



Content to go: Enabling a multi-screen digital lifestyle

The traditional fixed-device, fixed-schedule TV experience is rapidly giving way to a more flexible multi-screen experience. Abandoning linear program grids, consumers are combining live and time-shifted TV to create their own personalized viewing schedules. They're also embracing new outlets that make it easy for them to control and consume TV and video content from a variety of connected devices, including smartphones, tablets, netbooks and PCs. Today's discriminating consumers want a flexible digital lifestyle in which high-quality multimedia content follows them wherever they go and on whatever device they use. Service and content providers are seeking to respond by collaborating to deliver true multi-screen video services.

Jon Gibs, vice president of online and integrated analysis for the Nielsen Company, [recently described](#) the importance of addressing evolving consumer expectations with multi-screen video services. "Content and service providers," he wrote, "need to look at content and delivery from the consumer's perspective. Consumers tend to default to the best screen available to view the content they want. Customizing content for as many screens as possible will allow content and service providers to enhance the multi-screen experience and retain the attention and loyalty of consumers."

In other words, content and service providers need to work together to evolve the current multimedia service model, in which service providers use silo-based service infrastructures to offer platform-specific content to TVs, PCs and mobile devices. To capture and retain consumer interest, content and service providers need to collaborate on converged multi-screen offerings that deliver the same compelling value proposition to every screen while accounting for the unique characteristics of each device. This means providing access to the same high-quality content, interactivity, convenience and quality of experience (QoE) on any device, anytime, anywhere.

Giving consumers what they want: high-quality personalized content

Multimedia services typically succeed when they offer consumers easy access to compelling multimedia content. But the game is changing for those who offer multimedia services. When consumers adopt new connected devices like smartphones and tablets, they expect to gain greater and more flexible access to — as well as control over — high-quality, personalized content. They also expect that the same content will be available on every device and be formatted to suit the screen they're watching at any given moment. As they gain experience with each new device, they become less tolerant of gaps in support or incomplete content and service offerings.

Service and content providers can address these growing consumer expectations by developing converged multi-screen video offerings that extend TV and video content and applications to a wide variety of connected devices. These offerings can maximize the value of content by making it easy to find, select and consume.

For example, most consumers of TV services use an electronic program guide (EPG) as their starting point for live, time-shifted and on-demand viewing. The EPG lists all available content and enables consumers to select, view, record and manage the content they want to watch. In a multi-screen setting, the same EPG and content could be extended across TVs, PCs and smartphones, making it easy for consumers to find and watch their favorite content on every screen they use. Service providers like AT&T and Verizon in the United States and Free in France are already offering common EPG and multimedia content across multiple screens. If successful, these offers could spawn partnerships that evolve the EPG concept even further, enabling consumers to access video stores featuring third-party content.



With converged multi-screen offerings, content and service providers can offer consumers a wide range of flexible viewing options, such as the ability to watch live TV, PVR, catch up TV or video on demand (VoD) content on TVs, PCs and smartphones. Converged multi-screen offerings can also leverage Internet connectivity to incorporate sharing and social networking applications that allow consumers to capture, share and broadcast personalized content in real time on a dedicated TV channel.

Facilitating the discovery of an interactive digital media experience

Discovery is an important part of the multimedia experience. Now more than ever, consumers need to know what content is available, what it's about, who's involved, what's popular, and what their friends like. This need is being fueled by the rising popularity of mobile devices that offer consumers easy access to countless facts and opinions about everything they watch.

Multi-screen services can foster the discovery process by placing content and related information at consumers' fingertips at all times. Multi-screen services can, for example, permit consumers to use smartphones and laptops to access a common EPG or VoD catalog when they're away from their home TVs. Service providers such as Comcast and content providers such as Netflix offer — or intend to offer — remote VoD capabilities on popular mobile devices like the iPhone, iPad and Blackberry. From remote locations — in an airport, on a train, outside, in a café — consumers can browse and learn about available content. They can also purchase VoD content from any of these locations and watch it later, either at home or on the go.

The remote access concept could be extended to enable consumers to synchronize their smartphone and TV views. Consumers could then use their smartphones or tablets to get additional information about what they're watching on TV or restart a program that they've joined in progress. Synchronization could open the door to a wide variety of interactive applications, including sharing and recommendation services, voting (for programs like American Idol or Britain's Got Talent), live

chats through social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter, and merchandising tie-ins for TV shows, movies, sports and more.

Offering a more convenient multi-screen viewing experience

Convenience and portability are essential in a world in which consumers are captivated by innovative mobile devices and mobile video services. Today's consumers already watch content on many connected devices. They now want cross screen services that enable them to seamlessly shift the viewing experience back and forth between devices. Multimedia content — particularly live TV, VoD and time-shifted TV content — must now go where consumers go and follow them from device to device.

Multi-screen bookmarking capabilities can help provide the convenient cross screen service experience consumers are looking for. With multi-screen bookmarking, consumers can start watching streaming content on one device, pause it, and resume viewing from the same point using the same or any other device. For example, using the recently announced Netflix iPhone application, a consumer could start watching a movie on TV during the evening, pause it at bedtime, and finish it on an iPhone while riding the subway to work the next day — a truly convenient viewing experience.

True multi-screen services can deliver cross screen relevance through compelling applications like remote PVR and smartphone-based remote control. Remote PVR, already offered by AT&T, Verizon and others, lets users record programs using a smartphone or PC. Remote control capabilities, such as those supported by Free in France's Freemote application and Google TV's upcoming Logitech companion, allow consumers to control TV functions, tune in to specific channels, launch a VoD or turn the TV on and off using a smartphone. These applications give consumers the flexibility to watch personalized content at their own convenience, even when they're on the move. The flexible cross screen service experience they support can encourage consumers to keep coming back for more.



Delivering a consistent QoE on every screen

Quality of experience is a key requirement for every consumer of multimedia content. Well accustomed to a variety of multimedia devices, consumers now expect a consistent QoE on every screen they use. Consumers don't want to have to worry about whether they're getting the quality they've paid for when they choose to watch content on a given device. Specifically, they don't want the viewing experience to be interrupted or delayed by connectivity challenges when they're watching mobile multimedia content on their smartphones.

Content and service providers can address the challenges involved in delivering consistent video quality to smartphones by providing alternatives to streaming, which requires a strong and reliable network connection. One such alternative is to push PVR, VoD, catch-up TV and user-generated content to smartphones in a smart, transparent way to allow consumers to watch multimedia content when they aren't connected to the network. Offline viewing provides consumers with the consistent QoE they expect without requiring them to rely on connectivity during the viewing

experience. By combining content push and live streaming capabilities, providers can ensure that consumers always have access to the best possible viewing conditions.

Why go multi-screen?

With multi-screen services, content and service providers can attract and retain consumer interest by extending high-quality multimedia content and compelling applications across many devices and screens. Each new screen gives providers new opportunities to engage consumers and generate multimedia revenue, and improves their chances to secure a central role in the multimedia value chain.

Learn more

Find out how solutions from Alcatel-Lucent can help you seize the multi-screen opportunity:

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