

# CBS Worldwide Distribution Grows its Business through Harris Invenio® File Based Distribution and Metadata Tracking Workflows



## CUSTOMER PROFILE

CBS Worldwide Distribution (CWD) is the domestic syndication and international distribution division of the CBS Television Network. The mission of CWD is to consolidate and fulfill all aspects of program distribution for CBS content as well as programming for other nations' distribution companies.

CWD meets its customers' domestic syndication and international distribution broadcast demands through file based HD distribution, cable distribution, standards conversion, DVD authoring, post-production, and streaming media. The syndication arm is a fully managed and automated HD/MPEG 4 distribution system that reaches out to 1,400 television stations in the US. Streaming media is a growing segment of CWD's business, and the division provides file distribution for its streaming customers.

Founded in 2000, the New York City based 24/7 operation positions itself as a service-driven facility offering the highest technical quality distribution to a large and diverse clientele of domestic and international customers.

## BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Program distribution has evolved radically from the time when a master program videotape was dubbed several times and shipped out to customers or played back for on-site recording by regional television stations. Distribution today is a complex, multi-faceted

workflow that involves regionalized, niche versions of content, standards conversion for worldwide markets, foreign language dubbing and sub-titling, and content conversion into myriad formats for web-based, mobile device based, and streaming media playback. Conversion from HD to SD and vice versa is also another complicating factor. In today's world market, it's highly likely that a single program could go out the world in over ten different forms and formats. Managing these diverse and evolving workflows can tax the abilities of even the best run and most technically capable distribution enterprise.

CWD began operations in 2000 as a primarily baseband, or tape based, operation. But today that type of operation could no longer function effectively. The sheer volume of content moving through CWD, not to mention the enormous logistics of tracking, cataloging, and managing so much content, necessitates a computerized approach that takes full advantage of file-based, automated content asset management technologies. And content today is no longer mastered to physical media like tapes, but is data files residing on servers accessible by users and viewers anywhere with the proper network connection. Physical media like tape and film now seem almost archaic remnants of the analog era.

For CWD, the business challenge was finding an efficient means

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for managing a huge and rapidly expanding library of content files as they “moved” from workstation to workstation, collecting and managing metadata for each content file, and fulfilling a wide range of distribution demands through timely, quality driven, and cost-effect digital workflows.

## TECHNOLOGY SOLUTION

In its search for a powerful, flexible, and user-friendly solution to its operational requirements, CWD turned to the Harris Invenio® family of digital assets management tools. Invenio is a suite of software solutions that takes broadcasters from content ingest all the way to complete digital asset management. By providing a total media asset platform, Invenio empowers content owners to manage the entire life cycle for a content asset, from ingest to cataloging, to storage and retrieval, for modern multiple platform distribution.

Invenio Motion is the component of the Invenio Suite, that provides a comprehensive toolset for automating file ingest, tracking, cataloging, quality control, production and post-production, and multi-platform playout and distribution. A modular architecture allows the integration of devices from multiple vendors without incurring any changes in the Motion application itself. Motion also centralizes media movement tasks requested by other interfaced applications including play-out, traffic, ingest, and delivery, allowing those systems to stay focused on their primary roles. These and other Invenio Motion capabilities and benefits made the Harris solution an ideal choice for CWD when the time came for them to automate and switch fully to total digital, file-based operations.

## BUSINESS VALUE

For Jaime Rockman, Vice-President for Distribution & Operations, CBS Worldwide Distribution & CBS Television Distribution, the move to all-digital, and to Harris Invenio Motion, was a logical progression from the analog to the digital era of program distribution, a transformation that he’s experienced first-hand since establishing CWD in 2000.

“Without a ‘dam’ it’s very hard to control this ‘flood’ of digital assets,” says Rockman. “Invenio controls the movement of assets. It tells us where assets are in their digital distribution workflows, it communicates with our servers, it communicates with our other automation hardware, it gives us desktop GUIs that connect our producers, coordinators, and technicians with the assets. Invenio moves us from a very laborious baseband world to a much more streamlined desktop file-based world. Because of Invenio Motion, all our file conversion and distribution workflows can happen more or less through desktop computers now.”

For CWD, the advanced automation and metadata management of Harris Invenio Motion is not only an improvement to its internal operations, but it’s opened the door to added revenue streams for CWD and its customers. Because Invenio streamlines the workflows through which content is re-formatted and repurposed, CWD can provide such services faster and more cost-effectively to its clientele, with improved quality control. CWD clients that want to monetize their content through niche distribution are now better able to do so, and that creates a win-win-win scenario for producers, distributors, and consumers. Notes Rockman: “Viewership has become niche, it’s on demand, it’s what you want to watch, whenever you want to watch it. Between DVDs, cable, streaming, everything is repurposed. Our clients are anxious to seize these new markets to maximize their monetizing opportunities. So technology like Invenio Motion is not just good for people like us running a distribution operation, but for our customers because of what it makes available to them, and to their customers, the viewers, who are watching on everything from DVDs to streaming mobile devices. All of our business operations have to ultimately support however people are watching video content. Invenio helps us to meet that challenge.”

Richard Hart, Vice President Entertainment Production and Technical Operation at the CBS Television Network share these opinions, from a somewhat different perspective. As manager of a sport enterprise that produces thousands of hours of programming a year, much of it live, Hart knows the value of being able to effectively search a large asset library to find a video clip or piece of metadata and get it to air almost immediately.

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“Invenio Motion helps us search all across our database,” comments Hart. “And it’s not just video files, but all sorts of related content: spreadsheets, text documents, transcripts, information about rights and royalties, you name it. We need a place where we can dump all that in there, and then be able search it, find it, and retrieve it on a timely basis, which for us usually means right away. Invenio Motion does exactly that and it does it well. It took us from a tape-based workflow to a file based automated workflow. We don’t do very complex workflows but we do a lot of them, and we couldn’t do that without Invenio Motion. We’re very happy with it and it’s been a huge improvement in how we run our business.”

## LOOKING AHEAD WHILE LOOKING BACK

With an eye towards the future, and the past, Jaime Rockman sees Invenio Motion as a system that will not only help his organization continue its growth, but as a key component for preserving the vast archive of CBS programming, some of which stretches back over 60 years to the Golden Age of Television in the late 40s and 50s.

With over 8.5 million content assets, ranging from film clips to quad videotapes, digitizing this library is an enormous operation that will go on for years. But as this priceless archive of digitized history is created, it too will the need for the powerful databasing and management capabilities of a solution like Harris Invenio Motion.



“It’s extremely important for us at CBS to digitize and preserve our historical assets, not just for its monetizing potentials, but for its historic and artistic value as well,” says Rockman. “That’s another reason why we have Invenio Motion and why we continue to work with Harris to grow Motion’s capabilities. We see Motion as an essential part of the hardware and software infrastructure we’ll need to accomplish this kind of massive asset management.”

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