Multi-Platform Distribution
Shape a viewer experience
Audiences expect content to be available when and wherever they want it. In effect, they are engaging with and personalizing the content in a way that is unique and makes most sense to them. Content creators have a new opportunity to use this to their advantage and to the advantage of their brand.

Incidentally, most audiences who engage with content across multiple platforms actually watch more TV content, which only underscores the significance of what’s happening in the media industry. Each platform no longer functions as a separate, discrete entity, but in fact reinforces the others and drives viewers to spend increasing amounts of time consuming media across all of them.

The content creation, distribution, and reporting challenges of multiple platforms also represent huge opportunities. With the right tools, content creators can build their brand relevance, increase audience share, and grow ad revenue. It’s about enabling audience fluidity of movement between platforms to drive brand awareness and meaningful, measurable engagement. It’s also about understanding audience consumption habits in order to better leverage and monetize assets and resources across all of these platforms to develop new revenue streams and build brand stickiness.

Creating an audience experience

Whether on a TV or an iPad, audiences consume content in many different ways. From linear TV, to time-shifted video, to the other side of the spectrum with platforms like YouTube and even Twitter. Audiences are no longer beholden to linear content and social media has drastically evolved the way in which audiences interact with both content and brand across multiple platforms. This is of particular relevance with news and sports audiences who have shown higher propensity for multi-screen usage as timeliness of content to these audiences is crucial, regardless of the device they have in front of them. So, content creators have vast opportunities to take advantage of audience behaviors to build advertising revenue and to deliver a richer audience experience.

Building a marketing engine that leverages content specifically tailored to each platform in a way that reinforces brand and delivers consistency of story will let each platform reinforce the others. Each platform provides a unique path to market with a particular story and when the content is appropriately tailored to each platform and complimentary of the others it drives increased viewership, higher advertising revenues and engagement across all platforms.

- According to a recent comScore study around Multi-Screen consumers, a quarter of multi-tasking TV viewers are actually busy looking at the complimentary content to what they’re watching linearly.

1. “How Multi-Screen Consumers are Changing Media Dynamics”, Findings from a comScore Study for the Coalition for Innovative Media Measurement
Multi-Platform Distribution

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• According to Nielsen, 70% of viewers are watching TV and interacting online at the same time. Viewers watching video on mobile phones has more than doubled and time spent watching video on the internet has increased by almost 80% in the last three years.
• According to a recent study by Microsoft and Wunderman, 69% of multi-screen consumers feel that accessing similar content across different screens makes content more useful, relevant, and informative.
• According to Borrell Associates, local online ad revenue for U.S. TV stations increased 41% to $1.97 billion in 2011, and is slated to increase another 35% during 2012.

Making it work
Most content creators have solved some part of the multi-platform delivery challenge. Perhaps they’re already reasonably proficient at getting content online, or know there’s a social group that ensures messages are going out. But operationally, it’s necessary to get it running like a well-oiled machine so that it actually feeds a business rather than draining and dispersing resources.

How do you get started?
Leverage what’s available. Fix what doesn’t work. Streamline where possible. Look holistically.

Create efficiencies
One of the most effective ways to accomplish this is to streamline the process by creating content once and strategically using it across the relevant platforms for the audience and the story. Developing new workflow designs helps to eliminate steps and automating as much of the process as possible lets content providers generate more content with the same resources and ensure that content is consistent across delivery platforms.

Develop the right ecosystem
The role of digital advertising has been increasing as consumption patterns have changed. Advertisers are continually looking for opportunities to not only leverage complimentary digital ads to both maintain exposure frequency and ensure measurability. An ecosystem that has the tools in place to help audiences shape their own experiences across multiple platforms, simultaneously provides advertisers with a targeted ad platform that makes sense and money. With the right set of digital consumption metrics, online, social and mobile properties can actually become more valuable to advertisers as advertising moves beyond the traditional 30-second spot.
Optimize content & assets
Content is king. But it doesn't come in singular form anymore. It's important to stay story-centric and to build content not just for one platform, but develop it with multi-platform distribution in mind. Some assets can be mirrored, others created as complementary packages. However, it is necessary to consider how each platform is used differently throughout the day in order to make the most sense at a given time for the audience and platform.

Break down organizational silos
And the best way to optimize content and assets is to break down the publishing walls. No one wants to have to run down the hall to hear the breaking news, so get rid of the halls. The various departments in an organization may be creating content for each platform, and it's imperative that they're sharing resources, and that it's happening in an efficient way. Web teams need to talk to TV and social teams and all assets need to be accessible by all of the teams. Leveraging economies of scale can help avoid the potential risk of audience cannibalization caused by delivering inconsistent story and fragmented brand exposure.

Key solution considerations
Content management is the key driver of multi-platform distribution, and as an ever-increasing number of platforms are addressed, it becomes even more mission-critical. Effective content management helps to drive efficiencies and enable cross department sharing and communication. It also helps to ensure consistent content quality, speed workflow and make the entire process more reliable.

“Projects that would have normally taken us two weeks to complete can be done in a matter of 24 hours if the content is available and in the system. And I think that is the biggest advantage we have right now,” says Jimm Popowich, AMC Network.

Each organization has different goals for distributing content to multiple platforms and each platform has its own set of requirements and each works differently. So it's imperative to take a holistic approach to understanding each platform and the role that it plays in achieving that goal.

Some of the challenges this presents are resolved with a rich metadata structure. Developing a cross-platform model of integrated web and social media metrics as part of the metadata lets content providers control the production process and create a return path of analytics to tune the cyclic marketing engine for greater power and value. Additionally tracking metrics and production analytics versus ROI helps to most applicably utilize resources.

Of primary importance to multi-platform distribution is automated transcoding and delivery. Driven by necessary business logic, automation can both eliminate time consuming, error-prone manual steps and free up creative resources to get more content to more platforms in a shorter time. Incorporating review and approval processes directly into workflow definitions also avoids delays in getting content to the desired audiences.

Other services essential to the process such as captioning, graphics creation, and quality control can be integrated into the multi-platform publishing workflow as well.
Where’s the technology

Many media operations are not utilizing what they have in the best possible ways to achieve the right platform mix for their audiences.

Avid Multi-Platform Distribution (MPD) is a reference solution for integrating existing newsroom and production workflows with web, online video platforms, and social media distribution that enable them to meet that challenge. MPD allows content to be created once and simultaneously published using a single, integrated UI to targeted platforms. It is designed to take into account the nuances of specific business requirements and goals.

The solution leverages Avid iNEWS and Interplay Production Web Services APIs, and supports Interplay Central, NewsCutter, and Media Composer, allowing for integration with web content management solutions (WCMS), transcoders, and online video platforms (OVP). Interoperation with the systems is enabled through a media services bus that uses standard connector protocols to simplify and enable communication across disparate systems.

The reference solution is based on a few key tenets.

Integrated content customization

Most multi-platform distribution solutions approach the process serially, taking finished content and simply transcoding it for distribution. But this approach makes it practically impossible to customize the content for different outlets. By contrast, the Avid approach incorporates media publishing upstream during the content editing process so unique versions can be easily created with complete flexibility. By leveraging multi-version mastering formats like AS-02, the Avid approach enables flexible versioning of content prior to distribution.

Extensible client applications

The Avid MPD solution streamlines media publishing by empowering content creators to trigger automated, template-driven publishing workflows from within rich media applications. For example, Interplay Central is based on extensible open technologies like HTML5, CSS3, and JavaScript, allowing multi-platform distribution to be easily customized and integrated.

Service-oriented architecture

The Avid MPD solution is based on service-oriented architecture, capable of integrating a wide range of disparate systems. Every component is connected by a common messaging bus and automation layer. By wrapping existing web services interfaces into a common services framework, diverse systems can be integrated into unified, customizable workflows which can be easily modified in the future.
Building on standard connectors for common third party components like transcoding services and web content management systems, Avid Multi-Platform Distribution leverages existing components within the customer environment. This loose coupling of components is a basic tenet of service-oriented architecture, providing the agility necessary to evolve and adapt as the system matures.

**Experienced consulting and integration services**  
Designing and deploying a deeply integrated, automated multi-platform distribution solution requires significant expertise and experience. With over 1,000 successful customer engagements to date and a staff made up of hundreds of highly-trained industry professionals, Avid Professional Services helps media companies implement cost-effective, automated MPD workflows.

Avid Professional Services provides the MPD workflow design and automation services necessary to extend Interplay/iNEWS environment with digital workflows. Avid can automate background services such as transcode operations and OVP integration in order to streamline the delivery of content to social, mobile and online platforms in an efficient multi-platform publishing workflow; allowing journalists to focus on the story, not the technology.

**In summary**  
At the end of the day, it’s about improving business. It’s about considering production, distribution and business processes in a holistic way while keeping sight of future goals and developing extensible workflows that address multi-platform distribution needs today while future-proofing for tomorrow.