Framework for Interoperable Media Services

At IBC2011, the joint initiative by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and the Advanced Media Workflow Association (AMWA) to create a Framework for Interoperable Media Services (FIMS) will be demonstrated at the EBU Village, stand 10.F20.

This follows a highly successful first showing at NAB2011 in Las Vegas at which senior executives from both media companies and vendors showed great excitement for the potential for our industry. Here are some of the questions we received.

Q. Should I take the FIMS initiative seriously?

A. Ultimately, you must decide. The EBU and the AMWA have been keen supporters of Service Orientated Media Workflows ever since the idea was first proposed. The cost savings that can be achieved through an open architecture and a broadly accepted industry standard has great appeal.

Q. What will FIMS do for my business? How will it make my life easier?

A. For a long time media companies have operated with completely separate media workflows and business systems. Also programme workflows were "hard wired" so that processes had to be performed in a strict order sometimes resulting in under-utilised processes and bottle-necks. FIMS allows much greater efficiency and flexibility, where each process can be called upon as a "service" when needed and direct connection with business systems becomes possible.

Q. Is the industry taking this seriously? What level of interest is there?

A. The list of media companies and vendors that actively support FIMS grows continuously. When this document went to print (August 2011) there were 17 Demo Participants and Supporters at IBC2011 and 40 FIMS Participants. Please ask at the exhibition stand or visit www.amwa.tv for a current list.

Q. Can I realistically expect to build a system using products from a range of manufacturers?

A. Yes! The objective is to establish a connection standard that will allow "best of breed" systems to be built using products from a wide range of vendors. Ask your preferred suppliers about their involvement in the FIMS initiative.

Q. What makes FIMS possible? Are there standards that everyone can refer to?

A. One of the goals of the IBC2011 exhibit is to show real vendors performing some common activities, all made possible with an early draft of the FIMS specification. These vendors have been hard at work over summer getting the v1.0 specification ready for submission for public and peer review before IBC. All participants have agreed that their contributions to the specification are provided for free, permanently.

Q. Are there early examples of working systems?

A. At present, the only publicly working systems have been built for demonstration at NAB and IBC. We anticipate that working systems will begin to be installed during 2012.
This sounds interesting. I want to keep informed and possibly join in.

Q. What can I do next?
1. Anyone can see the progress at http://wiki.amwa.tv/ebu/
2. If you wish to join in the work, you will need to sign a Participation Agreement (online) to become a FIMS Participant. This is free and open to all.
3. You can financially support the initiative by becoming a FIMS Demo Supporter for NAB2012.

MORE TECHNICAL DETAIL

Q. What is FIMS in technical terms?

A. It is a framework of service definitions for implementing media related operations using a Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) approach and promoting interoperability and reusability of services. FIMS defines service models with associated management, error handling, communication, time awareness, and security components.

Q. How will FIMS change my workflows and processes?

A. Today's file-based workflows are often "hard wired" and disconnected from business processes. FIMS defines open services that are loosely coupled thereby enabling multivendor services to be integrated and creating "best-in-class" media systems. The services can span a wide domain of operations and permit integration of FIMS into business and management systems. Bottom line, it is an agile environment that is more easily configured, modified, managed and governed compared to non SOA systems.

IBC 2011 FIMS DEMO PARTICIPANTS

DEMONSTRATORS

SUPPORTERS

FIMS PARTICIPANTS

Companies and individuals who have submitted signed Participation Agreements and participate in meetings and contribute work to move the FIMS project forward.

AmberFin
AMWA
Avid
BBC
Broadcast International
Canadian Broadcasting Corp.
Cinegy
Compression Labs, Inc.
Cube-Tec International GmbH
DCA – Digimetrics
EBU
Flying Eye GmbH
GLOOKAST
Harmonic, Inc.
Harris Corp.
IBM
IRT, Munich
Isilon Systems
Limecraft BVBA
Marquis Broadcast
MBC Group
Mesclado
metaFrontier.jp
Metaglue
National TeleConsultants
NBC Universal
Oracle Corp
Perspective Media Group
Portability 4 Media
RadiantGrid
RAI Research Centre
Red Bee Media
Snell
Sony
Tixel GmbH
Vidispine
VRT Medialab
Yangaroo, Inc.
Andreas Georg Stascheit
Gary Olson