The Case for OTT Delivery of MDU/Institutional Targeted Video And Signage Services

MDUs and even towns and cities can take advantage of HTTP-based streaming with intelligent stream direction and TV client applications.

By Dave Jones and Lubo Trayanov / *Radiant Communications*

There is an underserved market for local content targeted for specific multiple-dwelling-unit (MDU) local or gated communities and institutional audiences.

MDUs and institutions such as college campuses, hospitals and military bases are increasingly producing their own video and digital signage (bulletin board) content, and they require the ability to deliver more than one channel to their audiences.

Cable service providers historically tasked with providing channel space for this targeted local content and supplying the field expertise to insert local content into building or campus wiring infrastructures find this increasingly challenging. The complexity of their distribution systems and the move to IPTV delivered services make a single point of program insertion into building infrastructure increasingly more complex. The return in revenue to cable providers in exchange for providing such services and channel spaces is not exactly a motivating factor. For them, this takes an investment in personnel, technical infrastructure and revenue-generating channel space.

On the other side, smart communities and buildings, off-campus housing and other types of properties have a greater need to generate and provide signage and information and video services to their residents. For the management companies of these communities, information services are an immense value-add. So, can property managers themselves offer over-the-top delivery of MDU/institutional targeted video and signage services?

Recent developments in internet-delivered video services are a solution to this problem. By publishing these services to the web, cable operators are no longer gatekeepers that determine how many such channels can be deployed. The network infrastructure of new smart communities and buildings is more than enough to support multiple channels. The shrinking cost of smart TVs and appliances, such as Amazon Firestick and Google TV boxes, make internet-delivered video services cost-effective and simple to deploy. But how does management keep viewership of web-delivered content local to the communities for which it is targeted?

'SMART CLIENT' ADVANTAGES

Using "smart clients" (software applications) developed for Android and other operating systems used in smart TVs, cellphones and tablet computer platforms is an effective way of presenting targeted programming to the residents of smart communities and institutions. The smart client authenticates with a "director"
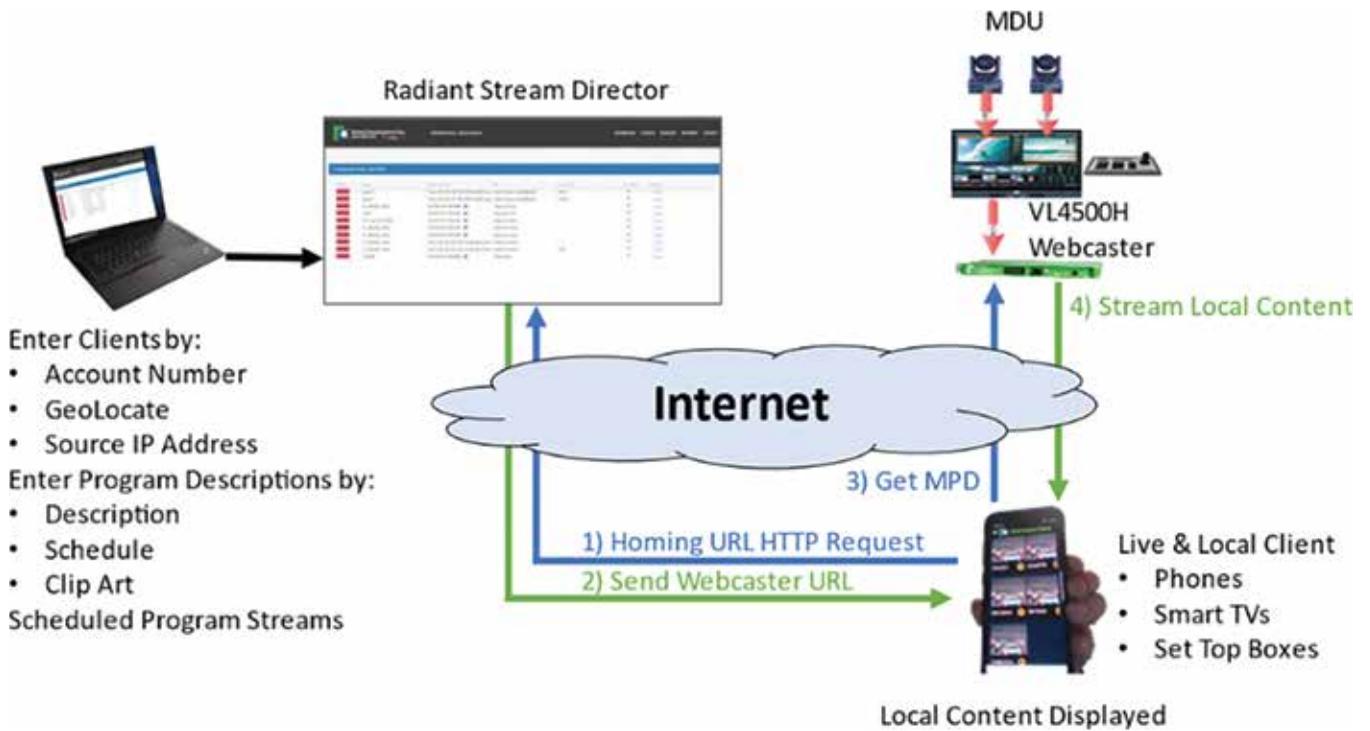
application that, on authentication, provides the channel lineup (guide) to the smart client. In this way, MDUs and institutions can provide targeted programming of many types to their residents. Even programming streamed from other countries can be shared within the local smart client channel lineup. Internet-delivered content can come from anywhere and be delivered everywhere.

Cable operators can take advantage of this innovative technology by embedding a smart client into their advanced set-top boxes and assigning a virtual channel to the service. Instead of delivering programming via the cable network, it is delivered via the internet. This also gives cable operators a revenue-generating opportunity to sell high-speed internet services to these special clients.

The types of programming that can be delivered in this way are bulletin board services; embedded YouTube videos; live, locally originated programming; gate or door cameras; webpages and more. Within that application are opportunities for revenue-generating, targeted advertising services.

Property owners and management companies can produce multiple targeted ad campaigns. Within the targeted property, owners and managers can sell advertising spaces as static messages or video commercials. The director application software provides the ability to actively schedule certain messages and videos during certain times of day. This way, ads can be targeted to specific resident groups at the right time and in the right place.

EXPAND AUDIENCE, MAKE MONEY

Expanding on revenue-generating opportunities, it is possible to use the geolocation function of the smart-client applications to target commuters with ads for local coffee shops and available discounts. Target stay-at-home parents with local children's activities, and show lunch-special ads for local restaurants during the day.

MDU and campus residents are not the only advertising audience in targeted properties. By displaying bulletin-board programming on common-area TVs, owners can reach all visitors and staff – everyone who visits a property is a potential customer for targeted advertising services.

In a campus scenario, the geolocation function of the smart client interacts with the director application, making directing class and lecture schedules to smartphones based on the physical location of the phone near a campus building possible. This is called "intelligent stream direction."

In summary, HTTP internet-based content streaming combined with HTTP-delivered signage and intelligently directed content lineups make customizing channel menus for many types of scenarios possible. Assisted living communities, hospitals, universities, military bases and even towns and cities can take advantage of HTTP-based streaming with intelligent stream direction and smart TV client applications. They can customize and target programming based on physical location to specific groups based on account numbers, to specific network segments based on IP address, and to many others. The increasing affordability of smart TVs and external devices such as Firestick, Google TV and Roku make localized, customized delivery of content services cost-effective and simple to deploy. ❖

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