

Global OTT operator secures live sports services



Industry

Media and Technology

Location

International Scope

Solution

Intertrust ExpressPlay DRM™

Customer profile

This leading video streaming platform operator (the Operator) manages a very large international over-the-top (OTT) service. It boasts over 300 million monthly active users (MAU), including premium tier paying subscribers and users of its ad-supported (free) service.

The operational scalability was amply demonstrated during the Cricket World Cup, where it handled 100 million daily active users (DAU) during peak viewing periods. This huge active user base makes it one of the largest video platforms in the world.

In the OTT space the Operator competes with International giants such as Netflix and Amazon Prime, while also facing off locally with several large players.

The Operator's key differentiator is live OTT sports, including English Premier League (EPL), German Bundesliga, Formula One (F1), most Grand Slams, Pro Kabaddi League, and Indian Premier League (IPL). It also offers 100,000 hours of drama, movies, sports and news content. This combination of compelling mostly exclusive content has created one of the largest user bases on earth. Services are available in key markets including South Asia, the United States, and Canada.



The challenge

The Operator launched its OTT streaming service in 2015. Then, over the next several years, the operator faced operational and growth challenges in several areas, such as optimizing its content delivery network (CDN), developing a new customer relationship management (CRM) system and, not least, replacing its on-premise digital rights management (DRM) system with a cloud-based DRM service. The selection of a new DRM technology and software as a service (SaaS) provider was crucial to securing its streaming revenue and its future business success.

Challenge highlights:

- **Digital Rights Management (DRM)**
Migrate on premise content security to a cloud-based multi-DRM service.
- **DRM Clients and Media Players**
Migrate to native DRM clients and players for both Android and iOS devices, requiring a scalable and proven rights and key management cloud service
- **Premium Content Licensing**
Meet strict licensing and compliance rules set by content owners and MovieLabs, a jointly run industry lab that enables member studios to work together to understand new technologies and drive the right ones to adoption
- **Protect Personal Information**
Protect the personal information and privacy of its subscribers to comply with the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and others like the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA).

These challenges demanded that the Operator choose a futureproof multi-DRM technology provider. It evaluated several potential multi-DRM service providers given the decision to move away from its existing on-premise system to a cloud-based service.

The Operator also considered building its own multi-DRM platform in-house. However, it quickly concluded such an endeavor would not be a viable long-term solution since an in-house multi-DRM technology would require major and continuous investments to stay ahead of the piracy threat curve while adapting to evolving rights holder requirements.

On top of this, there is the ever changing and fragmented device, OS and app platforms that operators need to support, including today's more than 63,000 different device profiles.

The vast majority of OTT operators today realize the economics and practicality of outsourcing content protection services to companies specializing in that field. Thus, Intertrust was charged with assuming this major responsibility.

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The solution

The Operator sought a trusted partner with a proven track record in all areas of pay-TV and OTT content protection and security management.

After an extensive evaluation, Intertrust was selected to manage the transition to a cloud-based DRM service. Founded in 1990, Intertrust has a long track record in content protection and related security areas. Intertrust co-founded the open-standard Marlin DRM together with Panasonic, Philips, Samsung and Sony.

Intertrust's ExpressPlay DRM service, with its core technology based on Marlin DRM, is a key component of the ExpressPlay Media Security Suite. The suite offers complete end-to-end protection including content key storage, content encryption, multi-DRM license delivery, and secure playback.

Intertrust implemented a smooth migration from the incumbent on-premise DRM system to the cloud-based ExpressPlay multi-DRM service. Support is provided for Google Widevine DRM on Android devices, making up the vast majority of the Operator's client devices, and Apple Fairplay Streaming for iOS clients.

ExpressPlay can target OTT devices with the appropriate native DRM client in a manner that provides complete transparency and interoperability to the operator backend systems.

The cloud-based ExpressPlay multi-DRM service provides a global footprint by using Amazon Web Services (AWS) infrastructure with regional redundancy and failover management, which enables a variety of low-latency, fault-tolerant architectures. The ExpressPlay service is running on multiple regional AWS instances for this operator.

Thanks to the global cloud-based service infrastructure, the ExpressPlay DRM service scales to any operational requirements, especially important in order to support sudden active user bursts during major live sports events such as premier cricket and soccer matches.

With millions of viewers in Europe, the ExpressPlay Media Security Suite is GDPR compliant, and fully integrated with AWS MediaPackage—both were essential customer requirements.

The integration between Intertrust and MediaPackage is accomplished using the AWS-specified Secure Packager and Encoder Key Exchange (SPEKE) protocol.

Intertrust has a local team providing first line 24x7x365 technical support, backed by support staff across Asia and United States. Intertrust prides itself on giving its customers a premium level of support, with highly qualified engineers on hand to fast track customer requests.

Ultimately, the Operator selected Intertrust for its continuous investment in security R&D and commitment to staying ahead of the shifting threats of piracy. The company's R&D effort goes beyond DRM in related areas such as whiteCryption application shielding technology, which includes white box cryptography, code protection, and secure key management. In addition, the Seacert managed certificate and PKI service provides cryptographically secure identities for connected devices including in IoT applications.

Thanks to the global AWS infrastructure, the ExpressPlay multi-DRM service scales to any operational requirements, especially important to support sudden active user bursts during major live sports events. For example, the Operator's OTT platform registered an unprecedented 25.3 million concurrent viewers during a major live event in July 2019, beating the previous world record also held by the same operator.



The results

The ExpressPlay DRM service has proven itself agile by scaling easily to the quickly growing MAU base. Since going live with Intertrust, the Operator has covered major live sports events using ExpressPlay DRM to protect its premium content and associated service revenue.

The scalability and robust nature of ExpressPlay DRM was quickly put to the test, as the Operator's OTT services experienced stunning growth and record-breaking numbers of concurrent viewers shortly after deploying the solution.

In the first three weeks of the 2019 IPL cricket tournament, the Operator registered 267 million viewers, a 32% increase over the 202 million viewers across the entire 2018 season.

During the India vs. New Zealand semi-final on July 10, the Operator's OTT platform registered an unprecedented 25.3 million concurrent viewers, shattering its previous world record of 18.6 million set during the IPL 2019 final. The Operator also witnessed some 15 million concurrent viewers across multiple matches during the ICC Cricket World Cup.

The Operator's VIP subscription service is breaking new ground by becoming the first local OTT platform to offer the option to pay by cash. Once a subscriber registers, the payment will be collected from their doorstep within 48-72 hours. This innovation highlights why providers must understand the needs of local markets and to adapt to subscriber lifestyles in order to expand their subscriber base.

The Operator has also brought major international sporting events to consumers in the US and Canada, where eager viewers tune in to the platform via the app, on the web, Google Play Store, as well as on living room devices like Roku TV, Apple TV, Amazon Fire TV, Android TV, and Samsung Smart TV.

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the connected world.

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