



## Viewing the business as a dynamic, integrated whole: New opportunities for media and entertainment companies

*“The real power of SOA comes in putting analysis of technology as well as business in a tight feedback loop that aims to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and flexibility of business process operations.”*

– InfoWorld<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

The transition to purely digital media has been dramatic—enabling media companies to develop and produce content in various formats and deliver it directly to consumers through a growing number of devices and channels. Today, eager audiences can take advantage of “intelligent” technologies that enable them to experience content interactively and control how and when they access it. Consider the growth of iPods. In last year’s fourth quarter alone, 100 were sold every minute.<sup>2</sup>

While these developments afford consumers more choices and a more satisfying experience overall, providers—broadcast companies, entertainment studios, publishing businesses and advertising firms alike—must become expert at managing the overwhelming volumes of increasingly complex content, data and transactions originating from and supporting various channels.



### ***Managing an increasingly complex value chain***

At the same time, many are finding themselves saddled with heterogeneous, “homegrown” infrastructures; redundant, inefficient or incompatible processes and applications; and greater amounts of digital content flowing to and from numerous channels.

Faced with these challenges, providers are looking for better ways to manage and integrate their business processes and content systems in every area. Today, IBM is making this possible with the IBM Media Hub Solution Framework, a set of services and a robust technology “control center” that gives media and entertainment companies the opportunity to create, maintain and manage an all-digital, end-to-end media environment from capture, to payout, to distribution.

Confronted by an ever-changing marketplace and the arrival of non-traditional competitors anxious to profit from the digital revolution, media companies are seeking ways to expand their offerings, integrate departments and technologies, and refurbish their production environments. This can be a daunting task in an industry historically defined by independent business units organized along product lines.

Knowing where content resides, what form it is in, who needs it, and when and how it must be delivered is an infinitely complicated proposition. Agreements for content licensing are contained in separate business systems. When content is packaged for distribution, rights must be checked and validated through Business Affairs to determine rights. The transaction then has to be cleared through Finance. Finally, content must be delivered to the right channel, and then monitored to make sure it is used appropriately.

Meanwhile, the speed and nature of digital technologies, as well as consumers’ demands for more, better and faster services, place the burden on media providers to react faster and scale rapidly. To keep up with these demands, transactions must be free to move securely across traditional lines of business and among traditional applications. Understanding how processes and content relate and how they contribute value—from production through distribution—is thus critical.



## ***Reducing dependencies and building bridges***

In today's media and entertainment industry, success depends on several factors: the ability to simplify the creation, delivery and management of content; a collaborative, tightly connected media environment; integrated, highly efficient production and distribution processes; an open standards-based enterprise infrastructure; and tight links with industry partners.

To achieve these goals, providers must understand where content is and how to manage it through production and distribution. This requires them to:

- Handle content as digital objects, and remove analog dependencies
- Understand different workflow dependencies, perform intelligence forecasting and execute actions across the organization
- Modify business processes and launch new business models as quickly as possible
- Incorporate new services within the existing infrastructure to extend the value of existing processes and applications

This can be hard when one considers that many companies are hampered by the very specialized systems and processes that made them so successful to date. Unfortunately, many of these assets are supported by closed, proprietary and vertical infrastructures that must now give way to or at least harmonize with today's open, standardized, more horizontal IT environments. The challenge is to integrate operations while driving innovation throughout the value chain—all with the appropriate levels of control and accountability.

### **Gaining control of content**

*With better knowledge of their content value chain and a more flexible, collaborative operating environment, media and entertainment companies can:*

- *Integrate and manage content, including third-party offerings, rapidly*
- *Trim overhead and shorten production time*
- *Repurpose assets across delivery channels*
- *Model alternative workflows and processes to dramatically improve efficiencies*
- *Afford a "dashboard view" of critical functions, in the right context*
- *Help ensure that resources are appropriately allocated*
- *Respond dynamically to market demands and accelerate the delivery of products and services*



### ***Returning choice: The value of a Service-Oriented Architecture***

#### **IBM is a leader in open standards and service orientation**

- *Gartner predicts that by 2008, SOA will be the basis for 80 percent of companies' development efforts, and acknowledges IBM as the leader in SOA-based technologies.<sup>3</sup>*
- *An independent report by AMR Research, which surveyed IT executives, cited IBM as the SOA industry leader three times more often than the closest competitor.<sup>4</sup>*
- *IBM owns over 300 SOA-related patents, and invests over US\$1B annually in SOA-related initiatives.*
- *IBM has a solid record of active participation in media industry standards efforts, including the Society for Motion Picture and TV Engineers (SMPTE), the Moving Picture Experts Group (MPEG), the Advanced Access Content System (AAC3) and the Internet Streaming Media Alliance (ISMA).*

*In a Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) environment, nodes on a network make resources available to other participants in the network as independent services that the participants access in a standardized way.<sup>5</sup>*

Considering the complexities involved in integrating processes and content, it's not surprising that an increasing number of enterprises are examining the advantages of a service-orientation strategy. Service orientation is compelling because it incorporates *business strategy, operational processes* and a *Service-Oriented Architecture*. The emergence and wide adoption of open standards, primarily Web Services technologies, have paved the way to making SOA a viable option for media and entertainment companies.

A service-orientation model takes everyday applications and functions and breaks them into individual tasks, referred to as services. These can then be shared with other departments within a company, integrated with trading partners' applications, and exposed directly to customers to quickly modify or create processes. And because services can tie together current applications and infrastructures—such as a digital asset management application, a broadcast scheduling system or a back-end financial system—there is no need to “rip and replace.” Componentized services can be applied to multiple processes rapidly, easily and consistently to help improve time-to-market and reduce costs.



## ***The IBM Media Hub Solution Framework: Faster time to market with new products***

The IBM Media Hub Solution Framework, supported by IBM services and software, is a service-oriented approach. It is a set of solutions that together enable media and entertainment companies to have more control over their business challenges and find better ways to create, consolidate, administer and distribute content.

The majority of media companies have invested heavily in best-of-breed applications to support specific areas of their business. Removing and replacing these valuable resources to accommodate new applications or to enrich or expand capabilities is simply not an option for most enterprises. With the IBM Media Hub Solution Framework, companies can pick and choose the infrastructure components that make the most sense for their business while leveraging their current investments in hardware, software and resources.

Media Hub enables previously isolated systems, users, departments and business units to communicate freely and easily, and information to flow quickly and consistently throughout the enterprise. Using this framework, companies can transform how they model workflows, and manage processes through an open standards-based IT architecture that can rapidly scale up or down as market and business dynamics dictate. This affords a simpler, more cost-effective way to reduce the costs associated with content management, and allows media and entertainment providers to take advantage of a variety of new, multichannel distribution opportunities.

The best news is that companies can start right away with small, well-defined projects, and proceed on the path and at the pace that best suits the needs of their business at any point.

- *A major sports franchise in the U.S. implemented a digital workflow in order to optimize content collection, management and use. This has made editing ten times faster, cut tape reviewing from up to three hours to 40 minutes, and quadrupled programming output.*
- *A Swedish broadcaster experienced a 25 percent gain in production efficiency for news and sports programming by restructuring workflow and streamlining production processes.*
- *A global education broadcaster is using digital technology to shorten its content creation/distribution cycle by more than 50 percent and to reduce content duplication costs by more than 30 percent.*
- *A well-known 24-hour music television network in Europe shortened its time-to-air of new programming by over 30 percent via digital file sharing and improved collaborative workflow.*



### ***The IBM Media Hub Solution Framework: Gaining clarity...with the best seat in the house***

#### **Four steps to business transformation**

Working with IBM media industry consultants and IT professionals, companies can:

- Identify areas that can return the greatest business value
- Model alternative ways to manage work processes
- Build an IT architecture that can adapt quickly to evolving business models
- Start small and keep growing

Conducting a **Content Diagnostic** to understand existing workflows and processes provides a good starting point for virtually mapping how content and processes run through the organization. The Content Diagnostic examines all of a business's content sources, from creation through distribution and all the steps in between. Using this "as is" and "to be" process and technology model, companies can see what their business looks like, and then target those areas that can reap the greatest benefit from process refinement and tighter integration. IBM consultants will establish the financial metrics to assess improvements, and create a baseline for measuring the impact of those efforts.

The **Business Modeler** takes the Content Diagnostic a step further. The "to be" scenarios are fed into the modeler to determine their potential impact on the organization. Business processes can be simulated and refined dynamically to more closely tie to corporate strategies. Using industry-leading tools like IBM WebSphere® Business Modeler, companies can enrich collaboration among subject matter experts, more clearly define desired business process models, and eliminate redundancies and inefficiencies.

Media Hub provides the **Service-Oriented Architecture** with a "control center" for shared applications and processes common to media enterprises, including rights management, ingest, production and content delivery. Built on proven IBM WebSphere products and based on industry standards such as XML, SOAP and WSTL, this scalable, easy-to-manage digital backbone simplifies the process of deploying new workflows and integrating new solutions (including those from third parties) with a company's existing systems and processes.

#### **A dashboard view**

With the IBM Media Hub Solution Framework, users can take advantage of a "dashboard" view that allows them to monitor business processes in real time through a visual display of status, alerts, performance indicators and notifications, for example. Views are customized based on business context—applicable to executives, production department staff, network operations employees and marketing personnel. This gives organizations the tools they need to adjust operations, schedules and resources; better handle the flow of information; and manage the dynamic nature of the business. For instance, a marketing executive working on a new content distribution deal can easily sense and anticipate, via the dashboard, if there are delays in the delivery process, if there is sufficient bandwidth and server capacity, and if the packaging of the content can be done within the negotiated time frame.



## **Leverage IBM's experience**

IBM is the ideal partner for media and entertainment companies seeking to meet the challenges of maximizing the flexibility of production and distribution processes; minimizing the cost of operations; and innovating new models of distribution.

IBM offers a unique combination of unmatched media and entertainment industry experience, leading research, deep service-orientation skills, an unparalleled IBM Business Partner network, and software and technology product excellence—making us a clear leader in service orientation.

Recently, the National Football League (NFL) turned to IBM to help it develop a digital foundation for leveraging the League's extensive collection of content—over 100 types that include video, audio, images, text and statistics. Today, exclusive NFL footage can be readily accessed to create enriched programming and analysis for NFL Network's "Playbook" and ESPN's "A Sports NFL Matchup" television shows.

To find out how *your* enterprise can benefit from the IBM Media Hub Solution Framework and other IBM offerings for the media and entertainment industry, contact your IBM representative, or visit:

[ibm.com/media](http://ibm.com/media)

To learn more about the power of SOA, go to:

[ibm.com/soa](http://ibm.com/soa)

*“By working with IBM, the NFL will be able to provide our viewing audience with the high-quality content that they have come to expect from NFL Films each season. IBM’s innovative digital solution enables the NFL to remain competitive as it gives producers and hosts quick and easy access to any particular game element, and it will help us capitalize on new business opportunities around digital content.”*

– Steve Sabol, president, NFL Films



© Copyright IBM Corporation 2006

IBM Corporation  
New Orchard Road  
Armonk, NY 10504  
U.S.A.

Produced in the United States of America  
4-06  
All Rights Reserved

IBM, the IBM logo, ibm.com, the On Demand Business logo and WebSphere are trademarks or registered trademarks of International Business Machines Corporation in the United States, other countries, or both.

Other company, product or service names may be trademarks or service marks of others.

References in this publication to IBM products or services do not imply that IBM intends to make them available in all countries in which IBM operates.

<sup>1</sup> "Maximizing the Business Value of SOA." InfoWorld. March 13, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> "iPod Accessories Proliferate." CBS News. March 7, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> "Gartner's Positions on the Five Hottest IT Topics and Trends in 2005." Gartner. May 2005.

<sup>4</sup> "Services Oriented Architectures: Survey Finding on Deployment and Plans for the Future." AMR Research. August 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Wikipedia.