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An Amagi Case Study | May 2022

POWERING 3X GROWTH

How Cox Media Group exponentially grew their digital offerings with Amagi

The award-winning media company partnered with Amagi to reach new highs in the streaming universe across CTV, mobile and web.

About **Cox Media Group**

Cox Media Group is an award-winning American media company that specializes in providing valuable local content to viewers.

The company's operations primarily include 31 high-quality, market-leading television stations in 20 markets, 53 top-performing radio stations delivering multiple genres of content in 11 markets, and numerous streaming and digital platforms.

CMG's portfolio includes primary affiliates of ABC, CBS, FOX, NBC, Telemundo, and MyNetworkTV, as well as several valuable news and independent stations.

Amagi-Cox Media Group
engagement summary

Cox Media Group aimed to launch 31 new channels within a tight timeframe of three months. These included 10 Breaking News Channels, 10 24x7 Now Channels, 10 Weather Channels, and one radio channel. Despite having different workflows for all three, CMG was able to launch them on schedule, thanks to Amagi's cloud solutions.

We enabled these channels with the capability to feature live breaking news at a moment's notice. We also fully automated the scheduling process and, with minimal investment, helped them expand nearly 3-fold.

Additionally, CMG availed Amagi's ad monetization services to make the most of their content. We helped them deliver an enriching experience for the end viewers resulting in increased viewing durations and a happier, loyal viewer base.

Using our expertise in the cloud technology space, we cloud-optimized their existing video transport infrastructure, thus saving big bucks.

In three months, we helped CMG launch

- 10 breaking news channels
- 10 24X7 Now channels
- 10 weather channels
- 1 radio channel

Impact delivered

- **3x growth** in CMG's streaming business
- **Increased efficiency** using automation
- **Cost savings** through cloud-optimization of legacy infrastructure
- **Improved ROI** through better content monetization

Business **requirements**

Cox Media Group was looking for a technology partner who could help them:

Create and launch a total of 31 live, linear and radio channels.
Distribute all the channels to their O&O apps
Distribute the 24x7 Now channels to two streaming platforms - Plex and Redbox

Improve ad monetization and create better ad experiences for end viewers.
Sell their inventory, increase fill rates and reduce blank slates to boost content ROI, while enhancing user experience

Why **Amagi?**

Our unmatched expertise

CMG saw Amagi as a reliable technology partner that could easily handle complex functions such as a 7-day EPG ingest, manipulation, and formatting for each distribution endpoint - keeping in mind the various acceptance testing protocols. They trusted us for our unique expertise to help launch three different bundles of channels with varying requirements – with agility and efficiency.

"CMG has always led the way, innovating across product, technology, and content. Now, with Amagi's best-in-class solutions, we've been able to take our streaming capabilities to the next level, fueling growth for the company. Our collaboration with Amagi unlocks the potential to greatly expand our streaming footprint including our NOW Channels, News and Weather streams across CMG."

Marian Pittman
Executive Vice President, Content, Product & Innovation, CMG

Amagi solutions **deployed**

Amagi CLOUDPORT

Amagi LIVE

Amagi ADS PLUS

Amagi THUNDERSTORM
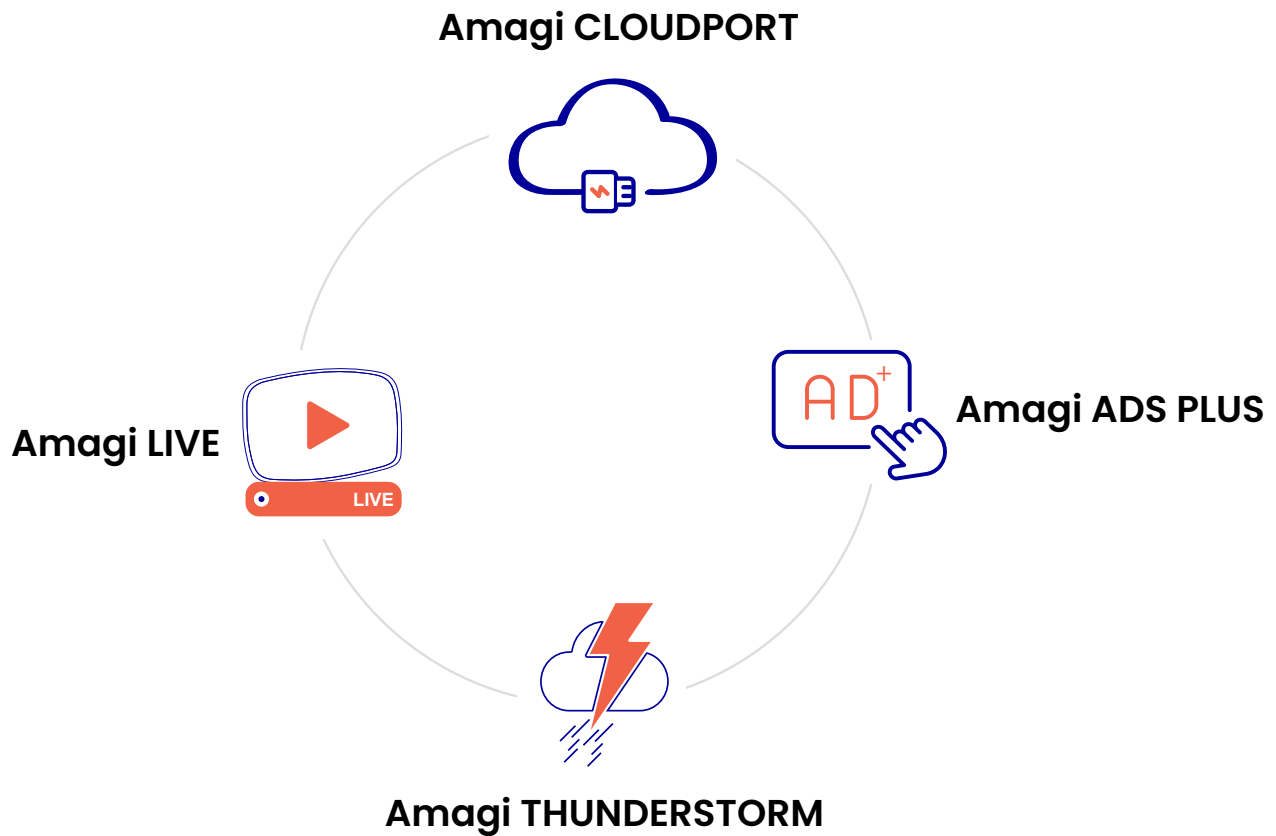
- ⬦ Spin up and deliver live and linear channels on the go
- ⬦ Automate scheduling for all sets of channels — Breaking News, 24x7 News, and Weather
- ⬦ Orchestrate broadcast-grade, low latency live events from any remote location
- ⬦ Ad-slate masking for news channels using SCTE markers – and for their radio channel using audio watermarks
- ⬦ Monetize content by selling their inventory, increasing fill rates, and reducing blank slates
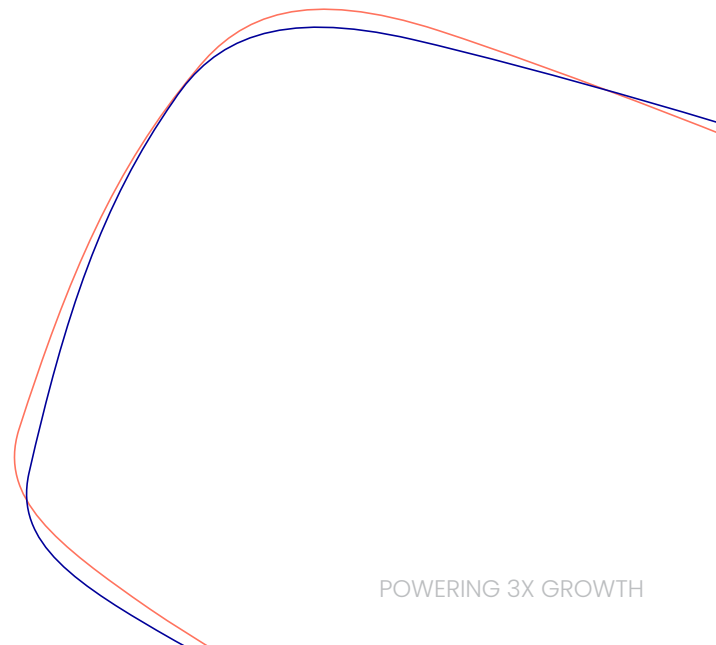
Launching broadcast-grade
Breaking News Channels with Amagi CLOUDPORT

Ingest

Cox Media Group drops its media assets every day from around 7:30 PM to 9:30 PM ET in the Amagi cloud storage – S3 bucket. These are 24x7 live channels that play just one 30-minute recorded NNT (National News Telecast) clip daily. Once dropped, Amagi handles the processing and scheduling of the same.

Scheduling

CMG has two separate schedules for weekdays and weekends, which they drop in the form of Excel sheets in our S3 bucket at the beginning of every month. As soon as they drop the files, we start scheduling. The entire scheduling process is automated to minimize time and effort. Since the content clips for the 30-minute recorded segment are mostly 20-22 minutes long, we have an automated process to fill in ads and promos in the remaining 10 minutes.

Delivery

The live streams that we receive from the Cox Media Group already contain embedded secondary graphics. Based on the platform and app requirements, we deliver these streams directly to their O&O apps, websites, and two FAST platforms.

Ad-slate masking for Breaking News Channels with
Amagi THUNDERSTORM

We power ad-slate masking for their O&O apps, Plex and Redbox, using Amagi THUNDERSTORM. SCTE markers depict commercials and promos in the live stream. These markers are masked using an ad-slate to make the feeds platform-agnostic and ready to be played as they are. For instance, when CMG takes their streams to FAST platforms, they wouldn't want to play the same commercials and promos as played on their O&O apps. So, they replay the same live stream with masked commercials.

Launching broadcast-grade
24x7 Now Channels with Amagi CLOUDPORT

Ingest

Amagi's ingest team has set up an accurate process for ingesting the right assets belonging to a particular station. We have also given CMG the option to manually upload VOD assets such as episodes and TV specials. The customer only needs to drop these assets in the S3 bucket at the beginning of every month and we take them from there based on the schedule and the metadata shared. We also enable mRSS ingest for these channels.

Scheduling

24x7 Now Channels also have two separate Excel sheets for weekdays and weekends. Once they drop them in the S3 bucket at the beginning of every month, we read them and start scheduling. Apart from live telecasts and National News Telecast clips, these channels also run some scheduled episodes. The episode scheduling process is fully automated via an automation code, such that, if one episode plays on one day, the next day, it is auto-incremented to the next episode, and so on.

Delivery

Similar to the Breaking News Channels, we deliver 24x7 News Channels to CMG's O&O apps and websites.

Ad-insertion for the radio channel using
Amagi THUNDERSTORM

Instead of SCTE markers, radio streams use audio watermarks to mark ads and promos. Cox Media Group sends us an audio watermark in the live stream. On detecting it, Amagi THUNDERSTORM starts replacing the ads and stops after two minutes. CMG's radio channel delivers video content only three hours a day between 9 PM to 12 PM. The rest of the radio stream comprises a black video stream with audio.

Powering weather channels with
Amagi CLOUDPORT

Cox Media Group drops assets (media files, HTML files, and ad slates) in their mRSS feed, which we pick and upload to the media library. All weather-specific assets are tagged as 'weather' and are about 1-2 minutes long. The customer also uploads 30-minute long schedules as Excel sheets just like their other channels. In the 30-minute slot, we need to pick up assets four times.

We also schedule variable assets such as secondary HTML graphics, which CMG updates every few seconds. They also provide us with audio clips separately, which are added to the HTML graphics and the live feed using native graphics. Apart from these, we create live events based on the defined schedule using the live streams coming in from traffic cams, weather cams, and radars.

In a nutshell, we take the entire weather wheel* and convert it into an Amagi CLOUDPORT playlist and repeat the exact process every 30 minutes. *A weather wheel is a mix of full-screen HTML graphics, ad slate, HTML URL, and live from one of their traffic cam or radar.

Ad insertion with
Amagi THUNDERSTORM

Based on the ad slate asset, we insert ads using Amagi THUNDERSTORM. According to their requirements, we then distribute the output to their O&O apps and websites.

Unique customizations for **CMG**

- With the help of our fully customized code, Cox Media Group is able to effectively execute the **30-minute automation that's a mix of live and VOD assets**

- The customer can switch to **immediate live at any given moment** across their 10 weather channels. Once the immediate live session is over, they can switch back to their regular 30-minute schedule.

- Thanks to **24x7 automation**, the ingest or scheduling teams can avoid tedious manual effort. We have automated more than 15 of their mRSS feeds and saved time and effort involved.

- Amagi's TORNADO solution enables **machine learning-based auto segmenting**, where on finding continuous black frames, TORNADO skips them.

Amagi **impact**

Cost-effective yet exponential 3X growth
In return for minimal investment, CMG could expand their live and linear streaming repertoire to nearly three-fold within a tight deadline of three months

Cost savings by leveraging their existing on-prem hardware instead of having to build everything from scratch, and cloud-optimizing their existing video transport infrastructure

Maximum content monetization with Amagi ADS PLUS
Minimized unsold ad inventory and blank slates and improve fill rates with Amagi's virtual ad sales service

"We're excited to see a powerhouse media company like CMG expand further in their digital offerings, taking advantage of the tremendous opportunity that lies in CTV and streaming content. As their technology partner, Amagi offers CMG the ability to scale their digital strategy quickly and cost-effectively to achieve unprecedented growth. We look forward to continuing to enhance CMG's streaming capabilities, boosting their reach and revenue with the very best cloud-based solutions."

Srinivasan KA
Co-Founder, Amagi

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