

Okko sport turns to Lumen for live video delivery

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January 15, 2021

Broadcasters and streaming providers know that when it comes to meeting consumer expectations, the stakes are never higher than during live sports events. Delivering live video is challenging enough as it is, but when a single incident of poor

performance can cause viewers to miss an amazing play or a crucial scoring opportunity, it becomes much more critical to ensure seamless delivery from start to finish.

These challenges were well known to Okko, one of the leading video on-demand (VOD) providers in Russia, when they launched Okko Sport, their new OTT sports broadcasting service, in 2019. The flagship content offering on that service is the English Premier League, the most popular club soccer league in the world, along with games from other regional leagues based in the US, Mexico, Argentina, and Serbia.

Compounding Okko's difficulty of getting their full video production and delivery services up and running was that they simply didn't have much time to do it. After securing EPL rights in May, they had a scant four months to implement a complete live video delivery chain from the stadiums to the end-user devices. That included delivering the broadcast from the EPL studios in London to Okko's production operations in Moscow, packaging and encoding it in Okko's video delivery platform, and delivering it through the network to end-user platforms on Smart TVs, web

browsers, iOS and Android mobile devices, and set-top boxes like Playstation and Xbox.



This high-stakes situation is why Okko turned to Lumen to help at each step of the video delivery chain, from acquisition to distribution. “We had a very short amount of time to build the service from scratch,” says Okko Sport CTO Alexey Golubey. “Given these challenging circumstances, we needed a reliable partner that could take responsibility for the timing of implementation, understand the pressure we were under and able to deliver a high-quality service for the football fans, even during peak traffic periods.”

The first step of the solution is provided by Lumen® Vyvx® service, which offers the necessary connectivity to handle multiple high-def broadcast feeds from several matches simultaneously. Vyvx handles the packaging and encoding from the Premier League Productions studio, and delivers the feeds to Okko’s operations team in Russia.

The video content gets transmitted over the extensive Lumen IP backbone network with the world’s most-connected CDN built on top of it.

That CDN infrastructure includes several points of presence in Russia (where the vast majority of Okko’s end users are located), as well as CDN Mesh Delivery, which leverages end-user devices to extend the edge of the network even further. Mesh Delivery works in tandem with the existing CDN infrastructure, fetching the initial video chunks from the CDN and then distributing it across the network of connected devices, essentially turning them into mini-edge servers that share the

content with other users. This not only alleviates congestion on the CDN and ISP networks, but also brings the live video content even closer to end users.

In addition to the infrastructure, edge programmability, and software-defined delivery that Lumen provides, Okko has also leveraged the customer success team to ensure that any technical issues are handled quickly before they impact the end-user experience.

By leveraging this end-to-end delivery system, Okko was able to get their first EPL broadcast services up and running in time for the 2019-20 season, and plans to rely even more on Lumen as a dedicated partner as they expand their future offerings. “We recently broadcasted ten games simultaneously, and we have been able to expand easily from six to ten streams with Lumen,” says Golubey. “We are not only going to grow our EPL offering, but may also begin to launch additional sports soon, so it is important to have the ability to expand the solution as our needs grow.”

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