Problem. Solved.

Weather Group Storms into Personalized, Local Content

COMMSCOPE®

Weather Group Storms into Personalized, Localized Content

Problem. Solved.

Service and Content Providers are racing to attract customers with immersive video, customized touch points and interactive information for a truly personalized user experience. This deeper level of engagement is a win/win for Service Providers and consumers alike, especially as traditional passive web searches continue their decline. According to Everything.me, passive web searches are on the decline with Android customers using a Web browser only 1.25 times per day[1] in favor of creating a mosaic of information on their mobile screens.

Weather Group recognized that those who can profitably deliver quality content when, where and how consumers want it will emerge as the market's next pioneer. Its mission is to offer the most accurate, personalized data to millions of consumers so they can make informed decisions – and take action – in the face of weather. Recently, however, the company's leadership recognized that its customers are interested in more than weather data.

Weather Group has set out to go beyond the core business of weather and take personalized content to the next level. Weather Group decided to deliver a localized service, much like a customized social media feed, to let customers view personalized, localized information that they routinely access throughout the day. The service would include traffic, news, sports and of course, weather. The service would also include the ability to preempt the programming with a Weather Channel Live Feed during periods of severe weather in a specific market.

The CommScope Solution Includes:

- ActiveVideo StreamCast software
- Anevia packaging and origin server software
- CommScope Custom HTML5 software development
- CommScope E2E Systems Integration
- CommScope Professional Services custom software development
- ARRIS Manifest Delivery Controller (MDC)
- ARRIS ME-7000 Converged Compression Platform
- ARRIS Stream Controller and Video Product Controller software
- CommScope support services
- Third-party hardware purchasing support

The Problem:

The blueprint for a personalized channel didn't exist - yet

The new service that Weather Group wanted to offer required them to embark on a complex systems integration project that had to be built from scratch. The new service needed to provide detailed and localized weather information, but also combine digital and broadcast to include content from third-parties with whom Weather Group has distribution relationships.

Geographic-based content and graphics for weather, news, sports and traffic would need to be processed and integrated to create customer specific over-the-top (OTT) streams. Therefore, the project required the integration of multiple third-party hardware and software systems and would need to uniquely use HTML5 as an automated video product creation engine. The project posed an exciting challenge that was further amplified by a launch date only six months away.

CommScope Solution:

The engine that's enabling the new customer experience

Within one week of discussing Weather Group's objectives, CommScope delivered a comprehensive design and immediately kicked off the project. Our team of systems integration experts went to work seamlessly tying in the multiple third-party vendors. With core competencies across a broad spectrum of technologies and project disciplines, as well as strong vendor relationships, CommScope helped deliver a completely unique and innovative service to market.

In order to ensure the project's success and widespread adoption, Weather Group employed a phased approach that would first offer a set of new localized channels driven by the subscriber's location. Called Local Now, it's streamed as one channel so consumers no longer need to download various apps to get the custom information they want.
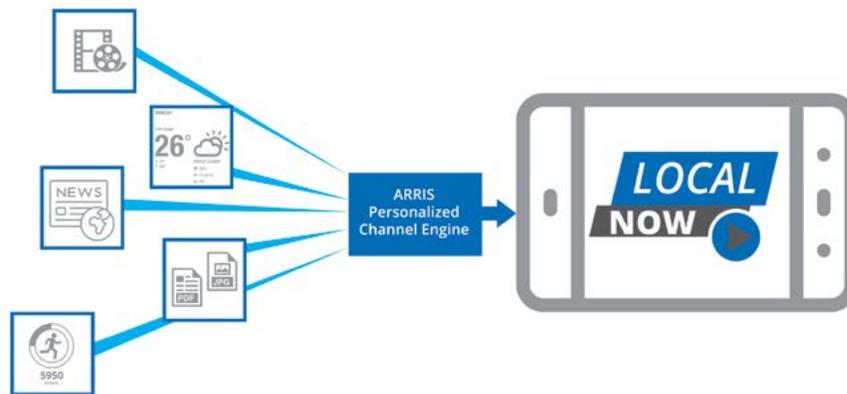
This personalized OTT experience is now available for 228 local markets through Sling TV, fubo TV and Xumo, in addition to a stand-alone app. CommScope leveraged its OTT video experience to design a first-of-its-kind solution - a channel that delivers relevant information to each subscriber including national news, local news, severe weather, local weather, traffic and local sports. The information is sourced separately and combined for each market with rendering for all screen types including TV. The CommScope "engine" takes content from both Weather Group and third-parties and wraps it into an HTML5 web app, stitches it together, transcodes it, packages it and sends it out into a linear stream for each market. Our strategic partnership with ActiveVideo was a key part of the solution, streamlining the HTML5 app development and its conversion into MPEG streams.
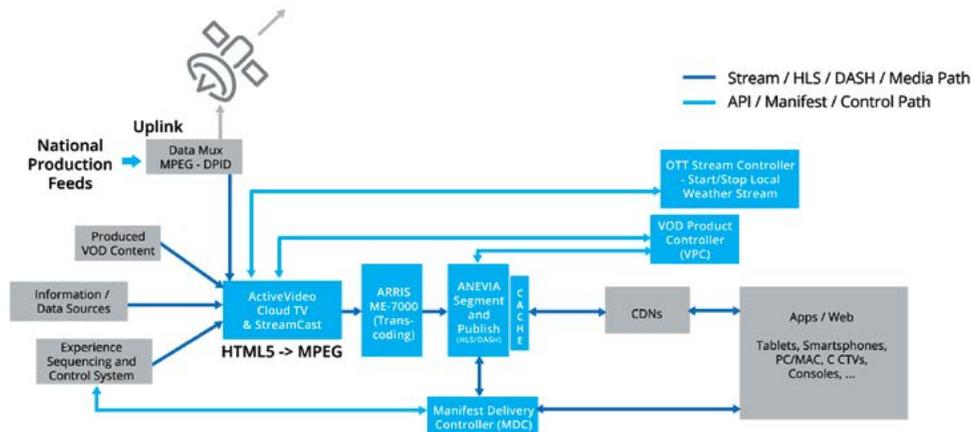

Figure 1 – The architecture behind Weather Group's personalization engine.

We relied on our extensive lab facilities and capabilities to test the end-to-end flows and ensure a high level of quality and performance. Our lab professionals also provided post launch support for all components of the solution, working with the Weather Group team to ensure a timely and successful launch. This initial phase was implemented with the new extensible architecture, which will ultimately enable subscribers to personalize their experiences on a deeper level and create a sphere of information all their own.

The Result:

The engine that's enabling the new customer experience

With its new ecosystem in place, Weather Group's latest offering increases brand loyalty for stronger customer retention and expands its presence by getting the brand in front of a new audience. In the near future, new advertising and subscription opportunities will further extend the revenue streams that stem from this new, personalized content.

CommScope designed Weather Group's new architecture to enable the future delivery of personalized and localized information. The next phase was to take it beyond passive linear streams and make it interactive, allowing subscribers to request specific content on-demand.

Content can also be delivered based on customer preference, viewing history and content metadata. As it evolves, our software will continue to power the personalized portal, ensuring that any VOD content requested by consumers is delivered flawlessly.

CommScope also leverages its Manifest Delivery Controller (MDC) to stitch VOD content together, and in the future, will insert ads in a seamless, continuous stream. With this new architecture, service providers will have the opportunity to deliver targeted advertising down to the individual consumer level for even stronger consumer loyalty and new monetization opportunities.

[1] "Smartphone personalization services are reducing the need to search on mobile"

CommScope pushes the boundaries of communications technology with game-changing ideas and groundbreaking discoveries that spark profound human achievement. We collaborate with our customers and partners to design, create and build the world's most advanced networks. It's our passion and commitment to identify the next opportunity and realize a better tomorrow.
Discover more at commscope.com.

COMMSCOPE®