

TECHNOLOGY FACT SHEET

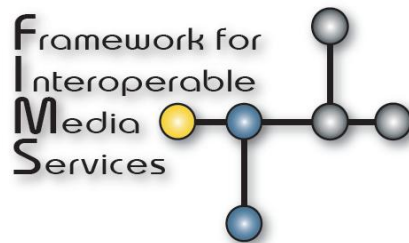
FIMS

The Framework for Interoperable Media Services (FIMS) is a joint AMWA-EBU project, focused on developing an open standard Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) for media, and an associated vendor-neutral framework. This is an industry-wide project that holds particular importance for the broadcasting community, a fact that was recognized when the project partners were awarded the IBC 2012 Judges' Prize.

BACKGROUND

The professional media industry is rapidly changing. Old paradigms are no longer sufficient for media companies working to deliver content to users. Business and technology changes occur constantly. Bespoke systems designed to provide delivery of content to traditional devices are not flexible enough to meet today's challenges and those to come. The industry needs more flexibility to meet them.

While these problems have been identified for several years, it is only four years ago that all conditions were met to bring key market actors together and launch the FIMS project. The outcome of this project provides a way to build scalable facilities that can be rapidly adapted to meet the demands of media companies as they work to format and deliver content to an ever-changing set of consumer devices and media.



THE CHALLENGE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA

In media production systems, dedicated video and audio equipment is being replaced by IT software implementations. This is because users require media format flexibility and extensive metadata management, and to reduce costs through the use of general purpose PCs and networks. However, despite IT having been used in media production systems for many years, system integration is still an issue that often causes inefficiencies and extra costs, jeopardizing some of the expected benefits.

A major cause of difficulties is the tight coupling of software components. This poses a number of serious problems in system management, including complexity in long term maintenance, problems with system scaling, difficulty in dynamic reconfiguration of processes, and longer IT innovation cycles. Another limitation is the use of undisclosed proprietary interfaces and data formats that greatly reduce the chances of reusability of components. This restricts user choices in assembling and upgrading systems.

Although EBU Members know that SOA brings answers, it remains a challenge to migrate from existing production configurations.

WHAT IS THE EBU DOING?

Since 2008, the EBU has promoted SOA by organizing workshops, webinars, and publishing technical articles and through conference papers. A project group dedicated to process analysis was created. Around four years ago, the EBU met with major representatives of the industry, including IBM, Sony and AMWA, to explore the value of a joint project. The jointly approved project became known as FIMS, the Framework for Interoperable Media Services.

The FIMS Technical Board counts more than 100 companies among its members. Early 2014, the project delivered the FIMS 1.1 specification, already operational at Bloomberg. FIMS 1.1 adds a new repository service interface and a REST reference implementation. Significant progress has been made on the definition of a new interface for Quality Assurance (QA), work that is taking place in collaboration with the EBU's strategic programme on Quality Control. QA and better timecode management for partial content, including in stream based architectures, are announcing FIMS 1.2 and, there is more to come with a new interface for automatic metadata extraction from media, analysing content features but also extracting metadata embedded in files.

There are different possible approaches to implementing FIMS in broadcasting facilities. Bloomberg, collaboratively with Triskel, decided that creating a global SOA driven media processing platform is a crucial part of their technology roadmap to achieve the flexibility, maintainability and scalability required to meet current and future business requirements. Turner Broadcasting will be the next major broadcaster to apply FIMS. A&E has set the focus on metadata and its data model. A list of implementers, both users/broadcaster and vendors already featuring more than twenty companies, is regularly updated on the project website, fims.tv.

In all cases, it is vital for broadcasters to understand their operational and business workflows and identify pitfalls with existing installations. There will be a return on this investment. By providing a solution to abstract the heterogeneous vendor APIs into a common framework, FIMS limits vendor dependencies and enables best of breed solutions, reducing time to market and product launch.

The EBU will continue to actively support the FIMS project and promote it within the broadcasting community by co-publishing results with AMWA. The EBU also contributes solutions and expertise on metadata.

FIMS website
FIMS Project wiki

fims.tv
wiki.amwa.tv/ebu

Scan this QR code to download the FIMS specifications

