

NEWSLETTER 2021 ISSUE 2

SATELLITE VIDEO MARKET AND TRENDS

**Interview with Yau Chyong Lim,
Chief Operating Officer, MEASAT**



What are your thoughts on the Broadcast industry's gradual movement from satellite to IP?

Over the last 25 years that MEASAT has served broadcasting needs across Malaysia and the Asia-Pacific region, we have seen the industry go through many transitions, from analog (PAL / NTSC) to digital compression technologies (MPEG-2 / MPEG-4 / HEVC); from Standard Definition to High Definition; and now 4K / Ultra High Definition (“UHD”). We believe that the only way to respond to such trends is to embrace them and make the most of it. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic began, broadcasters with a concentrated affiliate base were moving to fiber and internet-based delivery. The last couple of years have accelerated this process and as a company, we have ensured that we provide our customers with all the tools they need. Content delivery could be over the Internet, fibre or satellite either directly or via our strategic partners. MEASAT as well, leverages fiber and internet-based delivery to reduce the cost of content contribution to the teleport for satellite distribution, which gives us an edge over traditional means of fibre delivery or on-site playout. However, fiber and / or internet-based delivery for content distribution is not suited for markets where the last-mile Internet infrastructure is yet to mature. Therefore, satellite distribution is still vital for most emerging markets. Customers may choose to deploy different technical solutions, but they still value our end-to-end services when delivering content across Asia Pacific.



CONNECTme NOW site in Sarawak (photo: MEASAT)

Why has the 4K/UHD ecosystem taken so long to develop, and when will it become mainstream?

4K/UHD is already mainstream, and our customers are delivering HDR on top of it, so the answer to the question of when is now! Today, MEASAT has one of the largest 4K/UHD video neighbourhoods in the region. We continue to be one of the hotspots for anyone looking to foray into the Asian market with a 4K/UHD offering. Many broadcasters prefer their channel to be played out directly at affiliate locations. As the market matures and this number increases, delivering 4K/UHD via satellite becomes increasingly attractive.

Yes, the ecosystem has taken longer than expected to develop as there are many factors, including the global chip shortage, availability of receivers and consumers upgrading their television sets and set-top-boxes to 4K/UHD. However, our Direct-to-Home (“DTH”) partners have already deployed the necessary infrastructure for the delivery of 4K/UHD content. As live sports revive post Covid pandemic, we foresee every major event will be broadcasting in 4K/UHD. Over-the-top (OTT) technologies have also accelerated consumer TV upgrades. Soon the sports genre will have a spillover effect on upgrading workflows across the board.



MEASAT Teleport & Broadcast Centre (photo: MEASAT)

Who do you think will win the battle between OTT and Linear TV?

Firstly, I would not term the growth in customer choice of OTT and Linear TV as a battle. The comparison is not apple-to-apple. Linear TV has always been a household purchase with individual preferences. In contrast, OTT relies on personal preferences, and household features are add-ons. Hence, millions of subscribers to an OTT platform cannot be compared to DTH households. While most OTT content was developed with a “mobile-first” philosophy, Linear TV content is driven by the living room television. Therefore, what works for a niche OTT web series may not scale to a TV channel broadcast across multiple countries. From a connected (SMART) TV point of view where Linear and OTT content is consumed; the industry is evolving towards co-existence. PayTV providers have skinnier and cost-effective a-la-carte subscription bundles where customers can kick back and flip channels without committing to heavy viewing. Whereas OTT leans more towards popular binge-worthy series and telco bundles. Lastly, most viewers see OTT as an app on their mobile to complement their viewing experience. It does not replace watching a live football match on their 65” 4K SMART TV. Mature markets may be witnessing some cord-cutting, however, Asian audience demographics suggest that Linear TV will continue to thrive with older viewers. Linear offers better group viewing, even if young individuals’ binge on OTT.



MEASAT-3d (photo courtesy of Airbus)

What do broadcast customers continue to look for from satellite operators like yourself?

Broadcast customers always demand high availability. While unforeseen events may occur, they expect that restoration is prompt, and resiliency is built into the systems. MEASAT's 91.5° East neighbourhood hosts major broadcasters, both Asian and global. This requires redundancy across the entire chain and ensuring quality-of-service even in the most challenging scenarios. Apart from the unique high degree redundancy of multiple co-located satellites at the 91.5°E orbital slot, we have also invested heavily on ground systems which includes automatic Antenna Back-up Systems (ABUS) at our Teleport in Cyberjaya; well-established site diversity uplink infrastructure in Malaysia; as well as, with our partners in Singapore to ensure we provide the highest service levels to our broadcast customers.

In addition, our country-focused high-powered Ku-band transponders enables our DTH customer in South Asia and South East Asia to provide excellent service level despite high rainfall.

Ultimately, broadcasters demand a satellite operator who can stand behind them through the ups and downs of technological influences, economic trends and changing subscriber needs. MEASAT has provided this stability for more than quarter of a century and that reaffirms MEASAT as the preferred satellite platform, be it in Malaysia or across Asia-Pacific.



Network Management Centre (photo: MEASAT)

How are satellite operators like yourself planning for the future of broadcast over satellite?

MEASAT's upcoming launch MEASAT-3d, is a hybrid satellite scheduled to launch in H1 2022. We have combined C-, Ku- and Ka-band payloads to serve a variety of customers. MEASAT-3d will both replace old capacity and build resiliency at our 91.5° East hotspot. The satellite will complement MEASAT-3a and MEASAT-3b satellites co-located at the same orbital slot and boost our broadcast infrastructure while enhancing broadband capabilities. It will carry C-band transponders for distribution across Asia, Australia, India, Middle East Africa and Southern Europe. This will complement MEASAT-3a satellite at the same orbital slot and boost our broadcast infrastructure. The Ku-band payload is for local DTH services to ensure growth and continuity. The Ka-band capacity will be the largest High Throughput payload exclusively for Malaysia, with more than 30 Gbps of capacity for broadband connectivity and services. We have pioneered satellite broadband in Malaysia with our B2C brand CONNECTme. MEASAT-3d will cement our position as the satellite broadband provider of choice for the country. In addition to video streaming, we have a suite of services in the works for our satellite broadband platform, including Internet-of-Things (IoT), cellular backhaul, telemedicine, etc. For us, the future of broadcast over satellite goes hand-in-hand with broadband, and MEASAT-3d will be the anchor of that vision.



Yau Chyong Lim is MEASAT's Chief Operating Officer. In this role, he oversees the management of the company's operations. Yau has more than 25 years in the satellite industry, with wide-ranging experience across multiple sectors including sales & marketing, business development and commercial operations. He holds an MBA in Finance from Keele University, Staffordshire, UK and a BSc in Microelectronics & Physics from Campbell University, North Carolina, USA.



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New Horizons

With capacity across five geostationary communication satellites reaching over 150 countries, MEASAT provides innovative, cutting-edge solutions in broadcast, telecommunications and satellite broadband.

Soon, the MEASAT fleet will be further strengthened with the addition of MEASAT-3d in 2022 which will provide in-orbit redundancy for MEASAT's fleet of satellites at 91.5°E, with the largest ever broadband capacity over Malaysia from a single satellite.

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MEASAT-3d artist's impression picture