

M+E

JOURNAL

Charting the Metaverse

The metaverse
will prove
transformative
for M&E.
But only when
the entire
industry gets
on board.

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OFF-PREMISE PRODUCTION ENVIRONMENTS:

A DIALOGUE

**Whatever the future,
it's likely to be cloud based**

By Lisa Gerber, Director, Business Development, M&E, and Nelson Frye, Director, Business Development, Data Center Operations, PacketFabric

ABSTRACT: When it comes to mission critical workflows in media and entertainment, the number of options for data mobility can be daunting, and terms run the risk of being misconstrued. Here, PacketFabric reviews the options, and sheds light on which approaches work.

In the following exchange, PacketFabric's Lisa Gerber, director of business development for media and entertainment, and Nelson Frye, director of business development for data center operations, review the options, and try to shed light on the various approaches available to companies in M&E.

Nelson: Lisa, if you had to choose which of the following network architecture strategies would prevail in M&E, which would you choose?

- A. Public cloud*
- B. Private cloud*
- C. Off-prem*
- D. Hybrid-cloud*
- E. Multi-cloud*
- F. All of the above*

Lisa: I think the easy answer is to say "everything ends up in the cloud" and drop the mic, which most view as "A." The hyper-scalers like AWS, Azure and GCP build and operate the infrastructure so that productions, studios, and others in M&E buy and use what they need. They have no overhead, no racks to manage and life is great. Sort of like: "I don't want to

be a plumber; I just want to call a plumber when I need one.” But while the consensus seems to be that the future is more or less cloud based, the realities of connectivity and economics (and how the cloud is defined, when sometimes companies say this, but mean “off premise”) have limited the speed of industry-wide adoption.

Nelson: Right. One of the main problems here is that CSP data centers need to be reachable by millions of customers. So CSPs either wait for customers to figure out how to connect to them via traditional carriers or they provide better ways to do it and make it easy on them. Customers like “easy.”

And now production-grade connectivity (aka scalable high bandwidth, usage based, agnostic, private connections) can easily and economically interconnect software APIs, public clouds, data centers and on-premise points of presence. This means connections are now “point, click, buy, and use” and that aligns well with the CSP model.

Lisa: And the significant differences in egress fees, the existence of a multi-cloud router, and the capabilities of connections of up to 100 GBs are pretty game changing.

Nelson: Lets go over the various infrastructure strategies, and put them in the context of M&E.

PUBLIC CLOUD

Nelson: Microsoft succinctly describes the public cloud model as “the delivery of computing services — including servers, storage, databases, networking, software, analytics, and intelligence — over the Internet (“the cloud”) to offer faster innovation, flexible resources, and economies of scale. You typically pay only for cloud services you use, helping you lower your operating costs, run your infrastructure more efficiently, and scale as your business needs change.” So public denotes infrastructure that is shared among users, while private clouds use an organization’s own infrastructure.

For you M&E folks, VMWare had a great analogy when they said that private cloud is like watching videos you own and public cloud is like watching streaming video online.

Lisa: And in M&E, Azure, GCP, and AWS and others provide services for editing, rendering and storage tailor made for studios, productions, and post, at every stage of the process. As a networking partner, a service like PacketFabric provides comparably negligible egress fees to these CSPs, bandwidth of up to 100 GB, and scalable, automated access.

HYBRID AND MULTI-CLOUD

Nelson: Hybrid cloud refers to enterprises that use a mix of private cloud and public cloud services and multi-cloud is when they use services from more than one CSP like AWS, GCP, Azure, Oracle, Digital Ocean, etc.)

Lisa: Because M&E includes various phases of production from pre to post, so many various teams within those phases, and so many various services used by those teams, it’s not your average enterprise scenario. These companies and vendors will often use different softwares, data centers and vendors, all with different infrastructure. An advanced

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connectivity service can cross connect to all of them within various data centers, and also between data centers, in a seamless and on-demand manner. And a cloud router allows end users to route traffic between them all, whether public clouds or other data centers.

ON-PREMISE

Nelson: On-premise is IT infrastructure that is deployed by an enterprise in its own data center or within a colocation facility. It’s “old school” but sometimes retro is the way to go.

Lisa: Right. This can refer simply to good old hard drives and sneakernet, or to on-premise data centers (aka anywhere carriers originate from). In the case of the latter, connectivity like PacketFabric’s can be provisioned directly from the office, facility, or stage where their gear is located, as in a traditional data center. The benefits include high bandwidth access to multiple services or the cloud, and also the ability to instantly mitigate any network issues with redundant and diverse connections.

Nelson: One last one for the road. Is it possible to take advanced connectivity to artists?? What would it look like for animators, directors and editors to have these types of PoP’s and connections from their homes? Could that become a reality?

Lisa: Not today but possibly, yes. And if we got better networks in place, connecting the best talent in the world with this type of infrastructure would look like a very different world indeed. ■



Lisa Gerber is the director of business development for M&E at PacketFabric. She identifies use case-specific needs for an industry largely reliant on legacy processes. Her specialty lies in bringing disruptive solutions to companies seeking to simplify the backend elements of their workflows in order to focus on storytelling and on unifying with their teams.
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