regulatory bodies** of the Broadcasters with **statutory recognition**. The primary purpose is

to carry out the mandate of the Supreme Court in the **Common Cause** judgment of **12.01.2017** in **W.P. (Civil) 387 of 2000**, wherein the Supreme Court had acknowledged that there is an existing mechanism for redressal of grievances of viewers. Still, it is not known to the general public.

The operation of the current **self-regulatory code** also came in for examination last year in the Delhi High Court in the case of alleged media trial and "vilification" of a Bollywood actress **Rakul Preet Singh** in the Delhi High Court in **Civil Writ Petition 6568/2020**. She alleged that her name was being dragged into the investigation on the death of a well-known actor Mr Sushant Singh Rajput.

On **17.09.2020**, the Delhi High Court asked the electronic media to exercise restraint in making allegations against her and directed that her petition be treated as a complaint and action taken by NBF/NBSA. This did happen, and on **10.12.2020**, the NBSA

**COMMENT:**

*It may now be safely stated that there is no intention at present (after 26 years) to implement the CAB Judgment of 1995, asking for an Autonomous Broadcast Regulatory Authority setting to govern airwaves as per the CAB Judgment of 1995.*

*The current manner of regulating Broadcasters through the Cable Act is a major legislative failure to effectively monitor the vibrant broadcast media industry. There are approximately 902 Broadcasters with valid downlinking permission. The size of the T.V. homes is variously estimated between 190-220 Million. The estimated T.V. viewers number between 850-900 million viewers.*

*Such a vibrant T.V. ecosystem does not have a modern Broadcast Regulatory Act, and that too in an era where OTT is making fast strides in the past 2 years and today is estimated to have anywhere between 50-75 million subscribers, with Disney Hotstar benefiting from IPL rights which is now the largest OTT operator.*

*No doubt, new social and digital media rules have been notified in February 2021. Now, the Cable Rules have been amended in June 2021.*

*But the Cable Act is woefully outdated, and Government is planning to amend the Information Technology Act. Had the Convergence Commission of India Act been passed in 2001, both these and other acts like the 1885 Telegraph Act would have subsumed into the new mega Act. Efforts to revive this mysteriously fell through a couple of years back.*

*This columnist has for the past 20 years advocated the need for an Autonomous Electronic Media Regulator. Still, it is quite clear that the felt need for facilitative light-touch Regulation will remain a mirage in the near future.*

issued a series of restraint orders to the leading news Broadcasters. Here was a case of the “**media victim**” appealing for protection from vilification from the High Court. **The NBSA did Act but only on being so ordered by the High Court.** Time will tell whether the enormous faith

reposed in the Broadcasters will be sufficient, or Government will have to act as directed by the Bombay High Court in the **Nilesh Navalakha** judgment.

Curiously enough, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting had circulated the

amendments to the **Cable Act 1995** in **January 2020** to tighten many provisions and ensure statutory legislative responsibility by a series of amendments, especially to **Sections 5, 6 and 20** of the **Cable Act**. **These amendments are apparently currently in cold storage.**

## 2. TRAI AMENDMENTS TO INTERCONNECTION REGULATIONS 2017 - STREAMLINING CAS AND SMS SYSTEMS

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) amended the Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services Interconnection (Addressable Systems) (Third Amendment) Regulations, 2017, on June 11, 2021. The Amendment makes the following changes in Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services Interconnection (Addressable Systems) Regulations, 2017:

- ◆ **Regulation 4A** is inserted. This provides for compliance to requirements of Addressable Systems by Distributors of Television channels—
- ❖ Every Distributor of a television channel shall deploy a **Conditional Access System (CAS)** and **Subscriber Management System (SMS)**, which (shall) conform to the requirements as specified in **Schedule IX**.
- ❖ If a Distributor fails to obtain the certification of the **Conditional Access System and/or Subscriber Management System** deployed in its network within the stipulated timelines, as specified by the Authority, it shall be liable to pay, by way of **financial disincentive**, an amount of **Rupees one thousand per day** for default up to **thirty**

**days** beyond the due date and an additional amount of **Rupees two thousand per day** in case the default continues beyond **thirty days** from the due date

- ◆ A new **Schedule IX** has been inserted, providing **Conditional Access System (CAS)** and **Subscriber Management System (SMS)**.



### Explanatory Notes and Rationale for Amendment

- ◆ The Regulatory framework provides for **non-discrimination and mandatory sharing of signals**. These provisions have helped many new small multi-system operators (MSOs) install networks and start their services. As per the extant regulations, if the addressable system does not meet the requirements specified

in **Schedule III**, the Broadcaster is permitted to **disconnect signals** of television channels, as per **proviso to sub-Regulation (2) Regulation 15**, after due notice. **Para 37**.

- ◆ Sometimes, small MSOs suffer such eventuality due to the deployment of sub-standard **CAS and SMS**. This arises from the fact that there are no prescribed, tested, and certified solutions. Small MSOs have limited awareness of necessary technical parameters. Many times, cost remains the primary deciding factor for buying certain products/solutions. **Para 37**.
- ◆ Hence, there is a need to draft and deploy adequate standards for **content security for CAS**. Still, effective compliance with the **statutory framework** is also essential to build trust and confidence among all the stakeholders. This entails the entrustment of **testing and certification work** to a reputed and trusted agency. **Para 38**.
- ◆ Trust and confidence among all stakeholders should be the cornerstone of any statutory framework for its effective compliance. Therefore, the testing and certification agency must not only be fair, reasonable, and non-discriminatory; it must also generate such confidence

and trust among all the stakeholders. **Para 46.**

- ◆ The Authority shall designate Testing and Certification Agency(ies) that shall oversee the testing and certification of different **CAS** and **SMS**. The Authority, in consultation with the designated testing and certification agency(ies) shall issue a Test Schedule ‘with a detailed testing procedure for each requirement, as may be required. Looking to the importance of synchronised functioning of **SMS** and **CAS** as emphasised in preceding Sections, such Test Schedule ‘shall also check that the **CAS**

under testing supports integrating with any other **SMS** and vice versa. **Para 47.**

- ◆ The Authority envisages that there will be some time gap before the ecosystem becomes fully compliant with the testing and certification framework. Accordingly, the Authority will prescribe the timeline within which such systems shall get tested and certified to meet the requirements as specified in **Schedule IX**. Accordingly, the Authority shall notify relevant amendments in **Schedule III** and the **Audit Manual**, as required, along with the testing and certification regime dates. **Para 48.**

- ◆ **A robustly designed and tightly coupled CAS and SMS are expected to check piracy and result in factual reporting of subscriptions, which will lead to improved revenue realisation by all concerned stakeholders. Furthermore, the framework promises many nonpecuniary benefits, such as being conducive to doing business and adopting better technology, resulting in better service and end-user experience. A more secure network can also attract more high-quality content, thereby providing consumers with more choice. Para 55.**

**COMMENT:**

*This step comes a decade after Digital Addressable Systems (DAS) were introduced by amendments to the Cable Television Network Regulation Act 1995 in 2011 and the Cable Television Network Rules 1994 in 2012. This is a welcome development and will pose no difficulty to the large Multi-System Operators (MSO) or the Regional MSOs.*

*The objective of the Digital Addressable Systems Regime was to bring in mandatory choices to viewers to select channels of their choice and pay for what they wished to see and hopefully reduce a large number of disconnection notices and litigation suits in the Telecom Disputes Settlement Appellate Tribunal.*

*There are 1724 licensed Multi-System Operators on 12.04.2021 (as per the latest update on the MIB website) in the country. The direct impact of these amendments will fall on less than 10-15 per cent described by TRAI as “small MSOs”.*

*They will need to upgrade their networks to acceptable prescribed CAS/SMS norms or form Cable Cooperatives (a mirage at present) or take backend infrastructure services from large MSOs/HIT’S operators willing to share their passive infrastructure current infrastructure sharing norms.*

**3. HISTORIC INFRASTRUCTURE SHARING PACT BETWEEN NXT DIGITAL AND SITICABLE**

Hinduja Group’s NXTDigital Headend in The Sky (HITS) is India first fully functional digital initiative of a Hybrid Satellite-based and Fibre based Project, “NXTDIGITAL”. It has already surpassed over 5.5 million digital cable subscribers in India in over **1500 cities**. It is available in all 28 States and 9 Union Territories of India, including the Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep. At present, it supplies 660 satellite channels. It can provide 24 local

channels with unique technology to encrypt them as per the requirements of the Cable Act.

The Government permission for HITS to NXTDIGITAL in 2015 permitted both **active services** through linked Cable Operator networks and **passive infrastructure services**. For this purpose, a state of art satellite earth station has been set up in Noida near Delhi.

The original **HITS Regulations** of **26.11. 2009** were amended on

06.11.2021. The **Amendment** now allows explicitly for **voluntary sharing** of passive infrastructure between the HITS Operator and the MSOs. This was done by introducing two new regulations being **Rule 16**, providing for

- ◆ **Wherever technically feasible, the HITS operator may share the platform infrastructure voluntarily, in flexible ways, for distribution of T.V. channels provided that the signals of the**

HITS platform are distributed to subscribers through Cable operator only and the encryption of signals, addressability and liabilities are not compromised.

Rule 17 states,

“The adherence and compliance to all the provisions of the rules and guidelines issued by MIB and NOCC and WPC, DoT for grant of licence to the HITS operator will be the responsibility of both the existing Operator and the new applicant proposing to share the infrastructure, respectively to the extent as required / applicable individually.”

On 11.05.2021, An NXTDigital / Siticable joint press release stated:

- ◆ “SITI Networks Limited (an Essel Group Company) (MSO), and Hinduja Group’s Headend in the Sky (HITS) platform NXTDigital have announced a first-ever **infrastructure sharing agreement** in the MSO space in the country. The move, the first of its kind, will have

two conventional competitors share infrastructure, heralding a new era of collaboration in the digital platforms space. With this move, both companies will



synergise and leverage their strengths to provide the best services to customers.

- ◆ SITI will leverage the H I T S infrastructure to deliver its signals to its Local Cable Operators (LCOs), thus providing its services to semi-urban and rural subscribers while expanding its footprint across the country



through satellite. For this integration, **NXT Digital’s Platform as a Service (PaaS)** vertical worked with **SITI Networks’** team to ensure testing and full compliance in using the already deployed technologies and systems of SITI, such as Subscriber Management, Conditional Access using the existing Set-Top Boxes to provide services with the HITS platform wherever required.

- ◆ According to NXTDigital, the potential market for such PaaS (Platform-as-a-Service) or infrastructure sharing services in India is estimated at over **60 million** cable T.V. subscribers, connected to around **1,000 MSOs** – largely independent or regional players, who often face such cost, connectivity, and quality challenges.

**COMMENT**

*This is a significant development in the maturing of the Indian digital cable market in India. Infrastructure sharing will help competing companies to pare costs and focus more on joint technological development to bring many value-added services for Indian customers. As the NXTDigital HITS network is a unique hybrid mix of satellite services, it should be able to start quadruple-play services all over India. With the increasing adoption of OTT services, the need for such joint business ventures makes immense sense in today's converged times.*

*There are many small MSOs who are unable to cope with the technical requirements of the Interconnection Regulations. The recent amendments bringing in financial disinvestment in case CAS and SMS Systems are not technically compliant should push the small MSOs to either upgrade or join the NXTDIGITAL PAAS platform.*

**4. AMENDMENTS TO CINEMATOGRAPH ACT - CONTROVERSIAL SUPER REVIEW PROPOSED**

On 18.06.2021, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting issued a Press Note asking for public reactions to certain vital amendments to the **Cinematograph Act, 1952**. It stated that the Ministry proposes introducing the **Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2021**, which will

make “*sanctioning films for exhibition more effective, in tune with the changing times and curb the menace of piracy.*” The responses have been requested by **2.07.2021**.

The amendments have some new features:

**A) New U/A Categories**

The following provisions relating to certification of films under the ‘*unrestricted, public exhibition*’ category are proposed to be amended to further sub-divide the existing U.A. category into age-based categories, viz. **U/A 7+, U/A 13+ and U/A 16+**:

**COMMENT:**

*This new classification brings age-gating as in social and digital media introduced in the February 25, 2021 Regulations and is therefore unexceptionable.*

**B) Validity of Film Certificate Amendment of sub-Section (3) of Section 5 A regarding ‘Validity of certificate’ –**

As per the provision of the

present Act under **sub-Section 3 of Section 5 A**, the certificate issued by the Board is valid for **10 years**. Although this restriction on the validity of the certificate for only **10**

**years** has been removed through executive orders, the existing provision in the Act requires to be amended to remove the stipulation such that the certificate is valid in **perpetuity**.

**COMMENT:**

*This is a procedural amendment as the 10-year restriction had already been removed in executive orders and is non-controversial.*

**C) Amendment of sub-Section (1) of Section 6 regarding ‘Revisional powers of the Central Government’:**

In the existing **Act under Section 6**, the Central Government has been empowered to call for the **record of proceedings** in relation to certification of a film pending or has been decided by the Board and pass any order thereon. In other words, this means that the Central Government, if the situation so warranted, has the power to **reverse** the Board's decision.

However, the Hon’ble High Court of Karnataka in **KM Shankarappa Vs. Union of India** case stated that the Central Government cannot exercise revisional powers regarding films **already certified** by the Board. This has also been upheld by

the Hon’ble Supreme Court vide its judgment dated **28/11/2000 in Civil Appeal 3106 of 1991**.

The Hon’ble Supreme Court has also opined that the Legislature



may, in certain cases, overrule or nullify the judicial or executive decision by enacting **appropriate legislation**. In this regard, it is stated that sometimes complaints are received against a film that alludes to violation of **Section 5 B**

**(1) of the Cinematograph Act, 1952, after a film is certified.**

**Article 19(2)** of the Constitution imposes **reasonable restrictions** upon the freedom of speech and expression in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency, or morality or in relation to contempt of court, defamation, or incitement of any offence. Therefore, the following amendments are proposed in the Bill.

- i. **Removal of the provisions struck down by the Hon’ble Court in Sub-Section (1) of Section 6 in the Principal Act.**
- ii. **Adding a proviso to sub-Section (1) of Section 6 for granting revisionary powers to the**

**Government on account of violation of Section 5 B (1) of the Act:**

Since the provisions of **Section 5 B(1)** are derived from **Article 19(2)** of the Constitution and

are **non-negotiable**, it is also proposed in the Draft Bill to add a **proviso to sub-Section (1) of Section 6** to the effect that on receipt of any references by the Central Government in respect of a film certified for public

exhibition, on account of violation of **Section 5 B(1)** of the **Act**, the Central Government may if it considers it necessary so to do, direct the Chairman of the Board to **re-examine the film**.

**COMMENT:**

*This is a controversial step intended to overcome the Supreme Court's judgment in KM Shankarappa Vs. Union of India in Civil Appeal 3106 of 1991 dated 28/11/2000. In this judgment, the Supreme Court upheld the Karnataka High Court order, which held that Government did not have the power of revision once a picture was certified. The Supreme Court had noted that in terms of the K.A. Abbas judgment (1970) 2 SCC 780, the Government had set up a Film Appellate Tribunal, and in that judgment, the Supreme Court had expressed satisfaction that*

- ◆ *"We express our satisfaction that the Central Government will cease to perform curial functions through one of its secretaries in this sensitive field involving the fundamental right of speech and expression. Experts sitting as a Tribunal and deciding matters quasi-judicially inspire more confidence than a secretary. Therefore, it is better that the appeal should lie to a Court or Tribunal."*

*In the Shankarappa judgment, the Supreme Court expressed surprise that having set up the Film Appellate Tribunal, the Government still wanted to retain revisionary powers. It stated:*

- ◆ *Once a quasi-judicial body like the Appellate Tribunal, consisting of a retired Judge of a High Court or a person qualified to be a Judge of a High Court and other experts in the field, gives its decision that decision would be final and binding so far as the Executive and the Government is concerned. To permit the Executive to review and/or revise that decision would amount to interference with the exercise of judicial functions by a quasi-judicial Board.*
- ◆ *It would amount to subjecting the decision of a quasi-judicial body to the scrutiny of the Executive. Under our Constitution, the position is reverse. The Executive has to obey judicial orders. Thus, Section 6(1) is a travesty of the rule of law which is one of the basic structures of the Constitution*
- ◆ *The Legislature may, in certain cases, overrule or nullify the judicial or executive decision by enacting appropriate legislation. However, without enacting appropriate legislation, the Executive or the Legislature cannot set at nought a judicial order. The Executive cannot sit in an appeal or review or revise a judicial order.*
- ◆ *The Appellate Tribunal consisting of experts and decides matters quasi-judicially. A Secretary and/or Minister cannot sit in appeal or revision over those decisions. At the highest, the Government may apply to the Tribunal itself for a review if circumstances warrant. But the Government would be bound by the ultimate decision of the Tribunal.*

*It becomes clear why the Film Appellate Tribunal was abruptly abolished with immediate effect by an ordinance dated 04.04.2021. As long as it was in existence, the Government was bound by the Shankarappa Supreme Court judgment of 2000.*

*Early reactions of the film industry to the proposed amendments are naturally adverse: One news report states: "A group of filmmakers, academicians and students have criticised the proposed amendments to the Cinematograph Act, which could empower the Government to re-examine an already certified movie. They said the proposed changes would give the Government overriding power over cinema and threaten freedom of expression in India. This will also render filmmakers powerless at the hands of the State as they will be more vulnerable to threats, vandalism, and intimidation of mob censors."*

*The proposed Amendment quotes Article 19 (2) on Reasonable Restrictions. It controversially claims that since Section 5 B (1) provisions are derived from Article 19(2) of the Constitution and are non-negotiable... the amendments giving Government super revisionary power are sought to be introduced.*

*This, of course, is part of a continuing regulatory effort to bring Government oversight to all forms of media (other than print media) and is bound to be hotly debated and may ultimately be challenged in court.*

**D) Film Piracy**

**Film Piracy**, particularly the release of pirated films on the internet, the Consultation Paper states, causes huge losses to the film industry and government exchequer.

*In most cases, illegal duplication in cinema halls is the originating point of piracy.* At present, there are no enabling provisions to check **film piracy** in the **Cinematograph Act, 1952**, making it necessary to have a provision in the **Act** to check film piracy.

Therefore, the following amendments are proposed in the Draft Bill:

**i. Insertion of new Section 6AA**

- ◆ Prohibition of unauthorised recording “**6AA**. Notwithstanding any law for the time being in force, no person shall, without the written authorisation of the author, be permitted to use any audio-

visual recording device in a place to knowingly make or transmit or attempt to make or transmit or abet the making or transmission of a copy of a film or a part thereof.



**Explanation.** - For the purposes of this **Sub Section**, the expression “**author**” shall have the same meaning as assigned to it in **clause (d) of Section 2** of the **Copyright Act, 1957**.

**ii) Penalties for Piracy**  
**Insertion of new sub-Section 1A in Section 7- Penalties for contravention of this part 7(1 A).**

- ◆ If any person contravenes the provisions of **Section 6AA**, he shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than **three months**, but which may extend to three years and with a fine which shall not be less than **three lakh rupees**, but which may extend to **5% of audited gross production cost** or with both. Also provided that, any act mentioned in **Section 52 of the Copyright Act, 1957 (Act 14 of 1957)** is not an **infringement** of the provision of **Section 6AA of this Act.**”

**COMMENT:**

*According to Irdeto, a global solutions provider in digital platform security and media and entertainment, the Indian media and entertainment industry loses \$2.8 billion of its annual revenue to piracy. India is among the top five countries in peer-to-peer downloading. A recent report in a business paper claimed that with most cinema halls closed for the past 15 months due to Covid lockdown, the extent of film piracy had gone up. Any effort to curb film piracy will be welcomed by the industry.*



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## 5. IS A ZEE - VIACOM MERGER ON THE CARDS? - NOT REALLY

A report in a business paper claimed on **June 21, 2021** that

- ◆ “**Viacom 18 Media Pvt. Ltd.**, the Colors general entertainment channel owner, and Subhash Chandra’s **Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd** are in initial talks for a potential merger that could create a large media firm with interests spanning broadcast, OTT, live entertainment, and movie production.
- ◆ **Viacom 18** is a joint venture between **TV18 Broadcast Ltd (51%)** and US-based **Viacom CBS Inc. (49%)**. **TV18** is a Network 18 Media and Investments Ltd unit owned by Mukesh Ambani’s **Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL)**. **Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd**, founded by **Essel Group’s** Subhash Chandra, is majority-owned by foreign institutional investors, including Investco, Oppenheimer Developing Markets Fund and Ofi Global Fund China LLC. Essel Group’s equity holding is down to **3.9%**, although the company continues to be run by Chandra’s son Punit Goenka.
- ◆ “The merger of **Viacom 18** and **Zee** is proposed to be done through a **share swap deal**. The talks started a few weeks ago, and the agreement is unlikely to involve any cash transaction.

Within 24 hours, **Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd** informed the Bombay Stock Exchange that the story was **untrue**. It stated

- ◆ We herewith confirm that there is no such transaction being undertaken, and the matter is speculative in nature.”

**Viacom 18/Reliance** kept a discreet silence.

**Viacom 18** describes itself as one of India’s fastest-growing entertainment networks and a house of iconic brands offering multi-platform, multi-generational and multicultural brand experiences. It claims to have properties online, on the ground, in-shop and through cinema.

**Zee Entertainment’s** June 2021 investor presentation claims it has evolved into a 360-degree entertainment company with diverse content for a diverse Indian viewership reaching consumers wherever they are-with 30 years of solid relationship for content creation.

It claims strong partnership for distribution networks through Cable, DTH, Theatres. Telecom, and ISPs.

There is solid logic in a proposed merger looking to the long-term plans of **Reliance** in Telecommunication and Media. **Reliance** has enormous resources to spend at present. Still, no such plans were made clear in the recent AGM presentation by the **Reliance** Chairman.

**Zee’s** current investor holding is concentrated in external investor firms, which are not likely to have long term interests in its growth.

But for the time being, guess one will have to let sleeping dogs lie. ■



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# CARLYLE TO ACQUIRE LIVEU TO FURTHER ACCELERATE GLOBAL GROWTH

LiveU, the leader in live video streaming and remote production solutions, announced that global investment firm Carlyle has acquired the Company from Francisco Partners, a global investment firm that specializes in partnering with technology businesses. Details of the transaction, which is subject to regulatory approvals, are not being disclosed.

Founded in 2006, LiveU is the pioneer of a bonded cellular technology-based live video transmission platform, offered to major live broadcast news networks and sports content owners globally. LiveU's technology enables customers to apply innovation and automation to the entire production workflow. LiveU provides an end-to-end solution combining mission-critical acquisition, cloud production and IP distribution to broadcasters, sports organizations and production companies where reliability, quality, availability and low latency are key.

LiveU has been instrumental in

supporting the growing demand for live news and sports content and the requirement to broadcast from remote and non-stationary locations, in

of 4K and 8K broadcasting. With over 3,000 customers in 130+ countries, LiveU's technology enables

broadcasters to guarantee live video uplink quality, helping top-tier global broadcasters as well as major sporting content owners to meet the strong demand from viewers for live and

## CARLYLE

particular as video quality requirements have increased in the era

fan-based content. LiveU is currently gearing up for the Tokyo Summer



Games with thousands of hours of live video content expected to be transmitted live from the games.

Carlyle will use its deep experience in the media tech sector to support LiveU's growth ambitions, represented by existing investments in Disguise and NEP alongside prior investments including The Foundry, Vubiquity, BTI Studios and The Mill. Carlyle will seek to further consolidate LiveU's market position through M&A activity and organic growth while capitalizing on the rapidly growing demand for high-quality live video transmission. This trend is expected to accelerate with the rollout of 5G, and as media production in the cloud progresses, increasing the requirements for flexible and remote operations. Carlyle will leverage its extensive global network to further expand LiveU's customer base and help to develop relationships with some of the world's leading content providers. Equity for the investment will be provided by Carlyle Europe Technology Partners (CETP) IV, a fund that invests in middle market technology-focused opportunities in Europe and the US.

Samuel Wasserman, CEO and Co-Founder of LiveU, said: "We're excited to partner with Carlyle as we look to expand LiveU's global footprint

and service offering. This is a significant milestone for LiveU and represents a strong vote of confidence in our business. Carlyle brings deep industry expertise with their track record in the media and technology space alongside a global network. We greatly thank Francisco Partners and IGP Capital for their support and partnership over the last few years."



Michael Wand, Managing Director and Co-Head of the CETP advisory team, said: "Carlyle has a history of investing in fast-growing and highly innovative, disruptive media technology companies and is truly excited to partner with LiveU which is at the forefront of a rapidly growing market. Our partnership with the LiveU team will allow us to support their growth, driven by a mixture of expanding into new verticals, targeted M&A activity and through further developing their relationships with key media broadcasters, particularly in live sports where we are witnessing an

exploding demand for live content. We believe that the ongoing shift towards high quality real-time video content, the cost advantages of bonded cellular versus alternative transmission technologies, and the opportunity to bring live broadcast to hitherto neglected areas such as semi-pro or non-professional sports, provides an enormous growth potential for LiveU."

Eran Gorev, Francisco Partners' President of Israel & Senior Operating Partner, said: "With Francisco Partners' track record of investing in technology companies across the U.S., Europe and Israel, we were uniquely positioned to support LiveU as it expanded its customer base, geographic presence and solution suite over recent years and solidified its position as the industry leader. We are proud to have helped Samuel and LiveU's management team build upon their vision as they continued to innovate, capitalize upon many emerging opportunities in the live video distribution and remote production markets, and cross the \$100 million mark in annual sales. We look forward to following the company as it continues to evolve in this next phase of its growth."

GCA Altium advised LiveU on the transaction. ■



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## VIACOM18 UPS ITS 'DIGITAL-FIRST' ANTE

*Industry first platform interplay will witness the reality phenomenon begin on VOOT as Bigg Boss OTT, 6 weeks ahead of Season15 launch on COLORS*

India's youngest media and entertainment conglomerate, Viacom18 has constantly challenged itself through delivering innovative and category pioneering content experiences. With a vision to create a future-ready digital business, the network has been at the forefront of a digital convergence with its products and content offerings. In an industry first move, Viacom18 will now launch its marquee entertainment property, Bigg Boss, first on VOOT for 6 weeks. Christened Bigg Boss OTT, it will premiere in August 2021 with unprecedented access, engagement, and interactivity empowering viewers to immerse themselves in the journey of contestants in the Bigg Boss house. In addition to the 1-hour episode on VOOT, viewers will get a chance to watch exclusive cuts, round the clock content drops and a fully interactive 24\*7 LIVE feed from the house. After the completion of the digital exclusive, the show will move seamlessly into COLORS with the launch of Season15 of Bigg Boss.

Recognized as the biggest entertainment property of Indian television, Bigg Boss has stamped its pull even in the hyper-competitive digital entertainment space. With over 8.5 Billion views, the show has dominated the digital space with a whopping 92 percent share-of-voice.

Unleashing its fandom and immense consumption power on digital, Bigg Boss has garnered significant patronage of brands and advertisers who continue to engage with the iconic property, season after season, making it India's leading entertainment property – both on television and digital.

Speaking about the launch of Bigg Boss first on VOOT, Gourav Rakshit, Chief Operating Officer, Viacom18 Digital Ventures, said, "VOOT has grown to become home to entertainment in India through industry leading engagement and shareworthy content across originals, international, catchup and content-around-content segments. The launch of Bigg Boss OTT exclusively on VOOT before TV is poised to be yet another game changer in digital entertainment and a step forward in further cementing our position as the most loved consumer entertainment brand. This season is set to empower our audiences through unparalleled category defining innovation through interactivity which we are sure will provide significant to our users, advertisers and brands alike."

While explaining the content strategy behind Bigg Boss OTT, Manisha Sharma, Chief Content Officer, Hindi Mass Entertainment, Viacom18, said, "Bigg Boss, over the years, has

grown to become a phenomenon that drives conversations across the country. With the launch of Bigg Boss OTT, our digital audiences are in for a treat. The new digital exclusive format will take the show's fandom to its next level through active engagement with viewers being able to play a part in the show's progress. The beauty of this show lies in the versatility of format and the massive popularity it commands – both aspects helping us in customizing the show as two different content offerings for the two different platforms while maintaining its core ethos."

With the aim to build an increasingly symbiotic content ecosystem for the network, for the first time in the history of Indian entertainment, the country's biggest broadcast GEC show will launch first on digital. Starting August 2021, Bigg Boss will go live first on VOOT and after 6 weeks of exclusive streaming on digital, the show will launch in a fresh avatar in its 15th Season on COLORS.

Promising to be packed with ultimate over the top excitement and thrill, Bigg Boss OTT will set a milestone on digital through its disruptive content strategy. Tune in to watch Bigg Boss OTT as a digital exclusive only on VOOT starting from August, 2021. ■

# JAPAN'S J SPORTS SELECTS LIVEU'S MULTI-CAMERA REMOTE PRODUCTION SOLUTION FOR BASEBALL GAMES

*All home games – over 70 – will be covered using LiveU, live on J SPORTS On Demand in Japan, providing an enriched live viewing experience*

LiveU, the leader in live video streaming and remote production solutions, has today announced that renowned Japanese broadcaster J SPORTS, with its production partner Express, has selected LiveU's multi-camera, remote production solution for all of Yokohama DeNA BayStars' baseball home games this season. J SPORTS' OTT service, J SPORTS On Demand, will show over 70 matches where LiveU's technology will play a key role in enhancing the viewing experience.

2021 is the first year that J SPORTS has offered this live OTT service and it initially planned to use only the clean broadcast feed, adding commentary and graphics. However, working closely with Express, expanding the amount of content and increasing viewer engagement became a priority. Moving to remote production was also a long-held Express and J SPORTS ambition.

Kanji Kato, Technical Director, Express, said, "We really wanted to transmit multiple camera signals via mobile networks and, of course, it had to be extremely reliable. Originally, we were planning to send multiple camera feeds via Ethernet but demonstrations from LiveU proved to us that our original ambition was completely possible. They showed us the next level of remote production, with reliable tally light and additional audio functionality via the multi-camera LU800, facilitating bi-directional communications between the field staff

and control room. We were convinced that LiveU was the production technology partner we needed to help create a successful remote production business."

The on-air clean feed (switched between multiple cameras) is sent from



an OB unit at the ground via an LU800 along with two additional feeds – a wide shot of the ground and the score board. Commentary for this service is then added remotely at J SPORTS' studio, while graphics and audio mixing is carried out by Express at its Tokyo studio, called Avenir-Hub. Additionally, a video return feed with graphics is sent back to the commentators so that they can see the ball, strike and out counts and can check the slow-motion effects.

Yojiro Tomihisa, Technical Manager, J SPORTS, said, "One of the main advantages of remote production is that we don't have to send a big production crew to the site and it's the same in terms of equipment. This is all done using IP, which was crucial for

us. We are looking forward to deploying this very dependable LiveU technology on other productions and increasing the complexity of them. We are ready for the future!"

Kanji Kato, Express, added, "The LU800 and its multi-camera capabilities changed the way we looked at this and accelerated our move to remote production. Before we deployed this remote production system, we had to manage and arrange schedules for our crew, including travel time. That greatly reduced the time available to both our production crew and management team. LiveU's remote production solution makes our lives much easier and at the end of the day we can make more, and even better, content."

Yaal Eshel, General Manager, LiveU Asia, said, "We're honored to see one of the leading sports broadcasters in Japan, J SPORTS, together with innovative sports production company, Express, select LiveU as their remote production technology partner. It's exciting to see they recognise this as the future of broadcasting. We will continue to work closely with them to ensure successful productions and their continued breaking of new ground."

LiveU's solution suite brings together three core values for OTT broadcasters: improved viewer experience, uncompromised reliability and a proven reduction in production costs. ■



## MAHARASHTRA CYBER CRACKS THE WHIP ON THOP TV FOR COPYRIGHT VIOLATION OF VIACOM18'S CONTENT

Viacom18 has been at the forefront in addressing and curbing piracy of content. In a recent content violation issue, the network has filed an official complaint with Maharashtra Cyber against Thop TV, alleging that the 'rogue, standalone' application had been relaying and transmitting the network's content without authorization at a discounted price to common public, thus causing a substantial revenue loss to the network.

Cognizant about the seriousness of the crime, the research and analysis team of Maharashtra Cyber immediately investigated the matter and the accused, a 28-year old, Satish Venkateshwarlu, a Hyderabad-based IT engineer was arrested under Sections 43, 66 and 66B of the Information Technology Act, 2000, Section 63 of Copyright Act, and Section 420 and 34 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). The accused was produced before the Hon'ble Court and has been remanded to 6 days of police custody for further investigations. The accused was found to have created a standalone pirated application, through which he stole content using its inbuilt API.

Speaking on the investigation, Superintendent of Police Sanjay Shintre, said, "Viacom18 Media Private

Limited lodged a complaint with the Maharashtra Cyber against a mobile application, Thop TV, which was relaying and transmitting their copyrighted content such as movies, TV shows and VOD content at a discounted rate, thus causing substantial revenue loss to the company. After the initial technical



investigation, it was noticed that the accused, a highly educated IT engineer from Hyderabad developed a mobile application named 'Thop TV' and pirated Viacom18's content through Telegram, a social media intermediary. The app has lakhs of viewers, including 5,000 paid subscribers, thereby generating massive revenue for the app."

Speaking on this development, a Viacom18 Spokesperson said, "Piracy is a matter of grave concern for the

media industry and one that needs to be addressed constantly. It is important to acknowledge that digital piracy is a serious offence which causes huge losses to the digital economy. Viacom18 will continue to fight this menace and secure its content through all means available under law. We are grateful to Office of the Inspector General of Police Maharashtra Cyber for their constant vigilance and timely support towards curbing piracy and copyright violation."

The entire operation was carried under the strict guidance of (Special Inspector General of Police) Shri. Yashashvi Yadav, (Deputy Inspector General of Police) Shri. Harish Baijal, (Superintendent of Police) Shri Sanjay Shintre, (Deputy superintendent of Police) Shri Vijay Khaire, (Police Inspector) Smt Archana Sutar, (Sub-Inspector) Shri Sandeep Patil, (Sub-

Inspector) Shri Ravikant Bhandari, (Head Constable) Santosh Bodke, (Police Constable) Avinash Salunkhe all from the Nodal Cyber Police Station, Maharashtra Cyber, Mumbai. ■



THOP TV



## OTT PLAYERS STOP STREAMING NEWS CHANNELS

*OTT Players like Disney+ Hotstar, Zee5, Voot, Sony Liv and others have removed news channels from their platforms.*

The OTT platforms say the new rules mandate that all content on their platform should be rated and it is impossible for them to rate news.

The IT rules, however, say that 'online curated content' does not include news and current affairs. But the latter part of the rules also states that 'all content' should be rated.

According to level 1 of the self-regulating mechanism prescribed in the new rules, "online curated content shall be classified by the publisher of such content into the categories referred to in the Schedule, having regard to the context, theme, tone, impact and target audience of such content, with the relevant rating for such categories based on an assessment of the relevant content descriptors in the manner specified in the said Schedule."

The guideline further says, "Every publisher of online curated content shall display the rating of any 'online curated content' and an

explanation of the relevant content descriptors, prominently to its users at an appropriate place, as the case may be, in a manner that ensures that such users are aware of this information before accessing such content."

Now, in both the paras above, it is clear that the rules are talking about the 'online curated content', which does not include 'news and current affairs content'.

According to the definition given in part 1, 'Online curated content' means any curated catalogue of audio-visual content, other than news and current affairs content, which is owned by, licensed to or contracted to be transmitted by a publisher of online curated content, and made available on demand, including but not limited through subscription, over the internet or computer networks, and includes films, audio visual programmes, documentaries, television programmes, serials, podcasts and other such content.

So which part is ambiguous according to the OTT players?

In fact, the 'content classification' descriptor under 'Code of ethics' says, "All content transmitted or published or exhibited by a publisher of online curated content shall be classified, based on the nature and type of content, into the following rating categories."

Even as this descriptor part of content classification is under the title 'online curated content' which does not include 'news and current affairs content', the usage of the term 'all content' is raising fear among OTT platforms.

### **NEWS CHANNELS LOOSING REVENUE IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE NEW GUIDELINES**

News channel are feeling the pinch and loss of revenues to the OTT players. They have lost out revenues to the tune of ` 10 - 20 crore per annum.

The removal of the news

genre from OTT aggregator platforms such as Disney+ Hotstar, Zee5, Voot, SonyLiv among others will pinch the news channels hard as leading news broadcasters will lose out on the additional revenue and audience reach they were getting through licensing their feed and content on these streaming providers.

Aaj Tak was getting minimum fee of around ₹ 5 crore from a single OTT platform.

Other leading channels such as ABP, Zee and Republic among others are also paid by aggregators in the range of ₹ 3 crore to ₹ 5 crore annually per platform.

OTT platforms had decided to

start removing news channels from their platforms. The streaming players said that the new IT rules, 2021, mandate that all content should be rated and there's no way they can rate news.



The new rules, however, say that news is not covered under the online curated content of the

publishers but at the same time rules also say that all content need to be rated.

The OTT platforms said that unless clarified, the rules will be open to interpretation and the government must explicitly spell out that news need not be rated.

News Broadcasters Association (NBA) President Rajat Sharma had also written a letter to the government, saying that digital broadcast of TV news channels should not be covered under the new IT rules as TV news is already covered under various other rules and regulations, which they already follow. ■

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