

Media Dojo Tear Sheet

Origin Digital

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Summary: Origin Digital is a high definition IP broadcasting company. Launched in 1997, the company specializes in managing video content delivery to any device, in any format. The company works with Fortune 500 brands in both the media and enterprise sectors under a SaaS business model for video ingest, encoding/transcoding and distribution.

The Problem Being Attacked: Video encoding and transcoding for web and mobile is heavy lifting no matter how you slice it. While this has been the case ever since the first attempts at porting video assets onto the web, the sheer variety of client devices with different files formats, display resolutions, bit rates and so forth have made the job that much more difficult. Compounding the challenge is the fact that most video originators now want to include marketing and/or monetization layers on top of video streams whereas in the early days it was enough of a miracle just to see it run on the Internet.

The Approach to the Problem: Origin is more than a big server farm with cloud links. The company has an automation and optimization layer on the front end of the system. These features enable customers to set priorities for their video job (priority or non-priority, different formats, different bit rates) which enable a far more flexible business model for both parties.

Customer Base: The initial customer base concentrated around live video from sporting and similar events. They were joined by professional video producers who wanted to port their analog captured video over to the web. Publicly cited customers include Nike, Johnson & Johnson, and professional sports leagues like the US Tennis Association.

Ownership: The original company DNA came from Live on Line, which launched in 1997. Origin Digital in its present form spun out of that company in October 2006. Origin was then acquired by global professional services giant Accenture in May 2008. It is now a wholly owned subsidiary of Accenture.

Unique Point: Since Origin started its business by serving the interests of broadcasters and other video owners, it combines both broadcast and broadband experience. Moreover, Live on Line was a content delivery network (CDN) for a while. The trifecta of broadcast, broadband and CDN experience comes together in Odaptor, the company's proprietary broadcast/web/mobile video platform. Additionally, because of its experience in live event streaming, Origin does a tidy business handling extremely bursty video traffic.

Cloud Angle: Origin is a hybrid of facilities-based and cloud-based video management. The company uses Microsoft's Azure cloud for handling part of its ingest/encode/transcode work. Depending on the specifics of a customer video job, Origin has the option of doing the work using in-house or Azure-hosted resources. The decision to use which one is made by its automation front end. On the human side of the cloud equation, Origin digital has partnered with Avanade (www.avanade.com), a joint-venture between Microsoft and Accenture.