

Canadian Powerhouse Corus Entertainment Invests in OpenMedia Newsroom System



Leading Canadian broadcaster Corus® Entertainment Inc. has recently invested in the OpenMedia platform from CGI's Media Solutions. Corus, which owns and operates a wide range of television, radio, and online media properties, has been seeking to drive efficiencies in the back end of its news operations for several years; a task made more challenging by the sheer size of the country it serves and the multiple locations it has to operate in.

"OpenMedia has helped Corus to shift our focus, from a traditional news company to a true multi-platform content-centric news organization, providing twice the functionality of our old newsroom system at about half the cost," states Geoff Franklin, Director, News Architecture for Corus Entertainment's Global News division.

"The process started by consolidating control rooms across the country," he continues. "We automated control rooms, eliminated some control rooms and replaced them with simply server play out, but ultimately the focus has always been on keeping frontline reporters in the field."

Global News' implementation of OpenMedia is a part of that ongoing drive for efficiency. It has been designed as part of a multi-year project that services three different content areas within the Global News video output—linear TV, pre-packaged shows, and OTT — and is currently being rolled out to all of Corus' stations and locations across Canada as the central tool for its newsroom planning and rundown management. Further rollouts to radio and online are planned for the future and a full national deployment is envisaged to be completed by the end of 2020.

"At a high level, this project provides new rundown and planning functionality," says Franklin. "But it's really about changing the way we work to be more content-centric and multi-platform oriented. Over time, we want to develop and expand our current 375 users to 600 — completely utilizing a multi-platform approach."

An important part of the deployment was the ability of the CGI team to work tightly with Global News to ensure integration with various third party systems, notably the Grass Valley® Go! browser-based timeline video editor. This has enabled Global News to implement OpenMedia with minimal disruption and, importantly, has made change management easier and ensured journalist buy-in to the project.



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“People are used to having dozens of applications on the desktop and are increasingly frustrated at having to go all over the place to find information. What we are doing is bringing it into a single view; everything you need in one place,” says Franklin. “That’s huge for a news organization that’s trying to be quick. That is a game changer. We put this in front of people for the first time and they immediately get the concept. Journalists are by nature skeptical but when we show them this they get it right off the bat.”

The flexibility of the OpenMedia platform is not only allowing Global News to collate information sources into a single interface and provide a single view into all aspects of the organization’s content gathering, editorial, curation, and distribution, it is also enabling it to build new workflows from the ground up.

“We see OpenMedia as being the tool that will bring us together,” enthuses Franklin. “We have workflows across different platforms in different locations and OpenMedia is allowing us to build the kind of workloads we want and connect to a lot of underlying systems. That’s a big differentiator; we’re not buying somebody else’s workflow, we’re building our own.”

Franklin also highlights the fact that CGI has a long track record not only of delivering solutions but of evolving them to meet the challenges of future newsrooms, whatever they may bring.

“Despite its long history it is extremely agile and is constantly innovating the product. The system can be configured to make our workflows a reality and evolve over time as our workflow matures,” he says. “We try to find companies that will work as partners as opposed to just buying a product, especially with software. It’s not necessarily where the company is now that is important; it’s where the company is going to go and where the future is.”

The future for Corus Entertainment and Global News is about maximizing the production benefits of OpenMedia and ensuring they use the efficiencies it creates to become a more content-centric than before.

“You have to put your time and effort into the content and things that are apparent to the viewer and spend less time on moving bits and pieces around because that doesn’t provide value to them,” concludes Franklin. “Ultimately being more efficient allows you to tell a better story.”

ABOUT CORUS ENTERTAINMENT INC.

Corus Entertainment Inc. is a leading media and content company that develops and delivers high quality brands and content across platforms for audiences around the world. Engaging audiences since 1999, the company’s portfolio of multimedia offerings encompasses 34 specialty television services, 39 radio stations, 15 conventional television stations, a suite of digital assets, animation software, technology, and media services.

ABOUT CGI

Founded in 1976, CGI is among the largest IT and business consulting services firms in the world. Operating in hundreds of locations across the globe, CGI delivers end-to-end services and solutions, including strategic IT and business consulting, systems integration, managed IT and business process services and intellectual property solutions. CGI merged with SCISYS Group PLC in December 2019, gaining deeper expertise in the media and broadcast sectors, as well as the space and defense sectors. CGI’s Media Solutions, formerly SCISYS Media Solutions, offer a wide range of professional news and content delivery solutions for innovative media companies across local, national and international markets. This includes the market-leading flagship newsroom and radio delivery software product families OpenMedia and dira, serving many key players in broadcast and delivery.