

AMBITIOUS TRANSFORMATION

On any given day, more than half the world's population sees news from **The Associated Press**. As senior vice president, **Daisy Veerasingham** is AP's business leader for Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Currently, she is overseeing a multi-million digital video transformation for AP's video news business, which is based in London. It is, she says, an ambitious project but absolutely necessary



If you'd asked me just five years ago where I would be watching the news, I would have said, "with my feet up, in front of the television." But today, everyone's talking about the move from big screen to small screen, about the multi-screen world, about watching video news online, on mobile phones, on tablets.

How does the Associated Press, long the world's news agency for breaking international news, satisfy these ever-changing market demands while also anticipating those to come? At AP, we're embarking on a video business transformation that we believe will provide the ability to pivot rapidly to meet the needs of all customers – no matter the size of the screen. The initiative, announced in November, will expand our global video coverage while upgrading our newsgathering infrastructure by providing still and video images in high definition for both broadcast and digital markets. We aim to do so in time for the London Olympics and what is shaping up to be a contentious but fascinating race in the U.S. Presidential Elections.

Ambitious? Yes. Necessary? Absolutely.

Think about the information driven world we live in now. For the consumer, it's all about choice: getting your information when, where and how you want it. So,

“It's imperative we give our customers choices about how they receive content”

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then, it must also be for our customers. As well as getting the strong content AP is famous for, it's imperative we give our customers choices about how they receive it.

I'm convinced that this year will be the tipping point when a majority of international TV news markets will want pictures in high definition. AP's initiative will give both the traditional broadcast market and digital platforms a wide array of options about how they receive our video. We've already heard from many customers excited about getting their AP content in high definition.

A key first step is equipping our video journalists in the field with solid-state cameras, many with cellular-enabled backpacks that allow them to file video directly to AP's main video production centres from the field, increasing speed to our customers. In parallel, we will upgrade all parts of our video infrastructure to support HD, starting with the master control room and video production system in London. The work builds on the success of APTN Direct, the first live news agency video service, which AP introduced in 2004. And that work builds on a long line of technological innovation throughout AP history, including pioneering the use of satellites to deliver news and creating the first all-digital photo network.

For now, the broadcast market

remains the critical one for video news. It makes up the bulk of our customer demand, and is expected to continue to grow at healthy rates for the foreseeable future. But online and mobile markets will offer all content providers increasing opportunity as well. And we need to be prepared to offer both broadcast and online content raw, edited or packaged. That means a digital end-to-end solution like the one AP is undertaking.

Ultimately, however, it always comes down to content. With the proliferation of so many screens and so many ways to receive information, it is more important now than ever that consumers receive news that is relevant to them and that they can trust. AP has long been the definitive source for authoritative breaking news. We are, for example, the only Western news organization with a permanent video operation in North Korea, which has led to a series of global scoops.

With video playing an increasingly important role, we will be adapting our coverage to areas of higher demand, moving journalists to where customers need coverage. No matter whether the end consumer gets their news on an iPad, smartphone, television or newspaper web site, customers need to know that the content they are providing is trustworthy. As we say at AP, "Get it first, but get it right." ■