



Any media, any network, any device!

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Video Convergence Forum to develop and promote open specifications



Daniel Bar-Lev, the Forum's CEO

The Video Convergence Forum (VCF), launched at NetEvents EMEA Press Summit, is a new industry forum dedicated to the development and promotion of open interface specifications and consistent business models for the delivery of video content – whether for home entertainment, business or the mobile user. Interested parties – including content owners, hosting companies, service providers, broadcasters, device manufacturers, transcoding companies, and online ad insertion companies – are invited to attend the Forum's Foundation Meeting in Barcelona, adjoining the Mobile World Congress, on Wednesday 17th February. At the meeting the Forum objectives and strategy will be presented in detail, and the invitation will be extended for founder members to be appointed to the Forum's board. To register for the event, or obtain further information, see www.vcoForum.org. "The VCF will strengthen and grow the online video industry – from broadcast television through to mobile to mobile video streaming" explains Daniel Bar-Lev, the Forum's CEO. "It will do that by facilitating a level of

interoperability that simply does not exist today. Instead we are faced with a plethora of individual solutions – for device detection, bandwidth selection, ad insertion, optimized delivery, rights management decisions, and so on. But there is as yet no integration across the different web, transcoding and streaming infrastructures, receiving devices, storage and delivery environments, and content monetization processes. It means a total but flexible integration of the video ecosystem. The rewards will be staggering.”

This industry is growing at an incredible pace. This month, comScore reported 28 billion video views in October 2009 in the US alone, and a combined 12 billion views in Germany and France. In the emerging market of mobile to mobile live video streams, providers are reporting over half a million such streams in the past two months alone.

Commenting on the extraordinary surge in video content access, and its implications, Vidya Nath, Global Industry Manager, Digital Media Group, at Frost & Sullivan said “we are on the brink of G4 deployment, with LTE enabled devices arriving shortly; and all this is besides the already growing phenomenal penetration of devices such as the iPhone.”

According to Frost & Sullivan, deployment of video consumer playback devices, including mobile video handsets, videogame consoles, blu-ray players, IP set-top boxes and streaming devices is expected to grow from 835 million in 2009 to over 1.1 billion in 2013, illustrating a base of several billion devices over the forecast period; discounting the billions of TV sets and personal computers. “Video today has permeated the consumer psyche just the way music did a decade ago. Consumers increasingly take it for granted that there will be no lack of choices when it comes to searching, selecting and playing their favorite video content on any platform. The demand is colossal, but the infrastructure is creaking under the load and with it the video quality. Besides, the key issue is monetization. Any simple, consistent and non-punitive monetization mechanism with such volumes could be a license to print money.”

From a user’s perspective, the VCF is committed to nothing less than seamless delivery of video content. From a business perspective it is also about creating a framework for inserting information all along the video delivery chain that is needed to ensure high quality and secure, consistent monetization of online viewing – whether via ad insertion or subscription. The VCF offers its members many benefits. Member companies will be well placed to integrate their part of the video delivery workflow into the open specifications being developed, while membership will raise the company’s profile and facilitate networking with key industry players. The long term objective of “any media, any network, any device” will of course generate an enormous market with huge potential for innovation and commercial opportunities. Founder members, in particular, will be in a strong position to shape strategy and policy decisions in the critical early stages, as well as

raising their media profile as industry leaders.

Those attending the Foundation meeting – on February 17th, 12:30pm to 2pm at the Oleum Restaurant, Palau Nacional, Barcelona – will have the opportunity to be involved in the creation of the leadership board comprising founding members, and to take part in the nomination and appointment of interim technical and marketing co-chairs. Those unable to attend that meeting are invited to find out more at an interactive online session held at 6pm CET (12 noon EDT) that day on www.vcoForum.org. Further meetings are planned in the US during the course of the next 3 months.

"Video content providers are moving beyond the traditional broadcast market into video that is delivered via complex IP Networks. Video technology increasingly needs to become "network-aware" and the VCF is chartered to build an open-standard workflow model around new technologies such as adaptive IP delivery and HTML5," comments Brendon Mills, President and CEO, Ripcode. "Users are still dazzled by the breadth of content available to their smartphones, but when it comes to serious mobile business you need specific content available at your fingertips. HTML5 may be the future, but a lot of valuable material lies in the past. At the other end of the scale there is the broadcast industry, entering the world of content-on-demand while managing a challenging transition in workflow processes that are suited to digital delivery networks. The opportunity lies in working from both ends of the spectrum to create open interoperability for all the members of the online video ecosystem."

"The success of video-based applications are also dependent on completely open interoperability" adds Jim Machi, Senior VP of Marketing , Dialogic. "Video ringtones through to IVVR, live video customer representatives and mobile surveillance – this market is only just beginning. The innovation and profitability of these value-add video services will grow much faster if the value to the user is available at high quality in every location. Interoperability of all members of the online video ecosystem is essential."