Best Practices in
Broadcast Playout

Teleport operators explain how to design their facilities, safeguard their operations, structure services & pricing and future-proof their businesses.

99.99

The Four Nines Project

World Teleport Association
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Contents

Foreword 4
Executive Summary 5
Introduction: High Risk, High Reward 10
Creating a Competitive Playout Business 13
Facility and Connectivity Investment Decisions 16
Operational Demands of Playout 20
Business Models for Broadcast Playout 23
Building Margins for Playout Services 27
Technology Reshapes the Playout Business 32
Where is Playout Going Next? 37
Conclusion 41
About the Report 42
About World Teleport Association 42

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Foreword

Teleports as Integrated IP Gateways
As you’ll discover in this report, media and entertainment companies are responsible for nearly half of all the total revenues for teleport operators. More and more, our industry is serving as an outsourced playout center for all sorts of content providers – not only traditional broadcasters – but also cable, direct-to-home, online and mobile.

Teleports provide a vital link in the evolving information supply chain. Innovative video distribution applications are empowering teleport operators to nurture and grow the next generation of IP-based content delivery systems. High-bandwidth IP and cloud-based technologies are fueling a new breed of data generation, propagation, storage and display technologies.

More and more, broadcasters and content providers are relying on teleport operators to serve as strategic partners, helping to improve the overall quality of consumer and enterprise applications. And teleport operators are branching into other telecommunication access strategies to provide technology-agnostic infrastructure, with satellite serving as the primary backbone. High Throughput Satellite systems are providing bigger and bigger backbones through which teleport operators can bundle hybrid access solutions, cloud-based hosting, and application support such as digital signage and distance learning, all with the high SLAs that are the hallmarks of our industry – and one of our competitive advantages over purely terrestrial providers.

Now serving as managed network providers, teleport operators offer turnkey transport and hosting services reliably and cost-effectively. Increasingly IP-centric teleports are adopting data center-level security and functionality to serve as major gateways for broadcast and point-to-point information. Today’s teleport operators are actively acknowledging and being recognized for their roles and responsibilities as an integral part of The Cloud.

As you’ll learn in the following pages, our industry’s top business and technology leaders are embracing the opportunities and meeting the challenges of this vital market sector. From innovations in facility design and operational security to new strategies for pricing, performance and service, teleport operators continue to adapt and lead as the ever-crucial playout sector continues to play out.

Glenn Katz
Chief Executive Officer
Spacenet, Inc.
Executive Summary

Media & entertainment companies make up the single largest market for teleport operators, according to WTA’s Inside the Top Operators of 2011 report, published last year. Teleport operators continue to do simple uplinks and turnaround for broadcast. But for many, their primary and highest value service is originating programming for broadcast, cable, direct-to-home and increasingly online and mobile channels.

This report shares the insights of the business, sales and operational leaders of teleports providing broadcast playout, as well as technologists with expertise in playout technologies. For companies considering an expansion into broadcast playout – or seeking to improve their operating practices – it explores how to design their facilities, safeguard their operations, structure their services and pricing, and future-proof their playout business at a time of fast change in the media market.

Creating a Competitive Playout Business

Broadcast playout is complex and highly demanding. All of the content owner’s income rests on the quality, reliability and coverage of those channels, and the decision to outsource rests on a high degree of confidence that the playout provider can do the job 24 hours per day for every day of the year.

For the teleport operator who provides playout services, the business has important advantages. Its complex nature makes it highly “sticky” – once a customer has committed to originate with a teleport operator, there are significant costs and risks to switching providers. It is also rich in the value-added that provides teleport operators with a healthy profit margin.

Broadcast playout calls for technical systems, facility space, engineering resources and operational expertise above and beyond the norm for teleports. Uninterruptible power, redundant systems, 24x7 network operations and ample rack space are a given. The additional requirements vary widely, depending on the type of channels served, and services can be structured in a variety of ways. Customization is often the norm, as channels bring different mixes of live and non-live content, graphic “on-air branding,” advertising, scheduling, ingest, reporting, archiving, and other requirements.

Core facilities fall into four categories: management & playout, ingest & encoding, monitoring and archiving. In addition, playout facilities require connectivity to studios and media hubs and high-bandwidth Internet, as well as robust backup facilities, a high quality operating environment, and in many cases space for client offices and operations.