When will TV be everywhere?

**By Laurie Kennedy**

The NAB 2013 conference in Las Vegas, with a tag line of MEtamorphosis, underlined many of the upcoming changes in the broadcasting industry.

ME is the acronym for Media & Entertainment, and sessions went beyond traditional broadcasting.

TV Everywhere was among the attention-grabbing topics. TV Everywhere has large implications but no easy solutions. To make it happen, current business models and the different distribution methods must be addressed. Also, needed is a melding of vendor minds and resultant solutions.

The process involves looking at the roots of broadcasting, the types of content, the devices and then determining which distribution channel lends itself as the best for a multitude of consumer-use case scenarios.

It is a three-dimensional matrix ...

Device

Distribution Method

Content
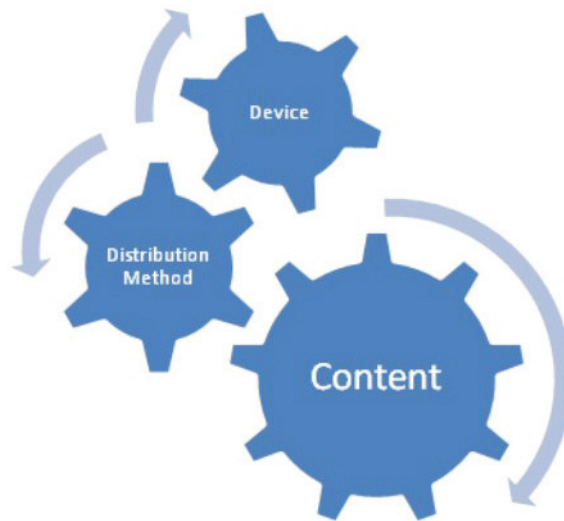
DEVICES¤
Television
(Basic TV; Smart TV or with Smart Appliance)
Computer (Desktop or·Laptop)
Tablet,   Smartphone

CONTENT		
Live·Event *News, Sports, Entertainment*		Time·Based
Canned Programming *Series, Feature Films, Documentaries*		Time·Based·(first·run) Video·On·Demand
Interactive Companion Apps *Voting; Sports Stats/ Camera Angles; Social Community*		On·Demand
Advertising *Sponsorships, commercials, banner ads, etc.*		Time·Based Dynamic·Ad·Insertion¤

DISTRIBUTION Method		Push	Pull
Digital Over-the-Air (OTA)	Spectrum (per tv channel)	✔	
Satellite	Satellite	✔	
Cable Television	Cable Network	✔	✔
IP Television (IPTV)	Private IP Cloud	✔	✔
Over-the-Top TV (OTT)	Public Internet / WiFi		✔
Cellular Mobile	Spectrum (per provider)		✔

Location is another consideration when determining the distribution method:
- In the home (main living area, bedroom)
- In transit/moving (car, bus, train)
- In a public area (stadium, shopping centre, parks).

Each device and distribution method has strengths and weaknesses, and not all are suited for every type of content. A given device can have more than one mode of connectivity. Today, tablets can connect via a mobile or Wi-Fi network, in future OTA.

Keep your eye on the upcoming Digital OTA - ATSC 3.0 standard. The primary goal is to provide TV service to both fixed and mobile devices providing a foundation for the next terrestrial broadcast system. A call for proposals is out—due August 23, 2013 (**www.ATSC.org**).

Additional considerations and challenges to enable TV Everywhere are….
- Audience trends
- Existing cable service
- Industry vision.

Audience Trends

The research, or perhaps the interpretation of the research, has been varied. It isn't as simple as it once was and though new trends are appearing, the methods of gathering, analysis and presentation are still evolving.

Broadcasting via cable is a big topic and many believe it isn't going anywhere. Though cord-cutting is happening there is still a large consumer base but many within the younger demographics are described as "cord-nevers". That generation consumes content differently from their parents.

"Binge-viewing" has become a normal practice, i.e. taking an interest in a given show and then viewing a season of episodes within a short period of time. Entire seasons are available on DVD and online.

What also varies is the device used as a "first screen" or main television. Large TV screens are still important for living rooms in homes. In bedrooms or areas outside the home, however, laptops and tablets are being used as the first screen. This is definitely an audience trend as second screen apps are developed.

Existing Cable Service

Young consumers have expanded ways of finding and viewing TV content, including online sites. Free is a watch-word for them but they're also willing to pay as they go for a la carte viewing. The Internet is the main choice for viewing on laptops, especially away from the first screen. While teenagers and young adults continue to consume cable or satellite, they see it as free since they're not paying for it.

However, university dormitories, which charge extra for cable, are seeing many students opting out. A likely

reason is that cable doesn't work well on their laptops which, for them, are now first screens.

In one NAB session, a cable provider said his company is moving towards an a la carte approach. The question arises, however, about who wants what and who gets what, e.g. a consumer's a la carte may be at the show-of-choice level whereas the cable companies are likely referring to a la carte channel choices.

Either way the change would affect the revenue model and broadcaster allocation.

Taking this a step further, how would the volume of channels be managed in a TV Everywhere world?

Though research demonstrates a broad public appeal for cable, it may be necessary to drill deeper for insights on appointment viewing (watching a scheduled show at the scheduled airing time) versus the trending towards video when it's more convenient, e.g. time shifting, PPV, PVR and video on demand.

Industry Vision

With consumer input, the industry partners need to work together to make this morph effectively for the benefit of all parties. An argument could be made that by doing so, more revenue and advertising revenues could be generated.

Topics on the agenda should include...

- Do linear schedules for existing content still work (consumer access limitations with channel plus time slot)?
- Moving from a channel schedule to branded content; new methods to promote and find
- OTA for mass viewing/live events with traditional advertising revenue model (helps manage bandwidth/spectrum use)
- Consolidated distribution hubs servicing an array of devices
- A la carte and subscription models to access content
- Personal schedules (line-up); connecting with appropriate distribution method depending on content, location and device
- Authentication at the device level; not tied to a particular provider
- Incorporate collection method of analytics on devices.

Laurie Kennedy, CMC is a consultant with Sapphire Leadership Inc.
She can be reached at 416-918-4161 or
LSKennedy@sapphireleader.com.