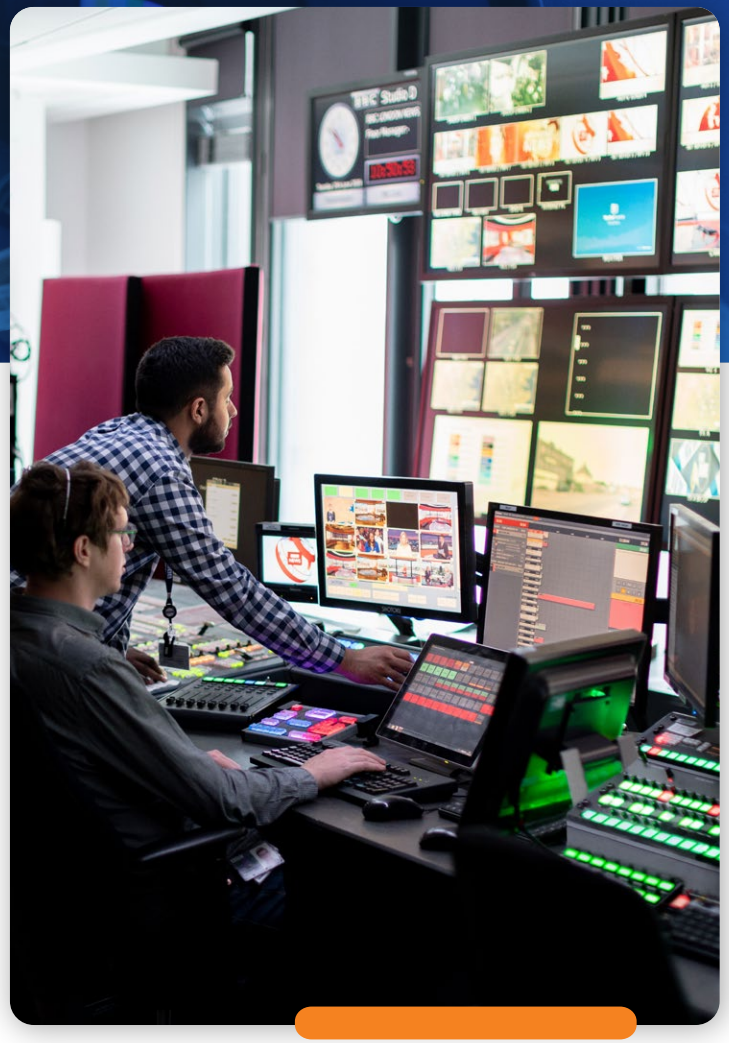
Perspectives on Playout:

What's working in the real world?

Snapshots of Global Innovation

imagine COMMUNICATIONS



The days of a single over-the-air channel are long behind us. Media companies are under constant pressure to spin up new channels for multiple platforms — and fast-track time to revenue.

Future-focused media companies around the world are tackling these challenges by rethinking and reshaping the way they manage playout.

And many of them are doing it with Imagine.

"Imagine's playout architecture efficiently supports multiple channels...their client-server approach gives us far better control and easier playlist management, particularly during live events."

Martin Abela
Senior Manager of Video Operations

Use case: Efficient delivery of multiple live sports channels

GO is Malta's leading communications services company, providing mobile, fixed line, internet and TV services to more than 500,000 customers.

To meet the needs of its growing business, supporting more television properties and premium sports rights, GO completely revamped its existing playout and media management architecture with Imagine's field-proven Versio™ integrated playout ecosystem and well-established ADC™ automation.

The new playout system is designed with 10+4 channel redundancy — four backup Versio channels protect the 10 main program outputs while the two most important commercial channels each have a dedicated backup. The remaining two redundant Versio engines will automatically take over if ever needed. ADC synchronizes the playlist so the backup channel takes over seamlessly and with minimal disruption, ensuring delivery of multiple channels of high-value content, including live events and sports.

Learn More >>

GO is using Versio to:

- Manage multiple channels per workstation, reducing servers required and saving space, power
- Increase redundancy, providing optimum balance between capital cost and resilience
- Provide enhanced graphics and animated pop-ups, ensuring better audience engagement
- Improve operational efficiency and deliver a better customer experience
- Operate in a highly scalable SDI playout environment today, transitioning easily to IP in the future

NPC MEDIA

"Imagine's Versio product strategy allows us to confidently manage our current baseband/SDI infrastructure, and more swiftly and efficiently transition to a full range of IP-based media services."

Chris Howe
General Manager, Commercial and Technology

Use case: IP-based managed media services

NPC Media is a collaborative, commercial venture between Australia's two largest commercial broadcasters, Nine Network and Seven Network.

When Nine originally established the National Playout Centre (NPC) in Sydney, the facility served 18 regional channels. The collaboration between Nine and Seven kicked off a phased upgrade of the NPC, with the goal of transforming the single-station facility into an IP-based, multi-tenanted managed media services provider.

To support this massive undertaking, NPC Media implemented an end-to-end broadcast playout chain — from a common ingest platform through to software-based channel origination — based on the Versio™ modular playout product suite.

Today, the NPC supports more than 211 live terrestrial television channels, together with a further 392 pass-through multiplexed channels.

Go behind the scenes with NPC Media >>

NPC Media is using Versio to:

- Consolidate multiple broadcast operations into a state-of-the-art playout center with shared facilities
- Manage current baseband infrastructure and economically transition to IP-based media services
- Deliver operational efficiencies not previously achievable using traditional technology platforms
- Implement new services to help reduce costs and deliver new offerings to market more quickly
- Enable clients to streamline processes, promote collaboration, and increase productivity

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S Knowledge Network:

"Imagine's in-depth understanding of broadcast workflows and continuous development of their product lines, including special features that we requested, gave us confidence to make this transition."

Oliver Eichel
Director of Broadcast Technology and IT

Use case: Branding and graphics-heavy channel playout

Knowledge Network is a publicly funded educational broadcaster in British Columbia, Canada. It broadcasts and streams local and international content 24/7, offering a mix of programming watched by over a million viewers each week.

Looking for a playout infrastructure refresh, Knowledge Network was able to replace 22 pieces of hardware with nine by transitioning to a software-based solution with Versio™ modular playout and the ADC™ automation control layer — which seamlessly integrated with the broadcaster's existing business systems and traffic software.

To maintain its heavy use of unique interstitials and branding, the network leverages Versio Graphics to deliver dynamic on-air graphics. With just one instruction, operators can schedule a complex graphics event in the traffic log, reducing touchpoints to ensure disruption-free delivery of the distinct look its viewers have come to expect.

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Knowledge Network is using Versio to:

- Streamline channel playout, handling complex workflows with fewer manual interventions
- Reduce dependence on hardware, saving in real estate, cabling, power, and air conditioning
- Create and command dynamic graphics on the fly
- Add audio objects to layouts, bringing animated graphics to life
- Extend their brand and drive audiences to their website and streaming options

Cignal

"We needed to add playout channels as quickly as possible. Imagine could provide a solution quickly, fitting precisely into our workflow, and ensuring the reliability and security we required."

Benedict V Galang
First Vice President Network Engineering & Operation

Use case: Fast, seamless channel expansion

Cignal TV is the Philippines' premier direct-to-home (DTH) satellite provider. Launched in 2009, the company broadcasts premium TV content over 121 SD and HD channels to household and commercial venues nationwide.

To meet audience expectations, Cignal TV continually adds high-quality content and channels. But standing up new channels can be a disruptive process for media organizations — and any downtime means lost revenues.

By deploying the software-based Versio™ modular playout solution Cignal TV was able to seamlessly add playout capacity and resilience, prepare for quick and easy future channel expansion, and take a first step toward IP connectivity.

Today, Cignal is the most subscribed Pay-TV provider in the Philippines!

Learn More >>

Cignal TV is using Versio to:

- Increase scalability and speed to market via a future-proofed, software-based solution
- Deploy an efficient, geo-dispersed 4+1 system with redundancy on each channel
- Stand up channels with minimal disruption by seamlessly slotting additional capacity into existing operations
- Create a highly automated, multichannel MCR that is easy to operate, monitor, and maintain
- Take a first step toward future IP connectivity

"Imagine Communications demonstrated that it could marry broadcast quality and reliability with virtualized technology and IP networking, and, perhaps most importantly, could deliver it immediately."

Philippe Van de Velde
Technical Director

Use case: Virtualized unified playout & scheduling

viàGroupe (formerly Médias du Sud) is an independent multimedia group based in the south of France. As part of a forward-looking initiative begun in 2018, viàGroupe created viàRéseau — the first national grouping of local TV stations in France.

The goal of the first phase was to deliver local content to 20 stations from a central data center. To support the pioneering venture, viàGroupe married its own in-house technology with Imagine's Versio™ modular playout to implement a fully virtualized, IP-based unified playout and scheduling solution. Versio integrates via a REST API with viàGroupe's powerful BIY traffic and scheduling platform, Myvideoplace, streamlining the workflow from channel origination to secure transmission.

viàGroupe plans to expand the network to ultimately support 30 channels reaching 40 million viewers — all driven from the same fully virtualized, software-defined media facility.

Learn More >>

viàGroupe is using Versio to:

- Support IP-based playout for 20-channel deployment
- Fuse the reliability of traditional broadcast operations with the agility of a fully virtualized media facility
- Streamline workflow from channel origination to secure transmission
- Maximize revenue opportunities by tightly integrating playout and business operations
- Simplify operations, allowing staff to concentrate on video quality and other on-air concerns

هيئة الشارقة للإذاعة والتلفزيون
SHARJAH BROADCASTING AUTHORITY

"This project is a really important step on our migration path towards IP and virtualization. We will be in a great position to prepare plans for the complete migration of our main playout center."

Aisha Alzareef
Broadcast Technology & Information Systems Director

Use case: Software-based hybrid business continuity

Sharjah Broadcasting Authority (SBA) is a government organization dedicated to developing the media industry in the Emirate of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates.

As part of a strategic business continuity initiative, SBA implemented a hybrid disaster recovery solution at their backup center in Al Thaid, using software-defined technology in a primarily IP-connected environment. The backup system, built on Imagine's Versio™ modular playout, maintains perfect synchronization with SBA's main playout site, with full content mirroring to allow seamless switchover in the event of any problems.

While SBA's primary objectives were preventing service disruption of its four television channels and protecting an extensive archive, the scalable, software-based system also enables the broadcaster to support future expansions and transition to full IP at a pace that works for their business.

Learn More >>

Sharjah Broadcasting Authority is using Versio to:

- Provide full cover for four television channels and protect an extensive archive
- Support expansion of operations, including additional channels to reach new audiences across the region
- Take an important step in their transition to IP networks and virtualization
- Help their staff get up to speed on deploying and operating software-based and IP technologies
- Continue supporting legacy SDI content while planning a complete migration of their main playout center

"Imagine offered not just a neat and powerful solution, but also a plan to implement it and get our staff trained and ready to go, with minimum disruption to our operations."

Laxman Humagain
General Manager

Use case: Automated playout for 24/7 operation

Janata Television is based in Kathmandu, Nepal. The channel, which first went on air in 2017, delivers a 24/7 service of news, entertainment, and other content.

Aiming to establish themselves as a renowned media house in Nepal, Janata Television looked to ramp up productivity and reliability by deploying an automated playout and media-handling workflow based on virtualized software running on commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) hardware.

The Versio™ modular solution at Janata Television not only handles playout, but also provides the engine to design and drive workflows, while redundant signal paths and hardware ensure maximum reliability.

Most importantly, a user-friendly interface enabled staff to quickly become productive — developing their workflows and delivering great content to the audience across Nepal.

Learn More >>

Janata is using Versio to:

- Maximize productivity by automating playout and media management
- Get an all-new playout system up and running without disrupting daily operations
- Save space by deploying a compact, software-based solution
- Ensure reliable 24/7 operation
- Simplify workflow development via a future-proof, microservices-based design

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