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Ariff Sidi, Chief Product Officer
Verizon Digital Media Services
The Future of Compliance Monitoring

Interview by Nichole Janowsky with Ariff Sidi

We recently sat down with Verizon Digital Media Services Chief Product Officer, Ariff Sidi, to find out more about how Volicon has been integrated into the company’s digital media platform, and what the future holds for compliance monitoring and more.

Two years ago, Verizon Digital Media Services acquired Volicon, a leading provider of video capture, archival, compliance monitoring and clip creation workflow for broadcasters. And within the past two years, the team has worked on bringing the same award-winning compliance monitoring services available to broadcasters to OTT content providers, at scale.

Nichole: Can you start off by sharing more about Verizon Digital Media Services’ initial interest in compliance monitoring?

Ariff: Even though it’s historically been used in traditional broadcasting, compliance monitoring has expanded into OTT content to cover the full path as well. Now, through onboarding Volicon, we’re able to offer services that ensure quality of experience for both broadcast and OTT content. From live linear to live OTT events, we track from master playlist to origination and to post-content delivery network. Our customers can receive alerts and record any quality impairments, such as black screen or static screen, silent audio, missing closed captions and issues with SCTE triggers.

Nichole: What have been some recent developments your team has been working on, related to compliance monitoring?

Ariff: Earlier this spring, we introduced Path Monitoring, which gives our customers complete end-to-end visibility into the beginning and end of the OTT delivery chain, for both live and historical content. We’ve also seen many of our customers use our compliance offering to produce content that’s ready to stream — for social, web and OTT.

Nichole: How do you see compliance monitoring evolving in the near future?

Ariff: Compliance monitoring is in a massive transformational stage. We’re seeing a shift from hardware-based to cloud-based compliance monitoring services, plus we expect many of our broadcaster and OTT content provider customers to move their workflows to the cloud. That’s why we’re working on having compliance monitoring tools available in the cloud. We’re trying to best serve our customers where they need us. Finally, even though compliance monitoring has been based on rules that have used earlier versions of machine learning, we’ll see further development. Compliance monitoring will become more content-aware and have the ability to evaluate more of what’s inside the frame — such as unsafe content and logos.

Nichole: You’ve talked about compliance monitoring expanding into OTT content; what will be the differences between monitoring in broadcast vs. OTT?

Ariff: One of the biggest differences in streaming is its ability to extend beyond traditional broadcasting’s “one-to-many” approach to a “one-to-one” unicast approach. Unlike in a traditional broadcast where there’s largely one version of a signal delivered to all viewers, with differences often the result of local market requirements, OTT enables content providers to deliver innumerable discrete streams to users — differentiated by region, device, preference or other factors.

We’ll see this same “one-to-one” approach in compliance monitoring, where the entire cloud workflow and other factors such as regional streams, can be checked as well. Having such nuanced monitoring capabilities provides an advantage. It will enable broadcasters and OTT content providers to create more nuanced distribution strategies to reach end users on a more personalized level.

Nichole: And looking even further down the road, what does the future hold for compliance monitoring?

Ariff: We strongly believe that the future of compliance monitoring is cloud-based. What remains to be determined, however, is exactly how this cloud infrastructure will be architected. We still need to decide the best way for broadcasters and OTT content providers to get their signals into the cloud and we need to ensure that the same features that have been available in compliance monitoring hardware are still available in a cloud-based solution. These are timely questions that are top of our minds and that we are working to resolve as we continue evolving our own compliance monitoring system, the Volicon Media Intelligence service.