Kaltura MCO Agreement

Kaltura - Video management and creation tools that integrate with many of the leading LMSs, social business, CMS, and marketing automation platforms. Staff and students can easily create, upload, edit, caption, manage, publish, discover and deliver high quality video to any device, live or on demand.

Key facts about this MCO agreement:

- Save 25% off standard pricing
- For more information, please contact Brenda at Brenda.Vanderburgt@Kaltura.com
Kaltura White Paper

How to Select the Best Video Player

10 Questions to Ask When Choosing a Video Player
Intro – Why focus on the video player?

This white paper offers a unique way of looking at your online video strategy. The strategy is usually comprised of many parts: content, branding, monetization, user engagement, social capabilities etc. In this paper we take a look at all these strategic elements through the lens of the player experience. If you are able to present a powerful video player that is both feature-rich and quick to load and respond – you are going to be successful.

Think of the player as a brick-and-mortar store: beautiful glass storefront with a well-branded skin, convenient buttons and a beautiful thumbnail will help lure the viewers. Once they click “Play” it is like they walked inside. This is where the player’s technology lights up to deliver a smooth video experience that will impress users regardless of their location or device. The player capabilities should inspire the user to take action, based on the strategy goals: watch more videos, click on ads, answer an interactive survey, upload UGC content or share your content with the world.

If done correctly, the player will be the incarnation of your video strategy. In this white paper we will discuss the crucial questions to ask when looking for the right video platform to build that player.

1. Can you deliver my video to any device?

Take a look at this set of numbers:
- Since Q4 of 2010, PC sales have been overtaken by smartphones and tablets
- By the end of 2013 tablets alone will overtake PCs
- Today Facebook sees more traffic from mobile devices than PCs
- About 22% of gaming console owners use them as a video streaming device
- 50% of video is “mobile” / “devices”

When it comes to online video, the proliferation of devices is even more significant given the various mobile OS, set top boxes, connected TVs and gaming consoles. All of these have different screen sizes and require different transcoding technologies. On top of that, live video, ad insertion and DRM technologies require more than one technology to service all of the devices in the post-PC world.

Simply put, your video player should be able to deliver any video to any device anywhere in the world.
2. How fast does the player load?

You can have a very advanced player with all the bells and whistles and a library of incredible content that is going to wow the viewers. However, if the player takes more than two seconds to load none of that matters. Recent research shows, that after two seconds, users begin to lose patience. Past that point, a 1-second increase in delay results in roughly a 5.8% increase in abandonment rate.

A reliable video player will always load quickly, even when it contains extended functionality like a playlist. When reviewing different players, it is important to test them in the context of a live HTML page, where there are usually many competing resources being loaded simultaneously.

Your player should also be flexible enough to work well in different use cases. For example, you may want to embed more than one player on the same page. How can you guarantee that all players load quickly? This is done using different embed codes that are generated by the player’s video platform. The same embed codes should also support additional features like responsive web design for viewers using mobile devices and built-in search engine optimization (SEO). In the context of video, SEO helps search engines index the web page including the content of the video. This way the search engine can display your page as video content and you receive valuable real-estate in the search results.

3. When does the player lead with HTML5?

You may have heard that HTML5 is the future of the web. Actually, it is the present. Every aspect of your web strategy should be aligned with that evolution and video is no different. Today, most video platforms lead with Flash, the familiar propriety Adobe technology that introduced online video to the masses in 2006. Flash was needed because HTML did not support video natively. HTML5 changed that and added multimedia support to the specification. Thus in a HTML5 world, your viewers will not need to rely on plugins like Flash or Silverlight, which means that the same video player could be easily loaded on a PC, mobile or tablet.

Today, we are in a transition period in which HTML5 video is getting increasingly better from a feature-parity perspective, but most video platforms still prefer to lead with Flash. This means that when the player loads, the default version is Flash. If the device does not support Flash (e.g. iPhones, iPads) it will fall-back to HTML5. For HTML5 focused video platforms, the order will be reversed very soon.

Choosing a player embraces future standards ensures feature parity and future-proofness by guaranteeing to continuously improve HTML5 and making it compatible with future video codecs and protocols such as H.265 and MPEG-DASH. This gives you peace of mind that as new technologies emerge, they will be automatically added to your HTML5 players.
4. How easy is it to customize the player?

Just like any video you produce should be an integral part of your content and marketing approach, the player should be well aligned with your brand. It is important to keep in mind the context of where the player will be embedded:

**On your website** - the most common use case is having the player on the company website. For this, you want the player to include colors and fonts that match the brand’s look & feel. This is one reason to go with a professional video platform as opposed to a free solution. A free player will often look very different from other aspects of the company site and could be difficult to customize. This is comparable to using a generic WordPress theme for a company website. Such graphic inconsistencies reflect badly on the brand and the users may question how professional you are. This is especially true for companies where video is a major part of their online strategy.

**Outside of your site** - another use case for video players is embedding them on other websites. From a content marketing and monetization perspective, you want your videos to go viral. So it is important to ensure that when they do, they also promote the brand and drive traffic back to your site. This could be done by using a number of features: clickable logo; on-video watermark; animated logo (bumper video); a ‘related videos’ gallery; auto-play of a subsequent new video and more.

In order to optimize the player for both scenarios, some customization is needed. Robust video platforms will offer a player studio that allows easy changes to the player’s functionality and the look & feel. The more you can do using an easy WYSIWYG interface – the better. However, those who need to execute deeper customization should have the option to not only save changes to the player on the server, but also dynamically change aspects of it at the embed code level where need be. Keep in mind that in the current state of the web, you will need two versions of each player – Flash and HTML5. Leading player platforms such as Kaltura let you use a single configuration and skin for both HTML5 and flash.

5. How does the player maximize monetization?

Digital ad spending marketing is growing rapidly and is projected to double in the next four years from $4.14 billion this year to $8.04 billion in 2016. In order to take advantage of this trend, it is paramount that your video player will offer smooth ad delivery to any device.

Some publishers use free solutions like YouTube to monetize their content. Due to their high traffic, these sites should definitely serve as distribution channels, but they should be secondary. While YouTube may share some of the revenue with the original publisher, this is often much less that what an ad network would pay directly for well-organized and professional online video content.

Monetizing your content independently also ties in to your branding strategy. As mentioned before, publishers should create an integrated store experience. Such an approach enables to cross-market products and attracts premium monetization. You may want to think of it as a brand name like Starbucks, which would not benefit from having its merchandise sold solely in Walmart where the brand becomes hardly distinguishable. For that reason, Starbucks puts most of its efforts to increase sales within its carefully designed coffee shops.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ad Spending (billion)</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
<td>40.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>$2.93</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>$4.14</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>$5.75</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>$6.99</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$8.04</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>$9.06</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: includes advertising that appears on desktop and laptop computers as well as mobile phones and tablets; data through 2011 is derived from IAB/PwC data; includes in-banner, in-stream (such as pre-roll and overlays) and in-text (ads delivered when users mouse over relevant words). Source: [http://www.emarketer.com/Article/Online-Video-Advertising-Moves-Front-Center1009886](http://www.emarketer.com/Article/Online-Video-Advertising-Moves-Front-Center1009886)
Online video technologies present a huge opportunity for content publishers since online viewers are considered to be a highly engaged audience. Pre-rolls (ads that appear before the video) and mid-rolls (ads that are served in the middle of the video) are the most popular. Having a player that supports both options is critical. Mid-rolls are considered much more useful with 87% completion rate. According to some studies, mid-roll ads are performing almost 30% better than pre-rolls.

Most sites will use ad networks that connect them with advertisers. Ad networks facilitate the transaction and simplify the ad delivery process. The video player should offer out-of-the-box support of major ad networks (Tremor Video, Google DoubleClick, FreeWheel) but should also be able to connect with any VAST ad network (LiveRail) When using VAST (Video Ad Serving Template), it’s important your player lets you take advantage of all the VAST features like Linear Ads, NonLinear Ads and Shippable Linear Ads. Also you player should let you customize that experience, with advanced tools such as ad segmenting based on content metadata, frequency caps and cross session ad intervals. The ability to serve ads to mobile devices is essential. Cisco estimates that 70% of the world's mobile data traffic will be video by 2016. Today, it already accounts for more than 50%. Therefore an ideal video platform will offer the same level of ad support on both Flash and HTML5 players.

6. How does the player protect my content?

Streaming technology revolutionized the way video is being distributed online. However, it has also introduced new concerns and risks, especially in areas like rights management and security. Different content types may have different legal constraints (e.g. viewer’s location; specific timeframe in which the video can be made public). Furthermore, once the video is published it may require another layer of protection to ensure that users do not simply download the streamed file. This is done using DRM (data rights management) technology that either encrypts the content or adds a digital watermark so the video cannot be freely distributed.

Much of the access control settings and DRM protection protocols are set at the player level. The video platform should have robust content access controls at both the player content level. This enables publisher’s maximum flexibility in a wide range of restrictions and policies. A robust video platform will allow creating a range of players to enforce these different requirements for various types of video. While all the players may look the same, behind the scenes they can be set to enforce distinctive access control profiles. For example, block access to users from specific countries – a crucial requirement for publishers that plan to scale globally. Another example is offering free episode previews in VOD sites and with the option of playing the entire show without having to reload the page after a payment was received.

When looking at different DRM technologies, it is important to keep in mind how you plan to distribute your content (VOD, live, sVOD etc.) and on which devices (PCs, mobile, set-top boxes etc.). Even the industry leading DRM protocols (Google’s Widevine, Microsoft’s Playready) do not support web deliver to all devices (many DRM providers claim unified support for all devices, but require extra steps to install and play on each of these devices). Therefore, a robust player platform should support multiple DRM protocols to minimize the number of extra steps required of users, which can limit your content reach.

7. Can the video player be easily integrated with my native mobile app?

Six years after the introduction of the first smartphone, mobile apps have become a customer expectation. Apps can offer a superior user experience on many devices, since they are not constrained by any web limitations and have complete control over the UI. In past years, there has been a debate about native apps (standalone software designed for a specific operating system that must be downloaded from an app store) vs. a web app (a mobile-friendly web interface typically built using HTML5 and offers a unison experience across multiple operating systems). In the last year, with the proliferation of cheaper and better tablets, it seems that most companies recognized the potential of developing their own native mobile app. As a result, the app stores have enjoyed unprecedented growth and the mobile apps market is forecasted to reach $74 billion by 2016.
Mobile devices are optimized to provide a supreme video experience and are often connected with one of the major online outlets (iTunes, Google Play and Amazon Instant Video). By creating a native mobile app any publisher can reach larger audiences and increase its monetization potential. Apps can be sold but most publishers prefer offering them for free and charging for the content either by selling it a la carte or by offering a subscription plan. In some cases the publisher’s main purpose is to promote a brand and its app will be entirely free.

Regardless of the strategy, developing a native mobile video app is usually a pricey endeavor that requires much time and multiple versions (iOS, Android, Windows Phone etc.). The development could be expedited if your online video platform provides a mobile SDK of a reference app. Such a blueprint for a mobile video app could save many resources and dramatically cut down costs and the time to market.

Furthermore, a mobile SDK developed by the video platform should provide a player component, that enables your same Flash and HTML5 configuration to cross over into a native platform experience. This will ensure that all the analytics are logged correctly so you can keep track on the videos’ performance across all devices. Ideally, the same SDK will include support for DRM to enable monetizing copyright protected videos.

8. How granular is the player’s analytics dashboard?

Measuring performance is key. Online video platforms offer incredible tools that provide information on any aspect of the video consumption. In fact, due to the nature of the web, online video analytics are far more useful than the tools of traditional broadcasters to measure viewership and optimize content performance.

To put it simply, the more information you can get – the better. Leading online video platforms should be able to track views as well as show the play to impression ratio and calculate the average view drop-off. Such key performance indicators (KPIs) are extremely useful to track performance. Additional measurements may include geo-location and device reports, which provide valuable data about where and how the videos are being watched.

All of this information is harvested on the player level. Advanced players also offer integration with robust analytics services (Google Analytics and Akamai Analytics) so that you can easily integrate video events into your overall tracking goals and existing services.

In case you are using an authenticated video portal that is tightly integrated with a video provider, the analytics will drill down to the end-user level. Highly granular user analytics can be used to draw deep insight on how video consumption improves learning (in a university setting) or productivity (in an enterprise setting).

The same analytics dashboard should also allow you to keep track of costs such as bandwidth and storage. Analyzing this information along with the consumption data and monetization reports will enable you to clearly see the ROI and evaluate your video strategy and tweak it as you go.

9. How will the player help expand my social footprint?

Getting your videos to “go viral” is very much dependent on how easy it is for viewers to share them with others. The player’s functionality and the UI can make a big difference.

An ideal video player will allow sharing the video on as many social networks as possible. No network is too small. However, displaying the video on one’s wall or feed is only the first step. You also want the user to be able to view the content right away (on the wall or feed) without taking the extra step of opening a new tab in the browser. Always remember that simplicity and ease of use is key in order to reach the masses.
In some cases you may want to add a specific call to action and allow the users to click on customized buttons. Such functionality is valuable when encouraging further engagement as filling out a survey or downloading a piece of content. A robust video player should be able to support such instances with an easy to use and well documented JavaScript API.

Social is especially important if you plan to offer live streams, since such events tend to create a massive amount of shares that can greatly impact viewership and brand awareness. For example, the live stream of the filibuster in the Texas senate last June reached 183,000 viewers at its peak and the Bonnaroo Music Festival generated 11 million views and many thousands of social items (facebook shares, tweets, likes) over 3 days.

10. Can I use the player to stream live events?

Live events can be a silver bullet to expand your reach and monetize. Historically, live events attracted more views than VOD and accounted for much higher engagement. As a result the click-through-rate (CTR) generated by players with live content is higher as well. At the same time, viewers expect more from the player when watching live events. Past research has shown that viewers are much less tolerant to buffering issues when watching live events. Likewise, the higher the quality of the video stream, the longer the average viewing session will be. Another important feature around live events is the ability to index them and offer them for VOD viewing as quickly as possible. If done efficiently, this could maximize the content potential by increasing viewership and revenue. Ideally, the live video player will play on any device, have the same look & feel and offer the same level of DRM as VOD content.

Conclusion

Online video technology poses a huge opportunity to publishers. However, with so much change and innovation, comes complexity. Examining the different scenarios of using the video player is a good practice when forming a focused video strategy and deciding between important features vs. nice-to-haves.

We compiled this helpful checklist to aid your decision process. If you wish to learn more about Kaltura’s world class “HTML5 first” and Flash video players please visit http://player.kaltura.com/

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<th>BUSINESS NEED</th>
<th>TECHNOLOGY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deliver to any device</td>
<td>Flash and HTML5 players and multiple streaming options support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fast play load</td>
<td>HTML5 and Flash chromeless players, dynamic embed codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading with HTML5</td>
<td>Powerful HTML5 player</td>
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<tr>
<td>Easy player customization</td>
<td>HTML5 and Flash feature parity, customize both player types with a single HTML/CSS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maximize monetization</td>
<td>VAST complaint player, YouTube distribution connector</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content protection</td>
<td>Widevine, Playready, Geo and IP blocking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Branded mobile application</td>
<td>Mobile SDK, out-of-the-box native application</td>
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<tr>
<td>Granular Analytics</td>
<td>Detailed analytics panel, 3rd party analytics plugins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase social footprint</td>
<td>Out-of-the-box sharing plugin, well documented JS library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live stream</td>
<td>Cross-platform support, powerful CDN to ensure no buffering issues</td>
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Kaltura Business Headquarters
5 Union Square West, Suite 602, New York, NY. 10003, USA
Tel: +1 800 871 5224 | www.kaltura.com | sales@kaltura.com

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