

SUCCESS STORY



Profile

MTV Networks Europe is a division of MTV Networks International (a subsidiary of Viacom) that encompasses a number of popular multimedia entertainment brands, including MTV, VH1, TMF, VIVA, Nickelodeon, Comedy Central and Game One. MTV Networks Europe launched its first channel, MTV Europe, on August 1, 1987, and today MTV remains MTV Networks Europe's most popular brand, reaching millions of homes across Europe.

In 1994, MTV Networks Europe established the MTV Europe Music Awards to celebrate what their viewers consider to be the best in music and music videos. The awards are presented annually and broadcast live on MTV Europe, MTV and most of the international MTV channels as well as online. The MTV Europe Music Awards is among a growing number of high-profile events leveraging streaming technologies and new digital media platforms not only to reach massive audiences around the globe, but also to generate advertising revenue for broadcasters and content owners.

In 2008, MTV Networks Europe approached the MTV Europe Music Awards with the goal of launching its most ambitious multiplatform experience to date, one that would deliver a richer, more interactive multi-platform experience for its multi-national audience. To bring their goal to fruition, the Network needed a reliable, all-in-one encoding solution offering a combination of quality, functionality, ease of use and real-time performance.

Industry

Broadcast

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MTV 2008 Europe Music Awards Delivered Live to the World via ViewCast's Niagara Streaming Appliance

The Challenge

Delivering a Richer, More Interactive Multi-platform Experience

In its effort to continue expanding the MTV Europe Music Awards into much more than a television experience, the network embraced new media consumption platforms such as computers, laptops and mobile devices, making multiplatform support an integral part of the viewing experience. Designed as the principle touch point for the awards, the Web site was intended to provide a worldwide community with a venue for watching, voting and learning more about artists and their work via their Internet and mobile devices.

Beyond the feed from the main stage, MTV Europe wanted to provide four additional live video streams from around the venue, including backstage, the red carpet, the scene dock and the artists holding area. The network also wanted to produce an online red carpet show.

In order to make this multi-platform, rich media goal a reality, MTV Europe needed an encoder that would be able to encode in Adobe® Flash® VP6 in multiple data rates to Akamai's global streaming network. The solution also needed to accept and process a broadcast-quality input (SDI with embedded audio), and provide reliable monitoring and easy start and stop controls to ensure real-time performance.

The Solution

Next-Generation Streaming Solutions from ViewCast

When MTV Networks Europe decided to evaluate encoding solutions for the awards show, it contacted Garland Partners Ltd (GPL) of the U.K.

"Last year, after we asked Garland Partners to assist us in implementing a Web streaming solution for the event, we had more than a 30 percent increase over the previous year on unique visitors to our Web site," said Alec Hendry, director of Digital Media Operations & Development at MTV Networks Europe. "Garland Partners had suggested we use the ViewCast® Niagara® Pro, which was so reliable and easy to use that we immediately knew that would be our choice again for the 2008 show."

Garland Partners worked with ViewCast to assist MTV in covering the show's dynamic performances and award presentations with two Niagara Pro media encoders, which streamed live video over the Web to millions watching on their computers and mobile devices.

The Niagara Pro dual-channel encoder is a professional rack-mountable streaming media appliance capable of delivering two channels of full D1 high-quality streaming video. Throughout the 2008 MTV Europe Music Awards show, the Niagara Pro media encoders streamed live footage in Adobe® Flash® and Windows Media®, which in turn were delivered to Akamai for real-time viewing on www.mtvema.com.

Niagara Pro encoders, which feature three pre-programmable "A-B-C" buttons, simplified streaming operations during the show by allowing operators to execute predefined encoding profiles simply by pressing one of the buttons on the encoder's front panel. ViewCast's SimulStream® technology enabled simultaneous streaming of multiple resolutions at multiple data rates in multiple streaming formats. - continued on next page.

The Solution

Next-Generation Streaming Solutions from ViewCast - *continued*

As stars arrived for the event, the Niagara Pro media encoders streamed a 90-minute Webcast. This event, which was the only live source of content from the red carpet, was exclusive to the Web and mobile audience, and was not made available over the air. Once the show began, live Web coverage shifted to a live simulcast of the awards themselves, with a complement of special inserts created to fill ad breaks.

Webcams installed around the arena provided unique, behind-the-scenes coverage. The Webcast featured interviews with performers and award presenters, giving mobile and Internet viewers a special up-close perspective of the show.

To accommodate all of these feeds most effectively, network engineers brought the ViewCast encoders to the venue, installing them in a portable rack to simplify transport and speed setup once on site.

The Result

Successful Multi-Platform Delivery

The MTV Networks Europe's 15th annual MTV Europe Music Awards show was held on November 6, 2008 at Liverpool's Echo Arena, and broadcast live through the MTV Europe Music Awards Web site (www.mtvema.com) on an unprecedented scale.

An estimated 30 million viewers from more than 40 European countries, plus China, India, and beyond, tuned in to the show, which streamed live video over the Web to millions more watching on their computers and mobile devices.

"Every year something sensational happens at this awards show, and we wanted to ensure our audience could feel that they were part of the action as it occurred," said Hendry. "Leveraging the convenience, flexibility, and reliability of ViewCast's Niagara Pro encoder, we were able to provide an engaging, interactive Web presence that integrated smoothly with the live show, adding tremendous depth and enjoyment to the viewing experience."

