

# STANDING OVATION FOR PAY-TV CHANNEL'S CONTENT DELIVERY NETWORK, DELIVERED BY AAPT

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Gerry Travers, MANAGING DIRECTOR, OVATION

## 1 BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Established in 1997, Ovation provides subscription-based arts and entertainment programming covering drama, music, entertainment events and the visual arts. The Ovation Channel is available to subscribers on various Australian Pay TV services including AUSTAR, Optus TV and fetchtv.

Around 60 per cent of Ovation's subscribers watched its programs through Pay TV operator FOXTEL, until the two media companies ended their relationship in March 2011.

"This was a wake-up call for our company," says Gerry Travers, Managing Director, Ovation. "We realised we needed to expand the distribution of our programming beyond Pay TV's traditional cable and satellite approach."

The company also saw an opportunity to reach a wider audience, since only one in three Australian homes has Pay TV.

Ovation was interested in internet protocol television (IPTV) as a delivery mechanism, having followed the progress of this technology for many years. However, each time the company had considered IPTV in the past, it encountered issues around providing a smooth, buffer-free video signal.

"We needed a solution that would shape and mould the data traffic to achieve speeds that allowed our viewers to watch programs without interruption," explains Travers.

## 2 SOLUTION FEATURES

Ovation approached several web service providers but was most impressed with AAPT's EdgeCast Content Delivery Network (CDN) and its technical expertise. Ovation now streams its service via the internet in

an encrypted format for its 24/7 Ovation Channel, and On Demand service. Anyone with access to the internet can subscribe and watch programs through the Ovation website or Smart TV.

### KEY SOLUTION FEATURES

- 1. Superior level of service**  
Initially AAPT provided specialist technical resources to determine how the EdgeCast Content Delivery Network (CDN) would best serve Ovation's requirements. AAPT then played a central role in helping Ovation set up its CDN.
- 2. Extensive trial period**  
AAPT provided Ovation with an extended trial period to ensure the CDN met the company's requirements. AAPT also allowed Ovation to develop and test software for each Smart TV manufacturer – a complex and lengthy process.
- 3. Rich multi-platform video**  
CDN accelerates and shapes Ovation's content, delivering programming from the cloud across multiple platforms including Windows Media, Flash Media and hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP). This content is seamlessly delivered – linearly as a 24-hour channel and on demand for one-off events.
- 4. Clear and intuitive**  
Ovation found the CDN simple and intuitive to operate. The company also benefited from AAPT's online technical support and security features. Access to security features was particularly crucial to providing an encrypted signal, so only paying subscribers could view Ovation's programs.
- 5. Easy scalability**  
The AAPT CDN enables Ovation to accommodate sudden spikes in the number of online viewers watching premium one-off arts events and live concerts, and to provide a smooth, buffer-free video feed.
- 6. Competitively priced service bundle**  
By owning one of Australia's largest networks, AAPT can bundle its CDN with its telecommunications packages, which can include flexible internet solutions. This meant Ovation saved time and money by transferring its video data to the CDN.

# OVATION CHANNEL IS FIRST IN AUSTRALIA TO LAUNCH A LINEAR SUBSCRIPTION TV CHANNEL FOR SMART TV

"With AAPT's CDN, we'll gain a much clearer picture of what our audiences are watching and what they want to watch."

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## 3 THE RESULT

With AAPT's CDN up and running, Ovation can now offer its Channel and On Demand service direct to Smart TVs, using adaptive-rate streaming across multiple IP-based video platforms that support Windows Media, Flash Media and HTTP.

The CDN has also enabled Ovation to become Australia's first subscription linear channel to screen its programs on Smart TVs. The company now offers a select range of internet-enabled LG and Samsung Smart TVs, and will offer Panasonic models in the near future.

### Greater flexibility and viewer reach

Under the traditional Pay TV business model, only a third of Australian homes could access the Ovation Channel service, as around one in three Australian homes have Pay TV. By embracing IPTV, Ovation Channel and Ovation On Demand can

now reach a much wider audience. "AAPT's CDN enables us to access all broadband-enabled homes with a reasonable signal in Australia," says Travers. "That's a big reach."

Ovation can also approach potential customers in a more flexible manner. "We can engage customers directly with targeted offers," Travers adds. "Traditionally, viewers who wanted to watch our channel had to sign up to a Pay TV provider for well over \$100 a month for 12 months, and they'd receive lots of other channels they never watched. Now for \$10 a month we can offer viewers just one channel. They only pay for what they want to watch."

### Vital ongoing support

AAPT's technical team played a crucial role in helping Ovation establish its online Pay TV model. In addition, AAPT's ability to bundle its CDN with its other voice and data communications services saved Ovation time and money.

Travers sees AAPT's involvement as

ongoing. "AAPT's technical expertise and business support were invaluable in getting our CDN off the ground in a cost-effective way," he says. "At the same time, we bought ourselves consistency.

"The technology we're using is evolving and being upgraded constantly. We believe it's important we continue to access and leverage AAPT's expertise."

### Future plans

By adopting a subscription-based IPTV business model, Ovation sees itself as a more tailored, cost-effective alternative to traditional Pay TV broadcasters, especially as more households purchase Smart TVs.

"With AAPT's CDN we can immediately see which shows and events are the most popular, and gain a clear picture of what people want to watch," says Travers. "Down the track, we may add other offerings to our line-up; for example, global simulcasts of big musical events and additional channels. There's a whole world of options to explore."

## OVERVIEW

When Pay TV broadcaster FOXTEL ended its relationship with Ovation in March 2011, the subscription-based media company decided to explore new ways of broadcasting its arts and entertainment programs.

After approaching several online service providers, Ovation chose AAPT's EdgeCast Content Delivery Network, which AAPT helped to set up.

## CHALLENGES

- Early adopter of streaming technology
- Buffering and latency issues for viewers
- Smart TV roll-out
- Audience approval

## SUCCESSES

- Superior content streaming
- Optimal viewing experience
- Australia's first subscription-based Smart TV channel
- New untapped audiences

## AAPT IS ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S LARGEST CORPORATE ONLY NETWORK PROVIDERS.

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