

**For Release 9:01 p.m. PDT  
April 15, 2007**

**Microsoft Introduces Interactive Media Manager to Simplify Digital Content Life Cycle by Connecting People, Processes and Rich Content**

*Solution combines the collaborative features of a portal solution, the streamlining features of a workflow engine and the rich media capabilities of an editing tool.*

**LAS VEGAS — April 15, 2007** — At the 2007 National Association of Broadcasters conference (NAB2007), Microsoft Corp. today introduced Microsoft® Interactive Media Manager, a next-generation digital content management solution that combines digital workflows and media application integration with a collaborative front-end environment. The solution, an extension of Microsoft Office SharePoint® Server 2007, is designed specifically for the media and entertainment industry, including film and post-production studios, broadcasters, game developers, publishers, and advertising and marketing agencies.

“As the digital era continues to alter the industry, we’re seeing the walls between previously disparate functions beginning to crumble as the strengths of IT are increasingly relevant and needed in the creative side of the house,” said Gabriele Di Piazza, managing director for Media & Entertainment in the Communications Sector at Microsoft. “Interactive Media Manager is a solution that spans those two formerly distinct worlds, automating the gaps that exist in the workflow process to create a fluid handoff between tasks and individuals.”

Interactive Media Manager is a server-based product that provides a Web-based interface for accessing and interacting with media files. The solution provides powerful tools for quickly building complex workflows, monitoring the performance of those workflows and facilitating the reviews and approvals in the workflow process by pushing tasks and forms directly to the

recipient's Microsoft Office Outlook® inbox or to an RSS feed. Interactive Media Manager supports Internet Explorer®, Firefox and Safari on Windows® as well as Mac OS.

The collective components that comprise Interactive Media Manager help media and entertainment organizations bridge the gaps in process that exist between content production and business departments, eliminate unnecessary manual workflow, and provide management with real-time insight into production details. Interactive Media Manager also addresses the emerging space of digital content aggregation and management, enabling service providers to simplify the acquisition, management, protection and publishing of digital content in services such as Internet protocol television (IPTV), video on demand and broadband portals.

Interactive Media Manager includes components of existing Microsoft solutions such as Windows Workflow Foundation, Windows Communication Foundation, InfoPath® XML forms and the newly announced Microsoft Silverlight™, previously called Windows Presentation Foundation Everywhere (WPF/E). Building on the capabilities of Office SharePoint Server 2007, Interactive Media Manager provides the following customizable Web parts that target specific processes within the content production life cycle:

- **Media Library** serves as a front end in which media content items in the digital asset management system are displayed as thumbnails.
- **Media Viewer** displays information such as annotations and time codes in Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers format and offers sophisticated, built-in playback controls.
- **Media Annotator** allows groups of people to collaborate on media assets through video annotations, digital inking and discussions.
- **Media Import** facilitates the upload of media files and automatically launches associated workflows, such as information-gathering processes.
- **Media Cart** provides an individualized area for storing media assets that people want to edit themselves or push out to appropriate editors.

## **Starz Entertainment Launches New Products “Almost Overnight”**

The edit bay at Starz Entertainment was getting crowded. Instead of shuttling tapes back and forth, many of the stakeholders involved in creating, editing, finalizing and approving trailers and promotional materials would gather in an edit bay that was starting to become cramped for viewing video footage. Apart from frustrating the editor, the process was losing efficiency and was threatening to add delays onto the process of airing new programming assets, such as a movie bundled with a Starz-branded and -produced trailer and promotional package.

“Microsoft has made our infrastructure about as simple as a complex environment can be,” said Stephen Smith, manager for Automation & Systems Integration at Starz Entertainment. “It’s enabled us to speed up operationally the time it takes to launch new on-air graphics and interstitial packages to almost overnight. Microsoft provides us with 90 percent of what we need out of the box so we can focus on improving the quality of the products we deliver and not on writing code.”

## **SyncCast Streamlines Its Workflow Process**

SyncCast is utilizing Interactive Media Manager in the processing and deployment of movies, television shows and trailers from Warner Bros., Lions Gate Entertainment, Paramount Pictures and MTV Networks Co. into the Xbox LIVE<sup>®</sup> Marketplace. The biggest obstacle the company faced in processing more than 1,500 hours of content was the downtime between steps in the workflow process.

“SyncCast has utilized Microsoft Interactive Media Manager to link all our tools together into one operation, removing much of the human intervention that was required in between steps in the workflow process,” said Ezra Davidson, executive vice president of SyncCast. “We can now process 35 percent more content with 20 percent less staff. Moreover, it helps decrease

complexity in our workflow and allows us to spend more time improving the quality of the content we produce for our clients.”

### **Ascent Media Group Simplifies Collaboration and Information Sharing**

With an industry-leading list of clients involved in creating and producing world-class commercials, Ascent Media Group utilizes a platform that connects stakeholders across geographical and organizational boundaries. Interactive Media Manager integrates with Ascent’s current file-based services to provide a variety of in-production media capabilities for advertisers, agencies and media channels to globally access, transform and distribute finished images and print assets.

“Interactive Media Manager provides the tools we need to improve information sharing and collaboration for our geographically diverse clients,” said Jose Royo, CTO of Ascent Media Group. “With this solution, we will be able to ingest and archive thousands of photos and still images, allowing our customers to review and collaborate on their work immediately. While this can create efficiencies, such as eliminating the need to ship and store hard drives, more importantly it allows our customers to focus on what’s most important — creating the best end product possible.”

### **McCann Worldgroup Manages Content and Collaboration**

As one of the largest marketing communications companies in the world, McCann Worldgroup needs to manage multiple campaigns in parallel for its clients. Within these campaigns, individual projects incorporate a variety of activities, including creative development and production, content retrieval and management, and client review and approval — and across all these there is the need for collaboration within a team and between organizations. SharePoint

2007 provides an infrastructure on which McCann and its agencies are able to collaborate and share.

Microsoft Interactive Media Manager provides a suite of tools that enhance the environment through which McCann looks to combine capabilities such as content management and search, content production and collaboration. The solution enables users to manage all these functions from a single Web-based dashboard with contextual security, role-based access and extranet sharing capabilities. Importantly, Interactive Media Manager integrates with other applications in the Microsoft Office suite, providing a familiar, easy-to-use interface for McCann staff.

“Our over five-year collaboration with Microsoft on SharePoint and more recently on Interactive Media Manager continues to deliver results for both McCann and Microsoft,” said Greg Smith, global chief information officer for McCann Worldgroup. “We are extremely pleased with the capabilities Microsoft provides and for the willingness to use us to help drive strategic direction for its products and services.”

### **About the Interactive Media Manager Ecosystem**

Interactive Media Manager provides for out-of-the-box integration with leading media-industry applications, including systems for digital asset management, digital rights management, transcoding, image transformation, and secure, reliable file distribution. Partners that have demonstrated integration with Interactive Media Manager include Anystream Inc., Aspera, Equilibrium, K2.net, Open Text’s Artesia Digital Media Group, Quantum Corp., **Sanbolic Inc.** and Telestream Inc. In addition to Microsoft Consulting Services (MCS), systems integration partners for Interactive Media Manager include Avanade and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS).

The solution is now commercially available.

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq “MSFT”) is the worldwide leader in software, services and solutions that help people and businesses realize their full potential.

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