

TV as a Service for Multifamily Service Providers

New business models by technology suppliers are making TV as a Service a possibility for MDU specialists. Can the industry benefit from these changes, or are the quality of service risks too high?

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Traditionally, broadband service providers specializing in the multiple-dwelling-unit (MDU), private-cable and business-to-business markets have had significant upfront and operating cost requirements related to providing a full range of television offerings. Between securing all required rights, installing signal acquisition and conditioning equipment, and building robust delivery architectures, maintaining a position as a television provider for the relatively small-scale MDU market has never been a simple proposition.

Over the last 20 years, the competition has continued to increase for broadband service providers of all types and has come from directions that may have been difficult to foresee before new technologies made them viable. The growth of OTT services such as Disney+, Netflix, Amazon Prime Video and HBO Max is just the most recent threat, following the packaged OTT service offerings of Hulu and Sling. These followed retail initiatives by Microsoft and Google, which followed significant MDU and hospitality initiatives launched in the early 2000s by DIRECTV and EchoStar/Dish Network, all of which continue to this day.

Over the last couple of years, new internet protocol television (IPTV) platform companies have adapted both their technologies and their business models to embrace the idea of providing TV service delivery platforms, and they have begun commercially packaging those platforms as white label and co-branding into TV as a Service (TVaaS) offerings.

There are differences among the players, but what they have in common is the ability to provide all internet protocol (IP) video offerings and bring with their technology platform either transport rights or full carriage rights to deliver content through a local service provider's network. In addition, all emerging TVaaS providers offer service-operator branding of their TV services, and the majority support various forms of advanced TV Everywhere multiscreen services, leveraging the same relatively low-cost caching infrastructure to deliver TV Everywhere services. Although most TVaaS providers have

focused on residential service operators and deployments, some are beginning to engage with alternative service operators focused on MDU, senior living, institutional and even hospitality video services.

EMERGING TVaaS PROVIDERS

Let's highlight a few emerging TVaaS providers. TiVo recently introduced its new IPTV service, Stream, to business users. It combines live and streaming content into a single user experience for display on smart TVs, tablets, mobile devices, and traditional set-top box endpoints. TiVo recently joined forces with Rovi, and together they have a large portfolio of intellectual property rights and advanced features and functions.

MobiTV began years ago as a company supplying the IPTV systems and infrastructure for large content and mobile phone providers around the world but pivoted in 2017 to focus on the TVaaS market in the United States and Canada. The company offers a tightly integrated user experience. It also offers advanced features coupled with the ability to transport a wide range of content to customers' networks and the ability to turn up new business customers on its hosted platform quickly.

Minerva Networks, a major company in IP television for many years with hundreds of system deployments and millions of subscribers worldwide, also has been adapting to changing market needs with the release of its Minerva 10 platform. Minerva 10 supports a pure IP and OTT infrastructure on a wide range of TV, mobile, tablet and set-top platforms and includes features such as catch-up and restart TV and network DVR.

SkitterTV is one of the newer entrants into the IPTV TVaaS market with its Skitter Services. SkitterTV is fully white-label branded for local operators but is deployed with a unique business model focused on bringing a complete set of content rights for the channels in its portfolio. SkitterTV