

FAST in Europe

A White-paper from the FAST4EU Consortium

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FAST in Europe

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Introduction



Introduction About FAST4EU





Embracing the essence of European innovation, FAST4EU is a consortium dedicated to reshaping the streaming landscape. With a foundation rooted in European values and vision, we're here to accelerate the growth of the FAST model across the continent.

OKAST partnered with SECOM and Kinostar to launch the FAST4EU Consortium, cofunded by the EU. Our goal is to spearhead the expansion of the FAST (Free Adsupported Streaming TV) model throughout Europe, cultivating a platform that is carefully suited to the continent's unique and rich cultural backdrop. Leveraging cutting-edge technology, we are building a strategy that not only caters to the European market but also possesses the potential to resonate globally. Through this effort, we hope to bring European storylines to the forefront, providing interesting and representative material while opening the path for a greater, global reach.

Europe's unique mix of cultures and traditions deserves a global stage. Our mission, through the FAST model, is to amplify this diversity, making European content not only accessible but also influential. We envision a digital realm where a tale from one corner of Europe resonates in another, fostering cross-cultural appreciation and showcasing the continent's narratives to the world.











Introduction FAST explained



FAST has been a phenomenon over the last few years, growing from the margins of the industry to being front and centre in discussions with stakeholders. For those unfamiliar with FAST, it is a much used term (often incorrectly), but the basics are as follows: FAST stands for Free Ad-supported Streaming TV, it is a linear phenomenon, streamed over internet connected devices - hence the name FAST Channels.

Typically channels are more library-content based, have lower ad loads than traditional TV and lower content refresh - but this is evolving.

The market for channels was driven by aggregators and specialists in the early years, but more players have been launching channels, from all areas of the business. Simply speaking, there are three types of FAST channel: Single source IP, Single Genre and Multi Genre.

There is a wide landscape of Platform operators with different perspectives and strengths. Some are Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) like Samsung and Vizio, offering FAST services embedded on their devices, with constrained distribution but with all the benefits that control of the user interface brings. Others are specialists, accessible through Apps and browsers on most connected devices, with many of these owned by large media companies. Finally we are seeing traditional broadcasters increasingly entering this space and offering FAST channels adjacent to their digital offers.

Channel Types Single Source IP **Single Genre Multi Genre** Channels devoted to one Channels focused on one Channels offering a mixture brand or programme only of programming and genres genre of programming (e.g. Les filles d'à coté, (E.g. Pluto Horror, True (E.g. Banijay Horizons, Baywatch, Masterchef) Crime, Movisphere) FilmRise Binge Watch)



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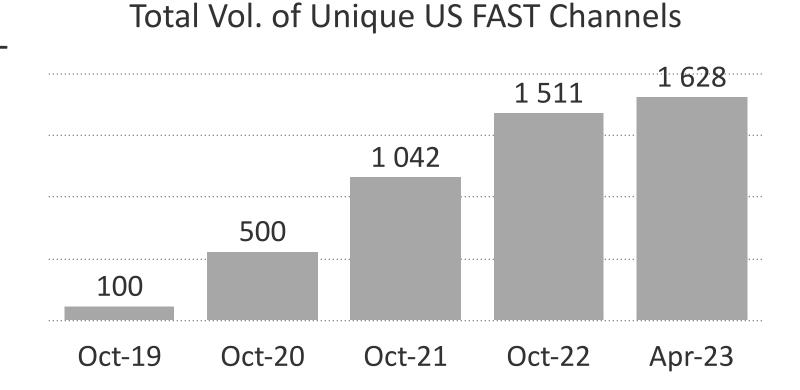
The FAST Market in Europe

A growing market with the US leading the way

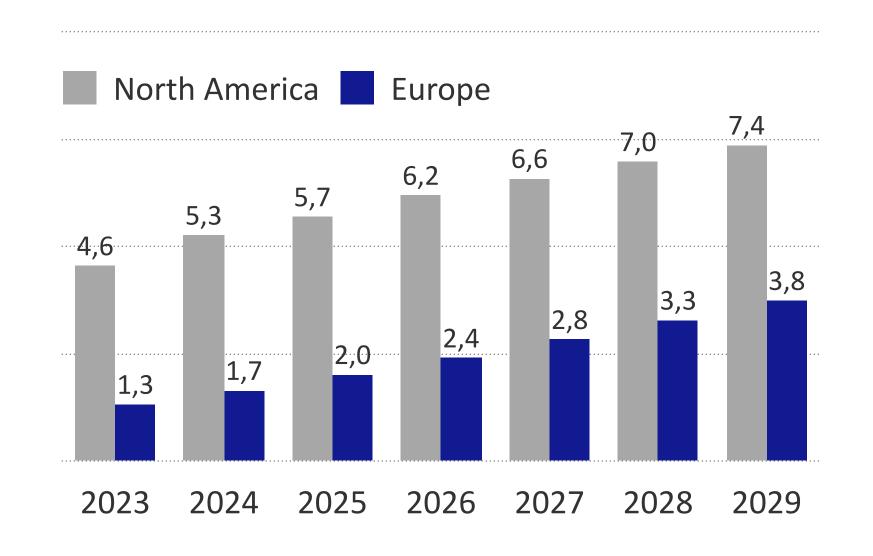


FAST Growth

FAST channels emerged into a world where the patterns of video consumption were rapidly changing. FAST is a type of video consumption that compares closely to traditional Free TV, but combines some of the benefits consumers get from a wide variety of online video services. Whilst FAST has its origins in early pioneers like Pluto (launching as far back as 2013) a key period in its development was when legacy media bought into the concept - with Viacom CBS buying Pluto in January 2019, NBC Comcast buying Xumo in February 2020 and Fox Corporation buying Tubi in March 2020.



FAST Revenue Forecasts by Region (US\$B)



US Market has grown to dominate revenues but Europe is following

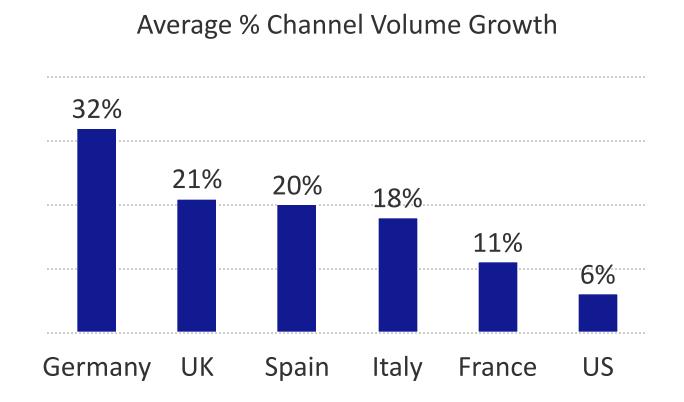
The US has seen rapid a growth in activity, with early tracking of channels identifying 100 unique channels in 2019 and numbers growing to over 1,600 in 2023. It represents a huge share of Global FAST revenues. Forecasts suggest global revenues will reach \$17 billion in 2029, up from \$8 billion in 2023.

North America currently takes over 50% of these revenues with this share set to fall as other regions catch-up. Europe is growing quickly, taking 17% of the global market at the moment but growing to 22% in 2029. Despite different characteristics there will be much to learn from the US - a market with a well developed advertising industry, huge choice, rapid Pay TV churn and a number of the world's key FAST services. Arguably traditional European broadcasters are in a stronger position to exploit FAST, with better established digital services and a strong hold on key local content.

The LIS is entering a power base

The US is entering a new phase that Europe can learn from





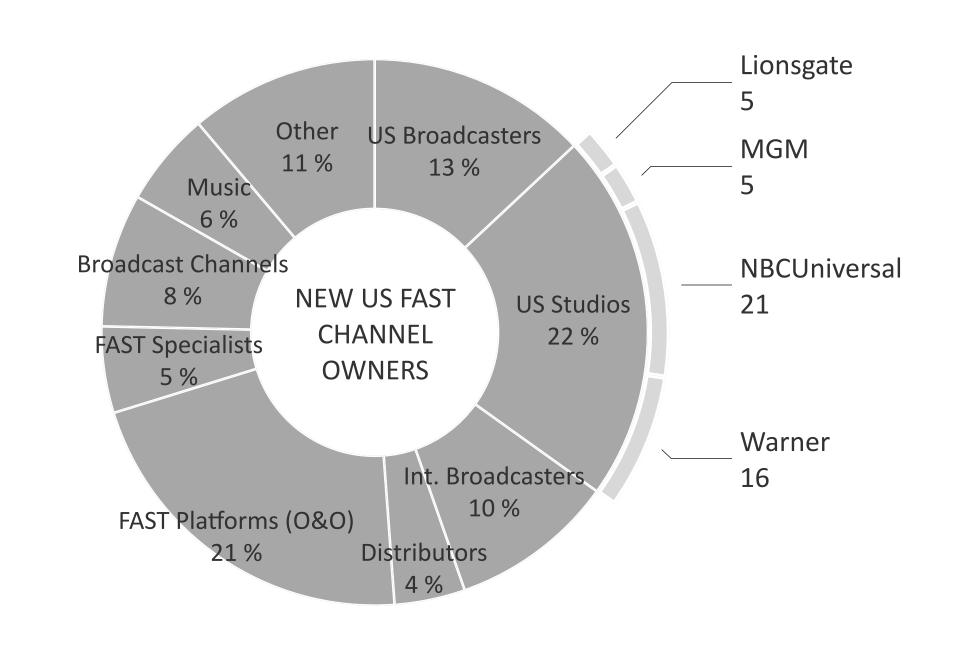
US growth starting to slow whilst European Channel volumes continue to grow

We are entering a new phase of development in the US that has implications for global markets and lessons for Europe. Over the first nine months we have seen new channel launches, but there are signs of growth slowing in the US (only 6% growth in volume over the first nine months versus 32% in Germany). However as growth slows the channels entering are of a distinctly better quality. The market was driven in the early years by aggregators and specialists but now as premium content owners enter the market, many with traditional linear TV channels already, quality levels are going up.

US Channels are improving in quality as major players and brands move in

As the US moves into a new phase of development, optimising channel line-ups is becoming the priority for services. This comes at a time when FAST is a major corporate focus for major media companies (including the Studios) who themselves are under pressure to diversify more and monetise content in as many ways as possible, including FAST.

The characteristics of owners launching channels are evolving, as larger media companies enter the sector and improve their offers, launching more channels with better quality content. Over the first nine months more than 200 channels launched in the US, with 34% of these from US Studios and broadcasters and a further 24% from Channel or Distributor businesses. On top of that, 21% of channels were Owned and Operated (O&O) by FAST Platforms.

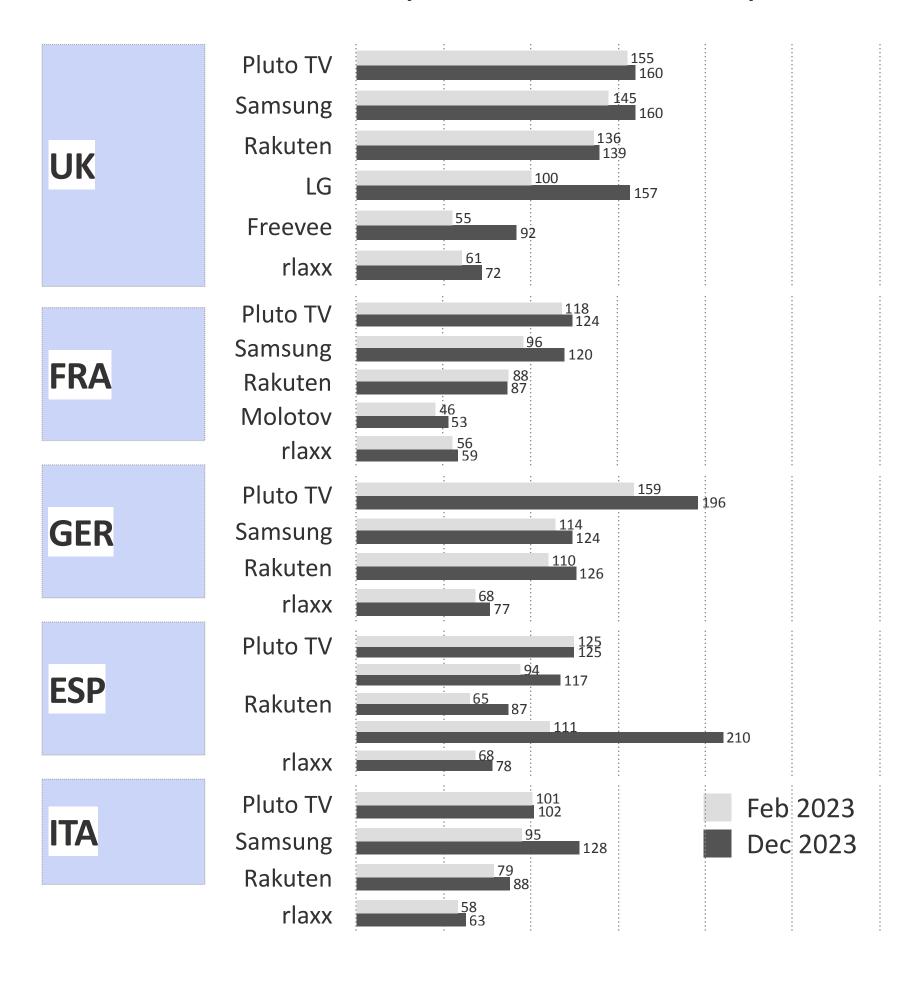


The FAST Market in Europe Europe is growing quickly





Channel Volumes by Platform and Country



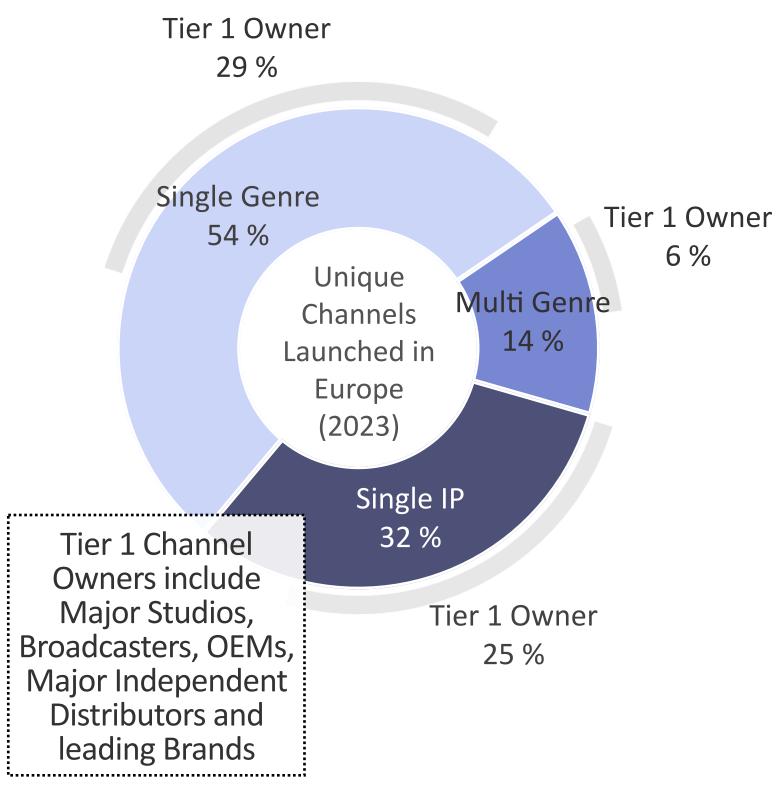
All major FAST Platforms growing in Europe

Across the five top European markets all Platforms grew channel volumes in 2023. With each one of them at different stages of development it is no surprise to see varied levels of growth, but the trajectory for all in the last nine months is clear.

Commentators have probably been leaning too heavily on channel volumes (while channels increase is not necessarily a good indicator of progress in itself); the quality of these launches is by far more significant.

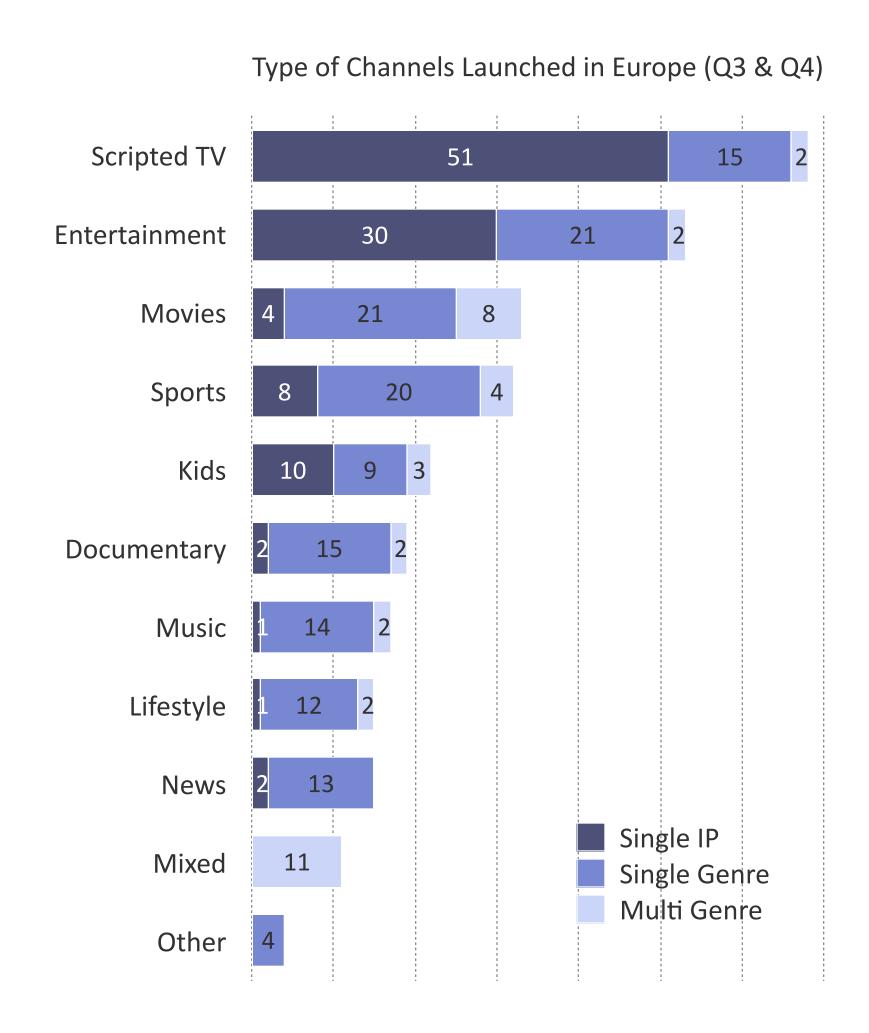
Major players launching in Europe

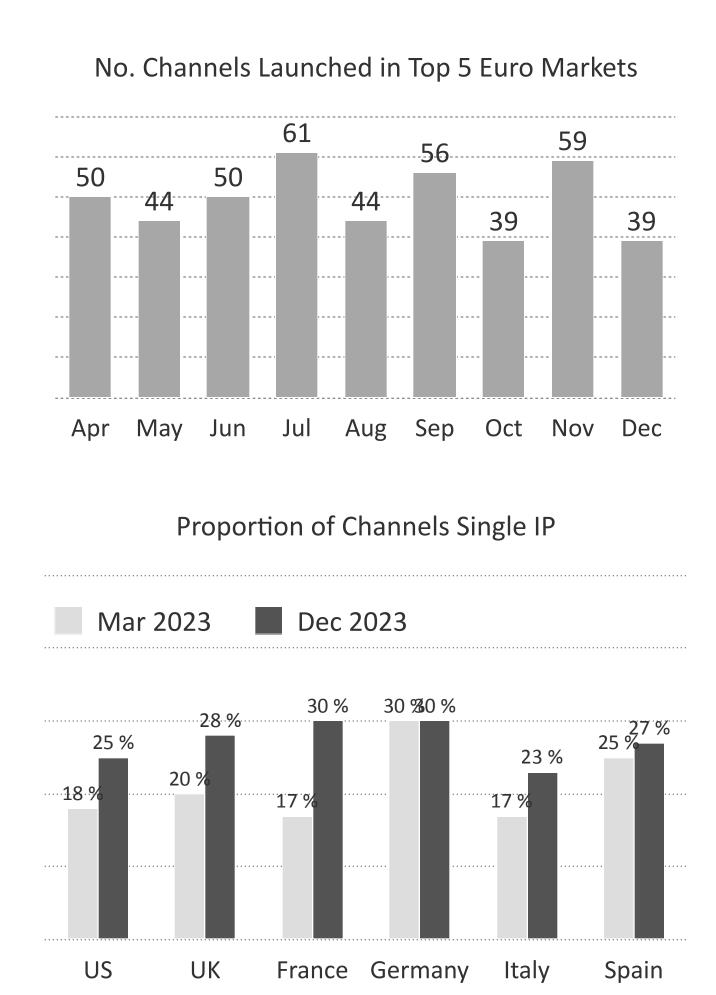
In the same way as the US market is seeing an increased quality of FAST channels, so is Europe (perhaps enabling Europe to skip faster through development cycles). Of the recent channel launches in Europe 60% could be classified as coming from Tier 1 Content Owners, a clear sign that FAST is moving on from the early years of non-premium unbranded programming.



The FAST Market in Europe Europe is growing quickly







The five top European markets launched on average 40+ channels per month over the last six months.

Single IP growth

Over the period the increase in Single IP Scripted TV channels was the largest growth category, often with well established brands. The clarity of proposition that Single IP offers continues to support their growth, with the category increasing share in most markets and averaging 27% of channels. As more premium brands move into the market, the battle for attention with Single IP channels will undoubtedly grow.

Scripted content

The increase in Scripted content (TV and Movies) is also notable, with the level of investment that is typically associated with scripted content greater than non-scripted it points to the greater level of investment being made.

The FAST Market in Europe **Local content and Platform partnerships**



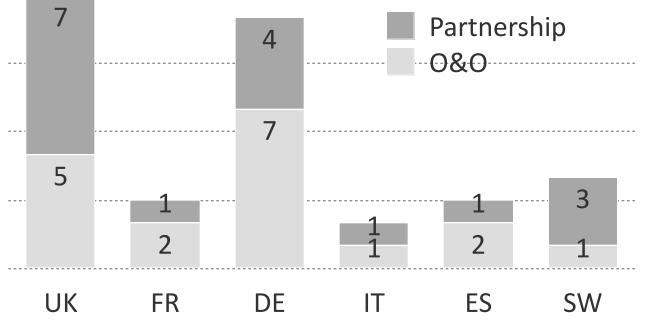


Local content will always be the key

With quality improvements comes a focus on local, both in terms of locally originated content and the correct versioning of content from global markets. Both come at a cost that Platforms will need to control, especially in the early years, with the quality and breadth of a services local content offer clearly a priority for the major platforms.

Throughout history all emerging types of service have improved their local offer over time, appreciating that the most popular content in any country is home grown, and the issue is even more important with the diversity of cultures in the European market. Whilst access to local content may be challenging for some, by working with local channel providers, and in some cases developing their own channels through local partnerships and licensing, the FAST lineups are developing into a proposition that means more to viewers.

Samsung TV Plus O&O Channels

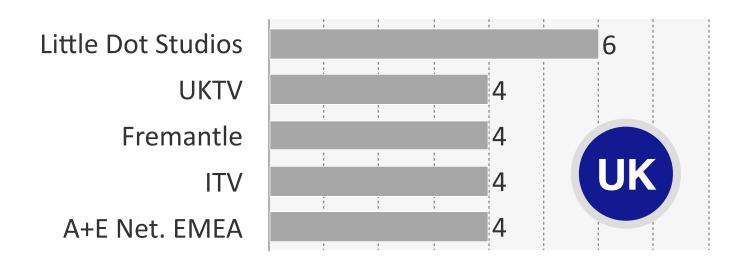


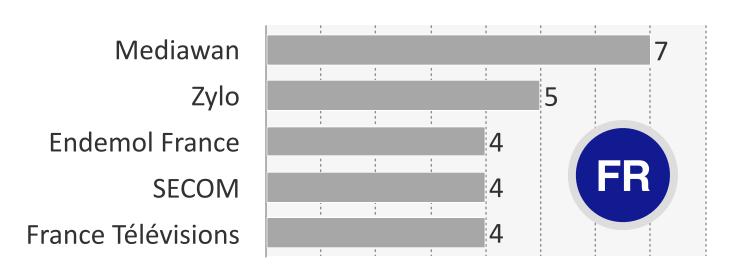
Platform partnerships

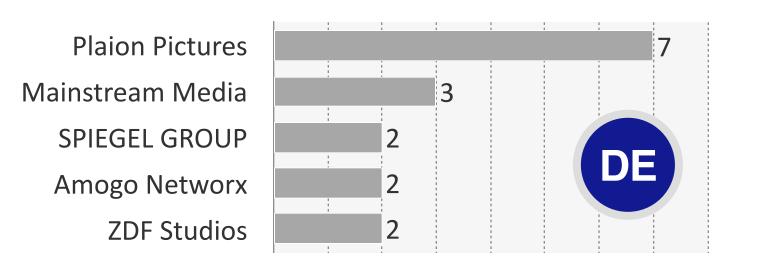
Samsung continues to grow its line-up of O&O channels, choosing to license content in some places and partner in others. This includes working with leading local players such as ZDF Studios in Germany, enabling the market to grow as content familiar to local viewers can drive viewing at a faster level than most imported.

Rakuten TV has a significant volume of localised O&O channels, hosting a collection of over 100 channels, with a curated array of content sourced from top European broadcasters and Major Studios and reputable local distributors.

Top 5 Local Channel Owners by Market







The FAST Market in Europe Quality is improving

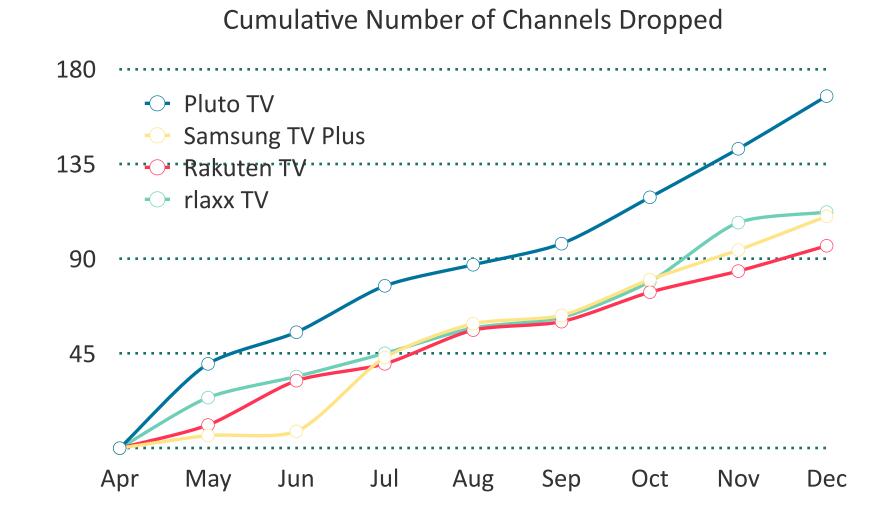


With quality improvements comes churn

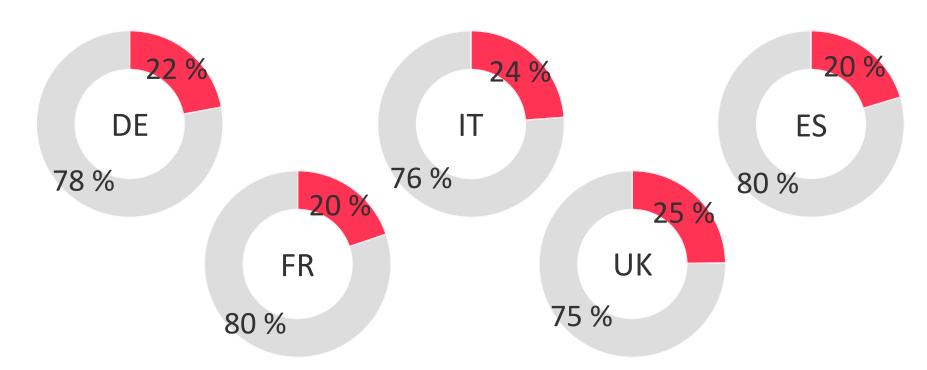
Another sign of positive FAST development is the removal of channels. As the market continues to mature, platforms will be required to remove under-performing channels in favour of the newer (and higher quality channels) being launched - in particular the new channels coming from the local players.

While some of the activity surrounding dropped channels will be the natural result of a rapidly evolving market, it more significantly points to the fact that platforms are now seriously looking at optimising channel lineups, which means churning off the weaker ones.

Despite net growth in channels with Pluto, Samsung TV Plus and Rakuten TV, all have removed channels each month throughout the last nine months. On average across the top five European markets 22% of channels have been dropped from at least one Platform.







FAST Platforms are increasingly discerning about channels

Platforms are operating in a market with more channel choice and as they themselves have developed are implementing minimum standard requirements for channels. New channels will need to meet these standards immediately and old channels will undoubtedly be reviewed on that basis when being considered for renewal.

Tracking removals and churn will not be straightforward as activity around single IP channels will overstate removals. Content owners are already swapping out one single IP channel for another - no doubt as they optimise lifetime values - and certain titles will be surfaced as seasonal (e.g Christmas) initiatives, much in the same way as Pop-up channels work in some markets already.

The FAST Market in Europe Wrap-up



Conditions for FAST growth are strong

As the wider streaming wars enter a new phase the conditions for FAST remain strong. Increased TV set connectivity, digital advertising growth, improving advertising technology, accelerating reach, awareness and usage are all contributing to a positive environment for FAST to grow. Regulation is likely to have some impact on how the sector develops in the coming years, as always needing to catch up with the reality of the market, but the opportunity is strong.

Quality levels are improving quickly

Switching on FAST in the early years meant you often found yourself looking at poor quality video of archive programming that had little or no appeal. This has changed significantly, with high budget scripted shows appearing (e.g. Narcos, Star Trek: Discovery, Bosch, Schitt's Creek), Studio movies (Hunger Games, John Wick), more popular entertainment shows (American Idol, Paradise Hotel) and an increasing number of Sports channels (e.g. DAZN, FIFA, PGA Tour, etc.).

Challenges for Europe

Two themes are clear, the quality of channels is improving and the race for volume is slowing. As major media players and bigger brands move in, that has significant consequences for the European market. With bigger global companies and bigger consumer brands entering the market it will become harder for local European players to be found - whilst at the same time they hold the key to growth with some of the most popular and well known content. The FAST ecosystem is hard to navigate as a consumer, with discoverability a key issue. With the economics also challenging as the market looks to grow from its relatively small level it makes it difficult for local players, who face an already fragmented marketplace, that is seeing major global brands move in.

The variation within the European market, and all the cultural diversity that it offers, means local FAST activity will need support as it looks to find its place in a fragmented ecosystem. US Studios are entering the market at brisk pace whilst Platforms continue to operate in a market whose regulation is very different from traditional television environments. Distribution across the multitude of Platforms remains somewhat of a "Wild West", as the many different markets of Europe work to ensure regulation catches up with developments.

Launching a FAST Channel



NALES TV | Nuestro Top 15

Rakuten TV

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Launching a FAST Channel Build and Distribute





Launching a FAST Channel

Once you have established your channel proposition there are a number of key steps to launching a channel. Programming needs to be planned and the content rights cleared, then the channel needs to be scheduled to optimise the experience for viewers. Quickly this becomes a requirement for a technology solution. There are many solution providers available to content owners, they can help content owners build a 24/7 channel from their catalogues, add advertising and distribute it across the leading Platforms. Systems will be in place to process content (ingesting, formatting files, enhancing metadata etc..), prepare for advertisements, create the on-screen identity (branding and graphic overlays), offer data analytics and deliver channels to Platforms. The very next challenge is how to optimise the operations of a channel, with revenue directly linked to performance.

Secure Distribution

There is a wide landscape of FAST Platforms each with their own strengths. Channels are faced with the challenge of securing distribution with Platforms and then finding ways to maintain prominence on the services. Different Platforms have different strengths, which can also vary by country, but at its most basic level without distribution there is no business for a FAST channel.

Distribution deals are typically based on a revenue share between the channels and the service. There are sometimes other components (such as minimum guarantees) but fundamentally it is about the share of advertising revenues. This share can be in the format of revenue share or inventory share. With revenue share deals the Platform sells 100% of the inventory and then shares these revenues with the channel. With inventory share the Platform shares the advertising inventory with the channel and each one is tasked with selling its own portion of the inventory, keeping the corresponding advertising revenues.

Content Plan & Proposition Detailed Programming Scheduling Content & Ads Securing **Distribution Ad Sales Optimising**

Performance

Launching a FAST Channel Monetisation





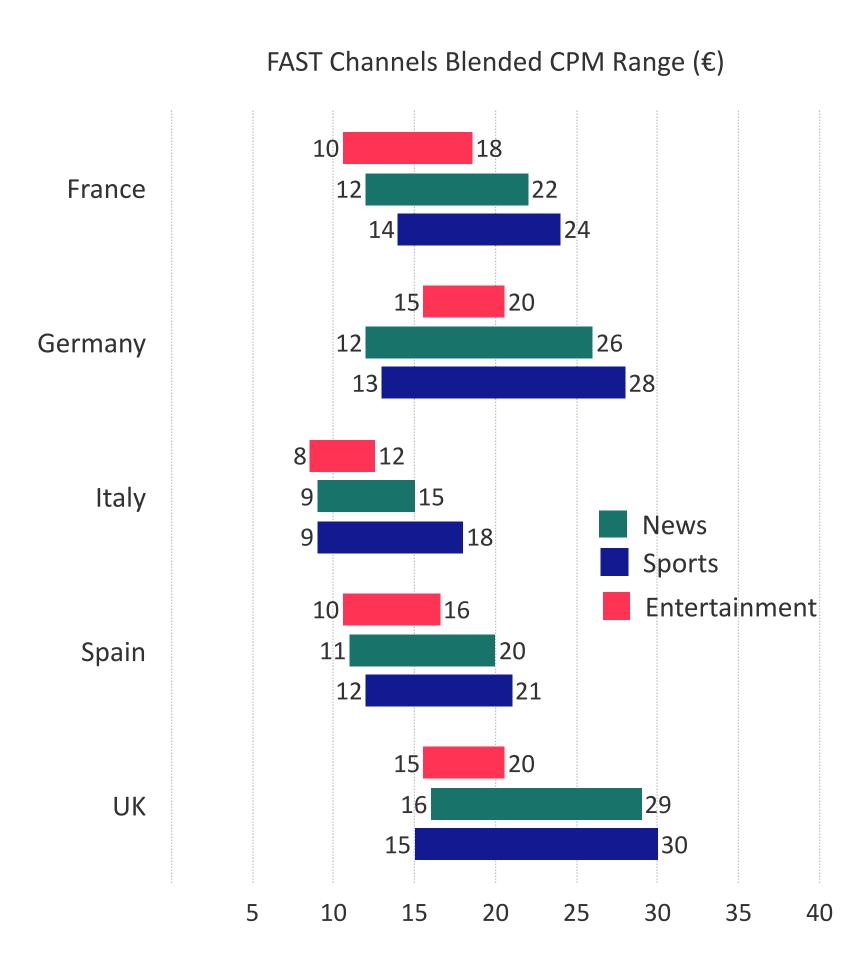
Basic monetisation model

A global cost of living crisis and economic downturn has coincided with a challenge to the SVOD model and a resurgence of the advertising model in the OTT video space. The simplicity of the FAST model is that it is free to consumers and there are no proposition challenges related to pricing. As viewers watch FAST channels they are served advertisements, with channels building Ad inventory for their channels that is sold to generate revenues.

CPMs and Ad Loads

Stakeholders report that the variation of both Cost per Thousand (CPM) rates (the price of 1,000 advertising impressions) and Advertising Fill Rates (how much of your Ad Load is filled) is significant which has a straightforward impact on resultant revenues. Ad loads and Fill Rates vary by platform and across the time bands and are influenced by numerous advertising market characteristics as well as the content type, genre and target audience. CPM variation starts on a country level (at their most basic it is driven by local conditions) but then structural characteristics of the Ad sales markets, along with the leverage each channel has, influence the rates.

Across the EU5 the average range for FAST CPMs can be wide. By blending feedback across multiple FAST platforms operating in the EU5 across 3 types of FAST channel we can illustrate this range. This illustrates another clear challenge for FAST Channel operators - accessing better CPMs to optimise revenues.



Launching a FAST Channel Monetisation



Revenue Share versus Inventory Share

Channels have two main ways to handle their Ad inventory, which is typically dependent on the distribution deal that they secure with the Platform: revenue share and inventory share.

Although many smaller operators may see advantages in allowing Platforms to handle the advertising sales, it denies them the control and insight they would get by selling their own advertising (which could itself be outsourced). This lack of control in turn may weaken overall leverage when it comes to securing the best advertising rates (CPMs) and an effective advertising load.

Revenue Share

FAST platform retains all Ad inventory that the channel programmes

FAST platform aggregates all inventory and sells it

Ad revenue from your channel is shared according to distribution deal

Channel has no control or oversight to how advertising is being sold

Platform is in control of the data

Inventory Share

FAST Platform and FAST channel share Ad inventory from the channel Inventory is shared according to the distribution deal Each are responsible for selling their share of the inventory

Channels control how their advertising is sold

Channels keep hold of more data

Launching a FAST Channel Monetisation through different levels of involvement



Involvement with FAST can come in a number of ways. Fundamentally FAST channels, by their very nature, generate revenues through advertising (with some having additional strategic objectives typically revolving around promotion of brands and services). However there are essentially four different ways European content owners can generate revenue through FAST, all of them depending on the success of a FAST channel, but each representing a different position in the value chain.

Content Owner routes to FAST

Aggregator	Owned & Operated	Partnership	Launch own FAST Channel
Content licensing model	Content licensing model	Channel operation model	Channel operation model
License content to 3rd party aggregator for use on their channel	License content to 3rd party Platform for use with their O&O channel	Partner with 3rd party Platform to launch a channel together	Create own channel and distribute it to 3rd party Platforms
Channels created by aggregation businesses (e.g. Filmrise, Cineverse)	Channel created/managed by the Platform (e.g. Samsung, Pluto)	Channel created/managed by the Platform with shared responsibilities	Channels created and managed by the content owner themselves
Receive license fees for content	Receive license fees for content	Share in advertising revenues with some guaranteed license fees possible	Receive a share of advertising revenue through revenue or inventory share
Limited risk to launch but no upside to success	Limited risk to launch Strong channel position through operator ownership No upside to success	Shared risk to launch Strong channel position through operator ownership Shared upside to success	High risk due to upfront costs Dependent on distribution deals and successful operation High upside from success

Launching a FAST Channel Wrap-up



Launching a FAST channel comes with many considerations with many issues and challenges needing to be overcome to ensure the channel maximises revenues to the best of its ability. There are many areas of focus, from getting the content proposition right, technically optimising the operation of the channel, securing distribution deals and maximising your return from advertising.

Challenges from optimising advertising revenues

There are different stakeholders available to sell advertising on your behalf, structurally different advertising markets by country, different Ad loads and wildly fluctuating possibilities when it comes to securing the best advertising rates (CPMs). The emerging issue for channels is how to maximise your return in a market where leverage is important and without it channels can secure viewers without getting a fair return from the advertising market.

In order to monetise your inventory in the best way control is vital. Without control of your inventory there is a data deficit that prevents ongoing optimisation of channels and there is a lack of leverage that enables you to secure better CPMs and fill your advertising load.

Distribution challenges

There is a wide landscape of FAST Platforms each with their own strengths. Channels are faced with the challenge of securing distribution with the right services and then finding ways to maintain a prominent position on these services. With Platforms offering very different levels of data to channel owners - in many cases there is a significant lack of any insight - this presents an ongoing challenge for channels even when they have overcome the challenge of securing distribution.

Regulation will start to play a bigger role with FAST, especially as FAST services operate under a completely different regulatory environment to traditional TV providers. The imbalance between how traditional Electronic Programme Guides (EPGs) and the channels made available through them and the FAST environment needs to be addressed. ARCOM (France), OFCOM (UK), ACMA (Australian Communications and Media Authority) have already expressed their concerns and willingness to keep the market fair. This itself will not solve all the challenges around distribution but it may stabilise some of the issues channels are facing.

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Top Chef





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Market Commentary Introduction





Benedikt Frey
Country Lead DACH
Samsung TV Plus



Ronny Lutzi CEO rlaxx TV



Marcos Milanez
Chief Content Officer
Rakuten TV



Pauline Coghlan
European Licensing Lead
Samsung TV Plus



Michael Roesch
CEO
Kinostar Filmverleih



Reza Ackbaraly
CEO & Co-Founder
Qwest TV



Kasia Jablonska
Director of Digital and OnDemand EMEA
BBC Studios



Cédric Monnier
CEO & Co-Founder
OKAST.TV



Linette Zaulich
Director Unscripted
ZDF Studios



Mathias Guille
Vice President Cloud
Platform
broadpeak.io



Stephen Byrne
VP Partnership
Development
RTL AdAlliance



Tim Edwards COO Titan OS

Market Commentary Samsung TV Plus





Describe your involvement with FAST

Pauline; Samsung TV Plus is Samsung's Free Ad Supported streaming video service. It's available on all Samsung devices, including Smart TVs from 2016. It's also available on tablets and mobiles, no login subscription, additional device or credit card needed. Currently we have around 2,000+ channels globally on 500 million devices globally.

As of today we have over 40 channels across Europe that we either schedule or license content for. We seek premium content that will resonate with the viewer in each country. As a content provider, if you have only a small library of content, we can still license your content to be scheduled in to one of our compilation channels. Example O&O channels include Todo Crimen in Spain which is a true crime and scripted channel. In the UK the Jamie Oliver channel and things like America's Got Talent and American Idol.

Benedikt; For third party channels (we have over 2000 globally) we are trying to get the biggest brands and the biggest broadcasters, the single-IPs out there. From classical broadcast but also the big Studios. We will further expand in the sports genre, it is very important, we see this in all our countries where we have premium sports live.

Where have you had success?

Benedikt; Mainstream contents are working very well, like news, movies, series. Also cooking, sports and kids channels. We also see Single-IP working very well in Germany, for example the Baywatch channel. We also have some quality niche contents which work well and we have opened up completely new genres in regions – for example fully localised Bollywood channels in Germany and an anime one.

Pauline; We can tune in to our dataset from across 24 countries to inform our decision on what to acquire. It's a rich source of data for us, very valuable enabling us to maximise our efforts across acquisitions, editorial, even the scheduling of the channel, and also marketing. So we're looking at varying programming types and genres, which will keep the FAST audiences engaged and drawn in.





Benedikt Frey
Country Lead
DACH
Samsung TV Plus



Pauline Coghlan
European
Licensing Lead
Samsung TV Plus

Market Commentary Samsung TV Plus (continued)



What are your biggest challenges?

Pauline; Programming holds the inherent challenge of striking the balance between constantly surprising and delighting our viewers while also being reliable: We want to be the "go-to" for genre channels such as comedy or crime, where users can expect fresh new content, of consistent quality; this is what keeps audiences engaged. So we strive to acquire the breadth and depth of content that will appeal to different segments of our audience, and schedule them to meet our users expectations, prime time vs daytime, weekends, etc.

Benedikt; One of the most challenging elements of the job is to predict what the consumer wants to see - it's not always intuitive, and the same series or content that is performing really well in a different European country might not be all that popular in the DACH region, and vice versa. We rely heavily on our own viewership data, as well as some market research, to make those decisions. But sometimes if you're planning on launching something that is totally different or new, you just have to take the risk. Luckily, our bets have been very successful so far, the Anime content for example was immediately adopted by a large audience, and big (read: expensive) partnerships have paid off and drawn a whole new audience into our Samsung TV Plus service.

What is the most important factor for growing the European FAST market?

Pauline; Content has to be acquired that resonates with local audiences. Whether acquired in local language, subbed or dubbed – all of our O&O channels will resonate with local audiences as they are localised. We are seeing growth as TVPlus is preinstalled on devices – and adoption is increasing in terms of monthly active users.

Benedikt; (on the importance of Free TV broadcaster content) On a pan-European level that is already happening. La Sexta is live in Italy and RTVE in Spain. In Germany we have a partnership with ZDFStudios — TerraX is very popular. But broadcasters have different strategies and can work at different speeds — they have their own BVOD services, so it's a difficult situation. More and more people however are moving to FAST, the majority of audiences are no longer spending time in linear environments and prefer streaming so broadcaster strategies need to account for this. The incremental reach and revenues broadcasters can drive through FAST are really there and pretty high. So it will happen and is already happening.

Pauline; in 2024 it's about improving and strengthening our existing portfolio of compilation and single IP channels. I don't think it's about necessarily volume and adding more and more channels. We have a soft ceiling, and that's across the whole of Europe, of a certain number of channels per market, to avoid overwhelming audiences and ensure the content is also still easy to navigate through.

Market Commentary Rlaxx TV





Describe your involvement with FAST

Operating in 27 countries, the FAST/AVOD streaming service rlaxx TV organizes its content via linear, theme-based channels curated from a wide array of global content providers. Viewers benefit from a range of features, including the ability to pause, restart, watch later, and access an on-demand library. This innovative approach combines the convenience of linear television with the flexibility of video on demand. Aptly summarised by its tagline, "Watch more, search less," rlaxx TV stands out as a refreshing alternative to traditional television viewing.

Rlaxx TV was meticulously crafted as a video streaming service that authentically caters to viewers' passions, offering a premium niche and local content portfolio while maintaining traditional TV quality.

Where have you had success?

rlaxx TV has experienced significant success in territories with a strong presence of local and dubbed content, notably in Germany, the United Kingdom, and Spain. Although a rich and diverse portfolio is key for user engagement, we see that content in the local language(s) resonates with viewers, representing at least 60% of the total effective viewing time in each of these three countries.

We have also seen that viewers embrace niche content with open arms. Content genres such as niche sports and cooking dominate.

What are your biggest challenges?

With an ever-expanding array of content available on the platform, ensuring that users can easily discover new and relevant content is a persistent challenge. Implementing advanced recommendation algorithms, intuitive user interfaces, and clear content categorisation are essential strategies to enhance discoverability and keep viewers engaged.

In terms of advertising, one notable challenge is managing frequency capping efficiently. Ensuring that viewers are not overwhelmed with the same ad creative repeatedly is crucial for providing a positive user experience that replicates the traditional ad breaks from linear TV. Luckily, in the last year progress has been made across the digital advertising industry, bringing advantages also to both advertisers and publishers.

What is the most important factor for growing the European FAST market?

Local content, in terms of production and language availability, remains a key for the rise of FAST in Europe. A streaming experience customised to the particularities of each distinct European TV broadcast market increased the likelihood that FAST captivates larger audiences across Europe. Moreover, ease of use is essential to encourage widespread adoption by viewers.

A crucial catalyst for growth though, is the cooperation between different platforms and competitors from the video streaming industry. By fostering collaborative relationships within the value chain, we seek to create a more unified and expansive streaming ecosystem that benefits both users and industry players. In addition, from a marketing perspective, it's great to partner with renown content providers and TV broadcasters to boost user acquisition. rlaxx TV, for instance, collaborates with Bild, Spiegel TV, Vevo, Bloomberg, Deutsche Welle, Euronews, and more.

rlaxx V



Ronny Lutzi CEO rlaxx TV

Market Commentary Rakuten TV





About Rakuten TV

Rakuten TV is one of the leading streaming platforms in Europe that combines TVOD, AVOD and FAST channels providing users with a universe of content and making the whole entertainment experience easier. The TVOD service offers an authentic cinematic experience with the latest releases to buy or rent in high audio and video quality. The advertising-supported offering comprises AVOD and FAST services.

The AVOD service features more than 10,000 titles available on-demand, including films, documentaries and series from Hollywood and local studios, as well as the catalogue with Original and Exclusive content. The FAST service consists of an extensive line-up of over 500 unique channels among which 100 Owned & Operated (O&O) across Europe, including free linear channels from global networks, top European broadcasters and media groups, and the platform's own thematic channels with curated content. Rakuten TV is available in 43 European territories and currently reaches more than 140 million households via its branded remote-control button and pre-installed app in Smart TV devices.

Describe your involvement with FAST

Rakuten TV was launched in 2013 as a Transactional VOD service, but since 2019 the platform has broadened its content offering scope by also adding AVOD and FAST. Today we offer thousands of AVOD movies and 500 unique FAST channels across our 140 million households in Europe.

We're proud to be able to offer our FAST proposition across all 43 countries in Europe. It also solidifies how important FAST has become to our business model, on which Rakuten TV not only acts as platform, but also as a channel producer and distributor. We have approximately 100 branded Rakuten TV FAST channels fully localised for our key markets such as Western Europe, Nordics, Netherlands, and Poland. Our own & operated channels comprise of various genres such as Hollywood and European movies, Crime (Scripted and True Crime), Reality, Lifestyle Entertainment, Documentaries and Kids.

FAST has become a cornerstone of our business and a valuable addition for our content ecosystem, whereas our customer has the freedom to chose if they'd rather buy, rent or watch for free with ads.

Where have you had success?

From a business perspective, we believe FAST has been extremely successful for our business due to 3 key pillars: (i) scale: the 10+ years of partnership with TV manufactures and other device partners, with a dedicated branded remote control button and pre-installed app has allowed us to reach millions of households on both RTV and 3rd party platforms across all of Europe; (ii) Ad monetisation: we have an in-house ad sales team, led by our sister-company Rakuten Advertising who distinguishes themselves as a specialist on the CTV landscape, supported by our local sales rep teams based in each of our key markets with established connections with agencies and brands; and (iii) content experts: we produce, license, and schedule content. It's in our DNA.

Our existing relationship with Major Hollywood Studios and key content distributors across the globe have facilitated this leap from TVOD to AVOD & FAST, as we're familiar with what are the relevant local content expectations from each market.

What are your biggest challenges?

There is still lots to do on user segmentation and customisation, which I think will be a key tool for us to tackle the challenge that all platforms face across content discoverability, but also help explain/guide our users to their preferred form of access.

What is the most important factor for growing the European FAST market?

We need to continue seeing top tier Content IPs transition to FAST, as it will help boost the ongoing growth of the sector and appeal to more mainstream audience. Meanwhile, the advertising market also needs to continue shifting budget to CTV, hence why we also welcome the entrance of the recent SVOD services into AVOD (or also newcomers to the European market) on CTV as it also supports educating and incentivising this transition.

Rakuten 17



Marcos Milanez
Chief Content
Officer
Rakuten TV

Market Commentary Kinostar





Describe your involvement with FAST

Kinostar is a German content producer and distributor.

We are a Theatrical distributor in 12 European countries, a world sales company, and a worldwide VOD distributor and - in addition to releasing English language movies worldwide - are catering to the German, Polish and Turkish communities globally, on SVOD and FAST.

We just launched our FAST channel "Turk on Video Free", which brings Turkish language movies to Turkish expats across Europe. Also we will launch the "Festival channel" in the next few months, which brings the best arthouse movies to audiences in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Amongst other channels we are working on a Polish language FAST channel.

Where have you had success?

We are very successful in both theatrical releases and VOD since many years, including Apple TV, Google Play, Netflix and Amazon Prime, as well as several channels on Amazon channels. We're very excited to extend our business to FAST channels now, and have launched out first FAST channel, "Turk on Video Free" just a few weeks ago.

The first results and the feedback from excited audiences is already very promising, and we are happy to bring our successful strategy to bring the best content from their home countries to audiences across Europe and around the world also to the quickly growing world of FAST channels.

With more channels to launch in 2024 we're looking forward to build on these early successes and to bring more content to our audiences and to generate additional income for our producers.

What are your biggest challenges?

We constantly work to get the best program for our audiences across Europe, which can be challenging, but is also very rewarding, knowing how much audiences enjoy to see movies from their home country.

In addition to our huge library of movies we are working to secure more TV series for our SVOD and FAST channels.

What is the most important factor for growing the European FAST market?

We think the most important factor is to make the channels available across all TV brands and all platforms. Audiences are spread over more platforms than in the past, and our goal is to reach our audiences wherever they are.

kinostar



Michael Roesch CEO Kinostar Filmverleih GmbH

Market Commentary Qwest TV





Describe your involvement with FAST

Qwest TV is Quincy Jones' video streaming network celebrating Black music and global sounds through premium documentaries, concerts, archive gems and exclusive interviews.

We have over 1,300 HD or 4K programs on offer, with a large catalog available through our own-brand subscription-video-on-demand service that is curated by top artists and music experts. Qwest TV also operates a 24/7 live channel through a range of local and global streaming providers, allowing subscribers to watch live and join our community!

We publish one live FAST Channel Qwest TV and make available more than 1,000 AVOD titles on the main AVOD platform in the EU, but also in the USA, Canada, CIS and AsiaPacific. We do manage our ad stack ourselves. In 2024 we will provide also live broadcast of concerts.

Where have you had success?

We have a wide audience in Spain, and recently had some successful partnerships with the operators there. Unfortunately the CPM (cost per mille) is not there yet in Spain (but growing, from 5 Euros in 2021 to 10 Euros currently).

In the UK and Germany, which are in our opinion the most advanced countries for the FAST market, our audience are smaller but our ad inventory is sold out for a CPM varying between 15 and 20 Euros. We see a trend where the EU's Eastern countries' (Poland and Hungary) have a rapidly growing audience but the advertising market is not yet strong enough though.

What are your biggest challenges?

Facing the operational cost to make available FAST channels and AVOD content when there is still uncertainty on the revenues and most of all the perennity of our distribution on the platforms. The publishers take all the risks and get the smallest benefit out of the FAST distribution.

What is the most important factor for growing the European FAST market?

Getting the platforms to advertise the usage of the FAST channels, sharing the risks between platforms, technical service providers and publishers.





Reza
Ackbaraly
CEO &
Co-Founder
Qwest TV

Market Commentary BBC Studios





About BBC Studios

BBC Studios is a commercial subsidiary of the BBC Group. The business is built on two operating areas: the global Content Studio, which produces, invests, and distributes content globally, and Channels and Streaming, with BBC branded channels, services, and joint ventures in the UK and internationally. Around 2,500 hours of award-winning British programmes are made by the business every year, with over 80% of total BBC Studios revenues coming from non-BBC customers including Discovery, Apple, and Netflix. BBC.com is BBC Studios' global digital news platform, offering up-to-the-minute international news, in-depth analysis and features.

Describe your involvement with FAST

BBC Studios operates 16+ feeds in EMEA across France, Italy, Germany, Spain, Nordics and Benelux.

We have 6 channel brands which are a combination of single IP channels: Doctor Who and Top Gear and multi-genre channels: BBC Drama, BBC Food, BBC Travel, and BBC History.

Where have you had success?

Our FAST channels showcase some of the best, well-known, and beloved BBC shows, serving them in the format and on the platforms which our viewers chose to consume content. They have been highly successful across all the EMEA markets where they have launched, regularly appearing in the top 5 best performing channels on our partner platforms. In some markets, regularly delivering 1M+ average monthly HOV.

We have also seen that viewers embrace niche content with open arms.

What are your biggest challenges?

Relative lack of clarity around local compliance for FAST products. We are vigilant and ensure we follow the best practice regulations in each market to provide our viewers with the best possible viewing experience.

What is the most important factor for growing the European FAST market?

High-quality premium content and close collaboration between FAST platforms and content owners to ensure a high level of satisfaction from both, viewers and advertisers. We are focused on working with both, our viewers and our business partners to deliver high-quality products, which are enjoyable to watch whilst providing premium inventory to monetize.

STUDIOS



Kasia
Jablonska
Director of
Digital and OnDemand EMEA
BBC Studios

Market Commentary OKAST





Describe your involvement with FAST

OKAST commenced in 2016 by introducing a white-label OTT streaming service. In 2018, we expanded our offerings to include AVOD support, and in 2019, we ventured into the development of linear channels. Subsequently, as the popularity of FAST grew substantially in the United States and poised to make its way into Europe, we initiated the design of our FAST services and established the FAST4EU consortium in collaboration with some of our key OTT customers.

Where have you had success?

Since the inception of FAST4EU, our primary emphasis has been on constructing the three foundational pillars of a comprehensive European ecosystem:

- Channel Building: We have developed a solution that enables the rapid design and construction of channels within a few weeks. Presently, we have successfully launched over 70 premium channels across all major platforms in Europe.
- Distribution: As certified partners with more than 40 platforms in Europe and the Americas, we have established robust partnerships that facilitate our channels in securing optimal business deals. This extensive network ensures widespread distribution and accessibility.
- Monetisation: we have introduced an ad network that spans across 18 countries in Europe. Additionally, we have implemented inventory share agreements with major platforms, fortifying our monetisation strategy and maximising revenue potential.

What are your biggest challenges?

Upon our inception in 2021, the European market was dominated by Americanbased technology providers and platforms predominantly featuring channels built with non-European content. Establishing ourselves as a European technology and channel provider encountered initial challenges. However, there has been a gradual acceptance, particularly as platforms increasingly prioritize sourcing local content. While there has been notable progress in gaining acceptance for our channels, some almost monopoly situations persist.

Monetisation stands as the next significant challenge: advertisers are only beginning to tap into this market, and performance outcomes vary widely. The lack of comprehensive data from platforms turns the monetisation process into, in some cases, a blind test, further complicating the endeavour for advertisers.

As the market continues to evolve towards a premium landscape, the scope for low-quality channels diminishes. Launching a channel in 2024 demands a heightened level of expertise, spanning from editorial craftsmanship to strategic advertisement break planning.

What is the most important factor for growing the European FAST market?

The already crowded landscape diminishes the initial 'unfair' advantage of FAST channels being free. It is crucial for platforms to prioritise discoverability and invest in personalisation tools. This strategic approach is necessary to amplify audience engagement and achieve the necessary volume for the ad market to fully embrace this evolving distribution model.

To maintain the quality of offerings and prevent the depletion of the production economy, implementing regulations becomes essential. These regulations would serve to balance the power dynamics between platforms and broadcasters, ensuring a fair and sustainable ecosystem for content creation.

OKAST



Cédric Monnier CEO Co-Founder OKAST

Founder and Coordinator FAST4EU

Market Commentary ZDF Studios





About ZDF Studios

ZDF Studios is a commercial subsidiary of ZDF, one of the largest TV broadcasters in Europe. Founded in 1993 and headquartered in Mainz, Germany, the ZDF Studios Group operates more than 30 direct and indirect subsidiaries and affiliates in Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom spanning TV production, distribution and services.

The parent company, ZDF Studios, is responsible for global programme distribution, realisation of international co-productions, acquisition of licences and merchandising of successful programme brands under its own name, for ZDF and third parties. ZDF Studios has the largest German-language programme inventory in the world and a constantly growing range of international productions, consisting of series and mini-series, television films, documentaries and children's programmes.

The companies of the ZDF Studios Group cover the entire value chain from the development of scripted and unscripted TV content to production, marketing and monetizing, including TV and streaming licences as well as merchandising and online rights.

The positioning of ZDF Studios as an integrated media company enables the development of innovative, outstanding and high-quality programmes and makes the Group an attractive workplace for German and international talent to flourish in a very inspiring and creative environment.

Describe your involvement with FAST

Back in 2019, we were the launch partner for PlutoTV Germany and since then we have launched 8 niche and single-IP channels on multiple platforms, licensed our content to many successful channels in the German-speaking and also English-speaking markets, and managed to expand our partnership with Samsung TV plus to launch more channels in several European territories.

Where have you had success?

It's been interesting to be part of the FAST market from the very beginning and to see the revenues develop. As FAST doesn't cannibalise any other distribution stream but increases the overall visibility of the brands, we have seen that single IP channels such as "Cash or Trash", "Terra X" and "Ice Pilots" have been our biggest successes without losing power over time.

What are your biggest challenges?

The regulations are still evolving, so we are sticking to our bread and butter licensing models for now. The same goes for the advertising market - there's a lot of potential for growth from a technological and advertising point of view, also in terms of personalisation. FAST is one of the most advantageous distribution streams for all viewers, content owners and advertisers, but its full potential has not yet been realised.

What is the most important factor for growing the European FAST market?

The more the merrier. As the FAST market fills up with quality content, there's more room for everyone to grow. There's no competition in the FAST world - the audience decides what niche it's interested in.





Linette
Zaulich
Director
Unscripted
ZDF Studios

Market Commentary Broadpeak





Describe your involvement with FAST

Broadpeak is powering and enhancing FAST services for content providers, aggregators, and operators. Together with OKAST, the two companies enable the "FAST 2.0" experience.

broadpeak.io, Broadpeak's video API SaaS platform, powers some of those unique capabilities. With regards to FAST, the platform brings 4 types of capabilities:

- Monetisation: the Dynamic Ad Insertion application makes inventory monetisation simple and efficient with SSAI
- Variants: this feature provides the capability to stream different pieces of content based on categories such as audience segments, platform, or geography. As an example, a single news channel provisioned with regional news variants will allow viewers to automatically get local news based on their location.
- Cost reduction: when content is already prepared, our Virtual Channel application can create FAST channels for a fraction of the cost typically associated with traditional playout technology.
- Personalisation: This capability enables the "Personal FAST channel" experience with content fully and dynamically tailored to viewers' tastes.

Where have you had success?

Our FAST clients have had great success with broadpeak.io platform. This includes an operator, a Tier one broadcaster in Southern Europe, a Tier one CTV publishing platform and a new media client offering a pop-up channel.

What are your biggest challenges?

The first big challenge is knowing how to leverage personalization best to improve monetisation. In the absence of first party data, we typically work with recommendation engines to overcome this challenge.

The second issue is diversity and fragmentation of content types and formats. Some old devices such as early CTV models have difficulty interpreting and decoding streams where ads have been inserted. This results in poor user experience. We have been working on our platform to make this experience more seamless.

Finally, there is scalability. The need to insert targeted ads is skyrocketing. It is now necessary to have scalable and elastic services.

What is the most important factor for growing the European FAST market?

Europe has several specificities when it comes to the FAST market.

Content must be localised before it can be streamed. The capability to perform such content adaptation in an automated way would be a significant added value.

Editorial resources are an essential cost factor. The capability to partially automate scheduling should help accelerate the growth of FAST in Europe.

We are anticipating the increase of what we call PFAST (Premium Fast Channels), powered by strong brands in the broadcast world.

Nevertheless, this comes with specific requirements such as blackout policies for live sports, content protection, regulatory compliance and low latency.

Finally, we believe a market shift to PAST (Personalised FAST) is coming soon. Viewers' expectations have snowballed lately, and they want experiences like what





Mathias Guille
Vice President
Cloud Platform
Broadpeak

Market Commentary RTL AdAlliance





About AdAlliance

The media sales house RTL AdAlliance, a subsidiary of RTL Group, unites premium content publishers under one roof for international brands to connect with European audiences. Working with RTL AdAlliance is working with a single contact point. We give the opportunity to execute multi-market campaigns from one platform. We also empower media owners to make better use of their video content with smarter monetisation strategies, advanced Adtech solutions, and media sales experts.

Describe your involvement with FAST

When looking at the FAST ecosystem and its players, RTL AdAlliance plays a role as an intermediary between platforms and advertisers and agencies to simplify the buying process and provide consolidation and scale. We help platforms monetise inventory by selling their available ad breaks to advertisers and agencies. This means we are an international sales house specialising in video inventory for the big screen. Our focus is Europe, which makes us the natural choice when monetising inventory in Europe.

We make a point that our expertise is not simply tech-focused, it derives first and foremost from humans. Our 250 media sales experts understand the importance of direct relationships with brands and agencies and can offer expertise in local markets. They cater both to the international demand from brands and the local requests of the agencies. Seeing that we are specialists for the big screen and are only working with professional and quality content publishers, we are the natural choice for FAST.

Where have you had success?

Our greatest success in FAST are our strategic partnerships with the major players in the field which have been instrumental in growing the European market. It is our accomplishment to help these platforms monetise their channels both internationally through our sales team and locally thanks to national sales teams in Italy and the Nordics, as well as other national sales champions like Ad Alliance in Germany.

This is possible as we include their FAST offer within our Total Video portfolio and broadcast content.

What are your biggest challenges?

- 1. The European offer of FAST is growing, though it is still in its initial stages. Therefore, the FAST platforms are facing the challenge of achieving scale in this fragmented landscape. The inventory has not yet reached a size that is sellable on its own. Thus, we bundle the FAST offers together with broadcaster content to create scalable advertising products like our new Big Screen Collection.
- 2. The second challenge is the content. There is a need to educate advertisers and agencies on the quality of FAST platforms' content. Even though we can see that the inventory and its quality is growing rapidly, there is still some hesitation.
- 3. The third challenge I would like to mention is the hesitation around media quality. This is an operational challenge, as it needs to be made sure that media quality standards apply to FAST, such as ad fraud prevention, data protection, ad verification, and content recognition. To counteract this, we have a rigorous media quality process where we vet every channel and content owner before onboarding.

What is the most important factor for growing the European FAST market?

European markets are widely reliant on their local content. We have seen broadcasters invest €16B in original European content and streamers up to €5B. It is indispensable for FAST channels to propose these locally relevant programs, as these will ensure their success — especially in this fragmented European market. The Broadcasters will play a key role in boosting the growth of FAST in the future. Now, however, we expect to see broadcasters and content owners to switch focus and to start distributing these channels on external FAST platforms.









Stephen Byrne
VP Partnership
Development
RTL AdAlliance

Market Commentary Titan OS





About Titan OS

Titan OS is the new independent European operating system for smart TVs. We are rethinking TV to change how people discover content and how brands connect with audiences. Our aim is to foster collaborations across the entire TV ecosystem to grow the business together with TV manufacturers, retailers, media agencies, content partners, publishers, and brands.

For manufacturers without their own OS (40% of the European market), we propose a win-win business model to grow the business together, sharing ongoing revenue, customer ownership and UX customisation.

For content partners, we provide additional distribution, leveraging data insights to aid content discovery and create more valuable and relevant advertising for viewers.

For advertisers, we help to go beyond traditional TV and impact hard-to-reach streaming audiences. We enable them to combine impactful, brand-safe, premium TV advertising with the targeting and measurement capabilities of digital.

Describe your involvement with FAST

We see FAST as the future of linear TV and core to our offering. We are making available 100s of premium, localised free channels with our operating system across Europe.

FAST is a "lean back" viewing experience. Users don't want to spend hours searching for what to watch. Therefore, it's key that the channels are very well integrated into the OS and users can easily access with the click of a button. When they do access it's important that the experience is personalised, and the channels we show are relevant to them and their interests.

Where have you had success?

Partners have responded very well to our collaborative, win-win approach. We have established strategic partnerships with TP Vision, for Philips and AOC Linux TVs and Curry's to power their own brand JVC providing an extensive distribution base of millions of devices in Europe and LATAM.

As a result of our scale, we have closed agreements with 100s of premium FAST channels that are eager to increase their viewership and revenues.

Another key success for us has been our close relationships with local European advertising agencies who are keen to advertise to hard-to-reach streaming audiences and our data partnerships which allow us to serve more relevant advertising to our customers and generate higher CPMs for our content partners.

What are your biggest challenges?

We operate in a market dominated by large technology companies from the US or Asia. But we see a great opportunity as a European-led team that understands our market better than anyone else and that proposes a more collaborative approach for our partners.

What is the most important factor for growing the European FAST market?

Making content discovery easier for customers through personalisation, deep integration of channels into the TV OS, and one-click access via the remote control. Localising the content proposition to offer culturally relevant content that appeals to local audiences.

TITANOS



Tim EdwardsCOO
Titan OS

The Future



Recently watched



Fantasy Football Showtime Live!

IP-999 Matthew Berry's Fantasy Life



LG Pres

The Future



The rise of FAST

FAST has been on a rapid rise with 2022 and 2023 significant periods for the development of both AVOD and FAST markets. The interaction of stakeholders with content owners has changed significantly over this period - as it always has done historically when new sectors have emerged for content owners to engage with. Early caution from content owners has largely been replaced by active interest and actual enterprise. Historically it has evolved massively, with early efforts limited to the specialists and innovators who pulled the trigger and now the market is more mature with traditional players and big media involved.

The key strategic moment for FAST was undoubtedly when the first corporate acquisitions in the sector were made in the US. First there was the ViacomCBS acquisition of Pluto in January 2019 for \$340 million. Then in February 2020 NBC Comcast bought Xumo and in March Fox Corporation acquired Tubi for \$440 million. Since then in both the US and Europe there has been a steady growth in not just the volume of companies stepping into the FAST market but the number of traditional media players and large local media companies. As the market has progressed we have clearly entered a new stage of development.

FAST 2.0

We are entering a new phase of development characterised by greater quality and premium brands. At the very start the channel offer was characterised by significant volumes of cheap and low quality channels, with slow and steady growth coming from significant brands and clear propositions. This is stepping up as we see bigger brands and more premium content from leading media companies enter the market.

Single IP channels have dominated discussion, offering a novel approach to linear channel propositions and providing consumers with a clear and simple proposition that appears to have resonated with audiences. But they are not the only channels gaining traction, with many genres and types of channel finding audiences and movies increasingly present. It remains to be seen how programming will evolve but there will be a role for all channels. The FAST ecosystem has its challenges though, with the market for smaller more diverse channels undoubtedly there but not helped by the influx of major media companies and Platforms that have considerable leverage in terms of channel prominence (though control of distribution) and data insights.

The Future





Crowded market for channels

As the FAST channel offer becomes an increasingly crowded area, finding ways to stand out will be key. Local European players face the competitive challenge from not just a significant volume of channels but from the types of channel emerging. Across the EU5 there are almost 1,200 unique FAST channels on offer from 243 different channel owners.

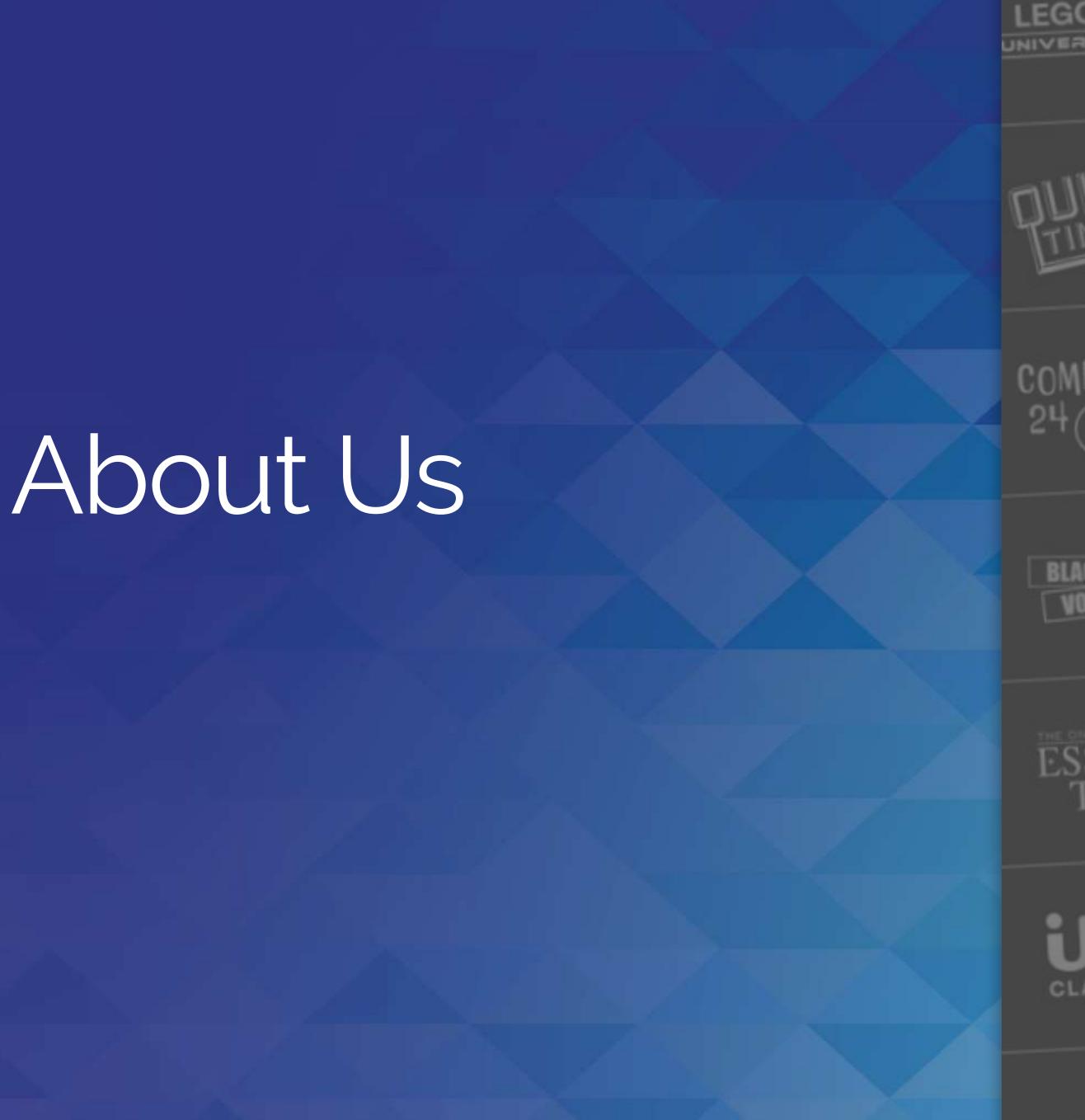
With major global content owners moving in with premium content and brands and the increasing number of O&O channels from service providers (e.g. Samsung, Rakuten and Pluto) the crowded marketplace becomes even more challenging. Service providers are likely to gain strength and we will undoubtedly see the Platform role and distribution deals evolve, with developments in regulation likely to play a role as the current imbalance.

Market	No. Of Unique FAST Channels	No. Of FAST Channel
France	417	170
Italy	315	152
Germany	485	169
Spain	390	153
UK	643	193
EU5	1179	243

Data deficit

Discussing the rise of FAST with stakeholders across the market leads to one very consistent theme, the lack of transparency with data. The FAST market is not the only market to face this challenge, with SVOD providers consistently facing calls to improve data sharing and only in December 2023 (after 16 years of streaming) have Netflix shared data on any significant level. The difference with FAST however is key, there is a direct line between revenue earned and usage.

As there are ongoing improvements in quality and more premium content is made available through FAST the calls for better data will grow. The consumer experience, content monetisation and the overall health of the FAST market will benefit from more insight being in the hands of channel providers. Controlling your advertising inventory is one way to help, allowing channels more leverage in the advertising market as they look to optimise Ad loads and CPMs, but the entire FAST value chain will ultimately benefit from more data sharing as the business grows.







A French established white-label modular cloud-based modern OTT and FAST solution to distribute and monetise audio, video and live content on all major platforms in Europe and beyond.

kinostar

German company specialised in the distribution of Hollywood films, German, Turkish, and Polish films, as well as live transmissions into theatres, and all major platforms, including Apple TV, Google, and Amazon.



French broadcaster, distributing in 98 countries its channels (Museum TV, myZen TV, Melody TV) and their FAST versions to all major broadcasters and platforms.

3VISION

3Vision is a UK-based global content and TV consultancy specialising in content acquisition, strategy, research and business development in the TV industry.





EU-Funded Consortium

Aims to accelerate the development of FAST in Europe and provide a technological and content approach tailored to the European market with the ability to scale internationally.

Co-funding, distributing and monetising channels for EU content providers.

Further Reading

→ The European Media Industry Outlook

→ FAST: Which Channels Travel the Most?

→ The Atomic Age Of FAST

→ FAST Forward, Industry Handbook

→ How to be successful in FAST