Snapshots of OTT User Behavior
How Evolving Consumer Trends Are Shaping the Industry

It’s Not About You, It’s About Me
Personalization in the OTT Age

Finding Love
Launching a New OTT Service People Will Like

OTT Civil War
Serving the Viewing Habits of Gen Xers vs. Millennials

Don’t Feel Guilty
You Can’t Possibly Binge Watch Every Show

Break the Chains
Blockchain Will Accelerate Pay-TV Industry Disruption

Road Trip!
Mobile TV Is Taking Over—But Ignore the Living Room at Your Peril

Executive Q&A

Bernarda Duarte
Director of Content Acquisition, Roku

Susanne Mei
General Manager, PeopleTV

Ralf Jacob
Head of Digital Media Services, Oath

Jon Cody
Founder & CEO, TV4 Entertainment
Nichole Janowsky recently sat down with Ralf Jacob, Head of Digital Media Services for Oath, which runs a digital media platform that powers streams for prominent content providers, including Tennis Channel, Newsy and more. In this interview, Ralf provides his take on where OTT is today and the opportunities that lie ahead.

Nichole: Let’s start off with discussing what the current state of the OTT industry looks like right now?

Ralf: Television as we know it is undergoing a series of rapid changes, and it’s never been more apparent than as seen in the staggering growth of OTT which is poised to have more subscribers than pay TV by 2020. The streaming industry is changing how and where viewers watch their favorite shows, and also how advertisers can more effectively connect with viewers across screens.

OTT is thriving, without any signs of slowing down. Video consumption is driving the future of media, and we’re seeing a vast interest in consuming content on mobile and connected devices. Cord-cutters and cord-nevers are turning to their iPhones, smart TVs and streaming players to watch the latest entertainment. It’s imperative that content owners, broadcasters, advertisers and the broadcasters of tomorrow meet this consumer demand for video, in order to thrive, now and in the future.

Nichole: What will impact the OTT industry’s future?

Ralf: Disruption, mobile-best experiences and personalization will be key factors that shape the industry’s future.

To handle whatever the future of media throws at you, you need next-level agility and next-generation technologies. That means embracing disruption. Remember when CDs first entered the market or the first black-and-white image was transmitted? They completely changed consumers’ perspectives on what media could be and could do. As the OTT market matures, more disruption will help change norms, whether that’s innovating around advertising, such as incorporating surface detection technology to insert ads directly into a stream, or seeing more interactive live video, thanks to augmented reality.

Secondly, when I say mobile-best, I mean that high quality content must be the norm, and not the exception, especially on mobile. There’s now an entire generation that’s TV-like quality every time they watch, on every screen they use. And, we’ve seen that the average viewing session across all devices falls by 77 percent when there is a significant impairment of video quality. We must continue to work on eliminating issues around advertising, such as incorporating surface detection technology to insert ads directly into a stream, or seeing more interactive live video, thanks to augmented reality.

Finally, personalization will be at the forefront, too. Whether it’s curated content or a targeted ad, the more personal the viewing experience is, the better. Catering to build viewer preferences can help build loyalty and gain higher engagement. A key advantage of online video is how it can deliver targeted, personalized viewing experiences (both content and ads) to each and every viewer. Viewer insights and customizable apps and experiences will help drive this personalization trend, moving forward.

Nichole: How is Oath helping to usher in OTT’s future?

Ralf: We’re delivering the future of media for broadcasters, OTT providers and enterprises by offering a best-in-class network and easy-to-implement services to get started in OTT — cost-efficiently and at scale. Our next-generation Verizon Digital Media Services platform delivers live, linear and on-demand video to all devices, through a single workflow for broadcasters and content providers.

Nichole: Any final thoughts or predictions for what the next few years may hold?

Ralf: From more live event streaming to delivering at scale to millions of concurrent viewers, there’s a lot to be excited about around OTT. Yet as the industry evolves, at the core, we must remember to keep viewers and their preferences first. Viewers will accept nothing less than fast, secure, high quality content on every device, and we must continue to work to consistently meet their expectations.

Ralf Jacob is the Head of Digital Media Services for Oath, bringing more than 20 years of technical and executive management experience to the organization. Prior to his current role, Ralf served as chief revenue officer and then as president for Verizon Digital Media Services. He initially joined the company through Verizon’s acquisition of uplink, an online video platform specializing in the simplification of a broadcaster’s workflow, where he was the CEO and Co-Founder. Prior to launching uplink, Ralf was Vice President of Digital Media for Deluxe Digital Studios. He has also served as Senior Vice President of Engineering & Operations for Move Networks, Vice President of Engineering for Knowledge Universe and Vice President of Engineering for IXL.