Wowza identifies player monetization gap, plugs it with Flowplayer

When Wowza Media Systems unleashed its new integrated video platform, simply called Wowza Video, earlier this year, it was seen as one of the most significant product evolutions in the streaming company's history – albeit one not without risks.

The one-stop shop gamble is already paying dividends, with Wowza Video picking up and migrating some 1,000 customers in less than six months, building on insatiable demand for streaming services which has driven up the US firm's annual recurring revenue by over 50% in two years.

That kind of uptake is almost unfathomable for a single product, but not when you consider Wowza's pedigree as well as the fact Wowza Video is positioned as an aggressive all-you-can-eat buffet. At the time of launch at NAB 2022, Faultline described Wowza Video as throwing down the gauntlet to multi-vendor workflows – blending CMS, built-in CDN, and HTML video player, with live and VoD streaming powered by cloud-based transcoding and packaging, supported by real-time analytics and a comprehensive set of APIs.

Following our first-hand demo in Las Vegas, we held our hands up in defeat as we could hardly fault what we were seeing. It seemed there was very little in the way of gaps, with our only criticism being that some customers would be resistant to vendor lock-in. However, Wowza has already identified one area ripe for strengthening, in the video player, which is why the company has this week acquired Sweden-based Flowplayer. An example of being your own greatest critic.

Backed by US private equity firm Clearvhaven Partners (which took an investment of undisclosed size in Wowza last year), Flowplayer brings monetization features such as ad insertion capabilities, expanded analytics, and enhanced player configurability.

If one was playing devil's advocate, we might critique that Wowza has been so successful in customizing and simplifying video workflows – removing many of the complexities that comprise rigid and inflexible multi-vendor workflows – that additional monetization tools have, in some instances, been an afterthought.

This is why Flowplayer could brings considerable value to the integrated Wowza Video platform and its now 1,000+ customers. For some context, while this sounds like a large number, it pales in comparison to the 35,000 implementations worldwide boasted by the Wowza Streaming Engine.

Flowplayer has only once before featured on the pages of Faultline, back in 2015 when we referenced it as a key rival to the likes of Brightcove, Kaltura, thePlatform, and even Ooyala. At the time, these firms were releasing unbundled versions of analytics products to chase business and corner subsections of the video market, such as content performance and audience engagement.

Wowza's acquisition of Flowplayer is effectively a reversal of this trend, bringing the video player and affiliated monetization tools back in-house and pre-integrating it with the Wowza Video cloud-based SaaS technology. Never say never, however, as Wowza may choose to unbundle such services if sufficient demand is there.

To portray its strength in customer diversity, Wowza has quoted a European provider of online medical education, called FomF (Forum für medizinische Fortbildung). It talks about component vendors lacking the reliability and extensibility to scale, underpinning the message of Wowza Video.

Presumably, FomF is a relatively new customer for Wowza, adding to Jewelry Television which was the newly named client in the Wowza Video launch release.

By appealing to business-critical applications, Wowza wants to demonstrate the flexibility of the platform in terms of target customers, with its powerful APIs suited for start-up video offerings at one end, or advanced applications up the other – from enterprise and live broadcasting, to healthcare, retail, esports, and government.

With the acquisition of Flowplayer, for an undisclosed fee, Wowza welcomes a new string of clients including L'oreal, Ringier Axel Springer, and Amedia.

https://rethinkresearch.biz/articles/wowza-identifies-player-monetization-gap-plugs-it-with-flowplayer/

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