

InReply

NativeWaves In Perfect Sync

NativeWaves CEO Eva Wimmers discusses the challenges and opportunities presented to the OTT sector...



InBroadcast: Can you give us a brief overview of what we can expect in the next six-12 months within your sector?

Eva Wimmers: The Covid-19 pandemic has presented major challenges to the live broadcast industry but at the same time, has offered opportunities for innovation. Live sporting and entertainment events being held behind closed doors have forced broadcasters to look for alternative technological solutions such as remote production to deliver content to their viewers. Broadcasters are exploring different ways to keep them engaged, despite the lack of atmosphere in the venue due to the absence of audiences.

Over the next six - 12 months, these innovations will become the new normal. Broadcast infrastructure will evolve, with more automation and remote production becoming the solutions of choice. AI-driven technologies will come to the fore, and broadcasters and service providers will focus on delivering personalised experiences to their audiences. Data on how audiences consume their entertainment will become even more important, especially to advertisers. Traditional broadcast and streaming production workflows will have a lot more synergy and OTT services will no longer be considered the poor cousin.

InB: Can you explain the benefits with regards to the latest products and service announcements?

EW: Personalisation, interactivity and immersion are three key features that our solution offers broadcasters and content creators to make their content even more exciting. The Hybrid Multiview Broadcast Platform allows broadcasters to deliver multiple streams of video, audio and data to viewers' mobile devices, all synced to the main broadcast feed, enabling personalised viewing experiences. The multiple camera feeds provide broadcasters not just additional real estate for advertising but also targeted data, adding to the viewer experience.

Linear broadcast delivers signals from the venue to the home in three to 10 seconds, but it provides only one camera view at any time. OTT services can deliver multiple video, audio and data streams from the venue to the home, but they have a latency of 40 seconds or higher, and the feeds are out of sync with the main broadcast.

The most commonly available solutions deliver no sync at all or use manual time alignment management to achieve some sort of sync; or require modification of content that disrupts workflows. Broadcasters have to adopt proprietary CDNs and media players, which limits scalability or increases the effort and cost involved in managing the system once a certain number of users has been reached. This is one of the primary reasons for the limited success of these solutions.

Our solution uses audio from the broadcast to sync video and is easy to implement. It is non-intrusive and uses automated synchronisation to deliver a multi-view experience adjusted to milliseconds. The solution also does not require marking or making changes to the content or existing workflows and is CDN-agnostic. It works across all mobile platforms and uses native players on the devices to deliver a synced multi-screen experience.

InB: What challenges did you face when designing and launching the service?

EW: The key challenge during the design phase was to create a product that was:

- Adaptable with and worked seamlessly across all broadcast workflows and with different providers;
- Adaptable across multiple platforms while still keeping and delivering sync across multiple devices;
- Pushed the technology to its limit when it came to streaming content in sync.

We believe we have been able to achieve these with the product we brought to market.

InB: Which territories do you think will show particular interest?

EW: Our solution is most suited to delivering an immersive experience for events such as live sport and concerts to viewers globally. It can also be used in stadiums and concert venues for instant replays, instant data on players/artists and is customisable to incorporate many commercial features such as targeted advertising and e-commerce.

We are focusing on the European market, specifically Germany, Austria, Spain, France and the United Kingdom. We have also had encouraging conversations with companies in the United States and Russia.

InB: Any future product innovations ahead that you can discuss?

EW: Our immediate product innovation roadmap is built around new features and developments linked to our core offering. We are currently working on a unified system that will offer a common workflow across single screen, multiple screen and in-venue production, allowing for delivery of multiple synced video, audio and data streams to both mobile and the web, and aiming to reduce production effort and complexities.

We are also working on using our core technologies to deliver a remote production solution that will enable synced delivery of multiple streams of video, audio and data from the venue to the remote production centre. This

will utilise both the ULL solution as well as our unique sync engine, and deliver production efficiencies for the production team and broadcasters. Our innovations will deliver efficiencies and additional revenue to broadcasters by not just cutting production costs but also giving them access to additional advertising real estate.

InB: Can you advise on your ideal market for these products/services?

EW: Our vision is to be the ultimate tool for immersive entertainment experiences. Our core technologies specialise in delivering:

- a) Synced multiple screen immersive experiences - syncing multiple streams of video, audio and data to the broadcast feed;
- b) Synced single screen experience - delivering multiple streams of synced video, audio and data to a mobile device; and;
- c) Delivering a multi-view/multi-use experience in-stadia such as replays of goals, player data, targeted ads and e-commerce.

Our solutions are ideal for broadcasters, OTT service providers, sports leagues, stadiums, and concert halls, as a few new use cases. And as our remote production solution comes on-stream, it will open up a new market segment.

InB: Thank you for taking the time to answer our questions. ■



NativeWaves Hybrid Multiview Broadcast Platform - multiple device streams in sync