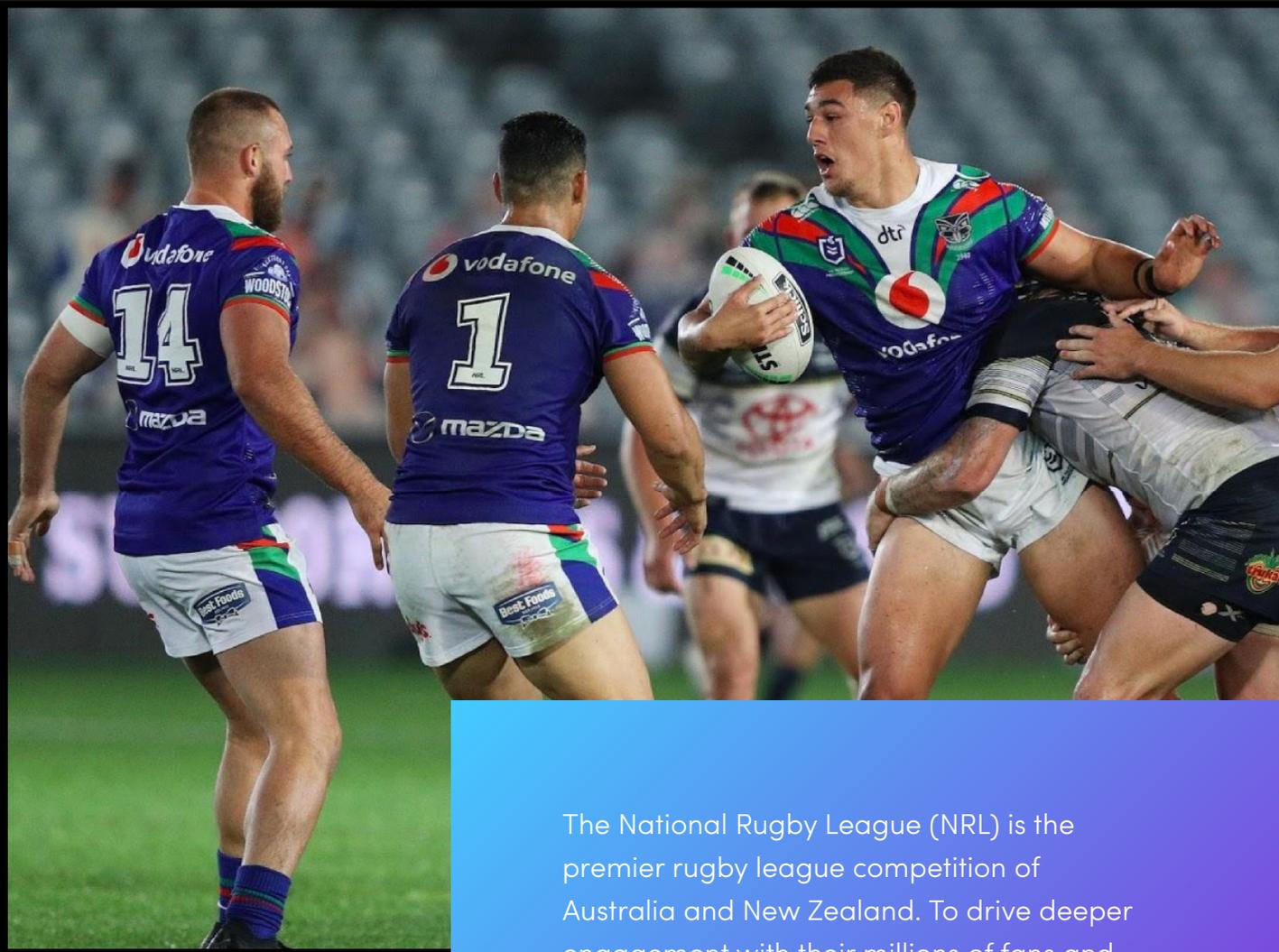# National Rugby League

Unlocking Fan Engagement by Tackling the OTT Workflow. The National Rugby League finds a winning team in Dalet and Bitmovin.

BITMOVIN

DALET

Rugged popularity:
NRL matches attract around
3 million viewers on TV alone

The National Rugby League (NRL) is the premier rugby league competition of Australia and New Zealand. To drive deeper engagement with their millions of fans and to win new subscribers from all around the world, the NRL sought to optimize its OTT strategy. By leveraging a new partnership between Dalet and Bitmovin, NRL's staff was able to build ad-hoc workflows that processed, encoded, published, and distributed more rich content faster across 30+ websites, apps and streaming platforms for immediate fan engagement.

Rugby League is Australia's most entertaining and popular sport. At its heart, Rugby League is a community-based sport played by hundreds of thousands right across Australia, especially in country areas. The National Rugby League runs the world's premier Rugby League competition comprising of 16 teams (15 from Australia and one from New Zealand). The NRL Telstra Premiership attracts about three million people to its matches each year with more than 100 million viewers on television. The NRL has more Facebook fans than any other sport in the country. Find out more on: www.nrl.com

The Challenges of Keeping Up with the Game

NRL leveraged a new partnership between Dalet and Bitmovin to overhaul their OTT strategy and workflows. Their goal: to elevate the viewer experience across its delivery network by instantly finding and serving up the highest quality video and imagery from its large inventory of content all while optimizing efficiency and reducing operational costs. Key to the initial phase powered by Dalet was:

- Establishing a common workflow for all content sources, including broadcasters, clubs, and syndicators including telecommunication provider Telstra, a major sponsor of the NRL.

- Republishing a massive back catalog of content—some of it nearly 120 years old.

- Eliminating content duplication and competing metadata from different sources for stronger permissions management and visibility, and to create a single truth for metadata and analytics.

- Increasing automation to put more of the lean NRL digital team's focus on producing content.

Bitmovin was then brought in to further streamline NRL's OTT workflows by enabling parallel processing for greater workflow efficiency--all while delivering the highest quality video with the lowest latency and fastest startup time across all of the sites, apps and devices in NRL's network at significant bandwidth savings. With Bitmovin managing OTT workflow complexity, NRL could adopt a more cost-efficient infrastructure while minimizing risk and accelerating the delivery of visually stunning and relevant content.

Ultimately, the goal was to bring more immediacy to fan engagement with quicker go-live. The faster the NRL could process, encode and publish high quality content, the faster they could engage in more compelling ways. Their mantra? Search it, find it, watch it.

Bitmovin and Dalet:
A Tale of Two Teams

Working with video content from varying sources meant every workflow, metadata layer and media processing step added time and complexity hurdles in the path between the NRL and its audience.

By combining the advanced media logistics of Dalet's Ooyala Flex Media Platform with Bitmovin Encoding API in a cloud environment, the league could achieve the flexibility and automation they needed to overcome their inefficiencies and dramatically accelerate their online delivery workflows. Leveraging open B2B and B2C APIs from the Ooyala Flex Media Platform and Bitmovin's high-speed encoding, player and analytics offerings, the integration delivered the flexibility and agility NRL needed to support their OTT workflow strategy.

Now, the NRL can immediately engage fans wherever they are by quickly and cost-effectively tapping into their entire inventory of rich content to bring the highest quality, near-live video to their viewers across all of NRL's sites and apps.

Integrating Bitmovin with the Ooyala Flex Media Platform workflow is achieved through a Bitmovin API wrapper, which sits as an action element within the workflow where it can leverage assets' metadata, flow decisioning and approval processes already built into the Ooyala Flex Media Platform:

At last, Bitmovin's support and the way the two engineering teams worked together to develop and integrate features was another decisive factor in favor of Bitmovin.
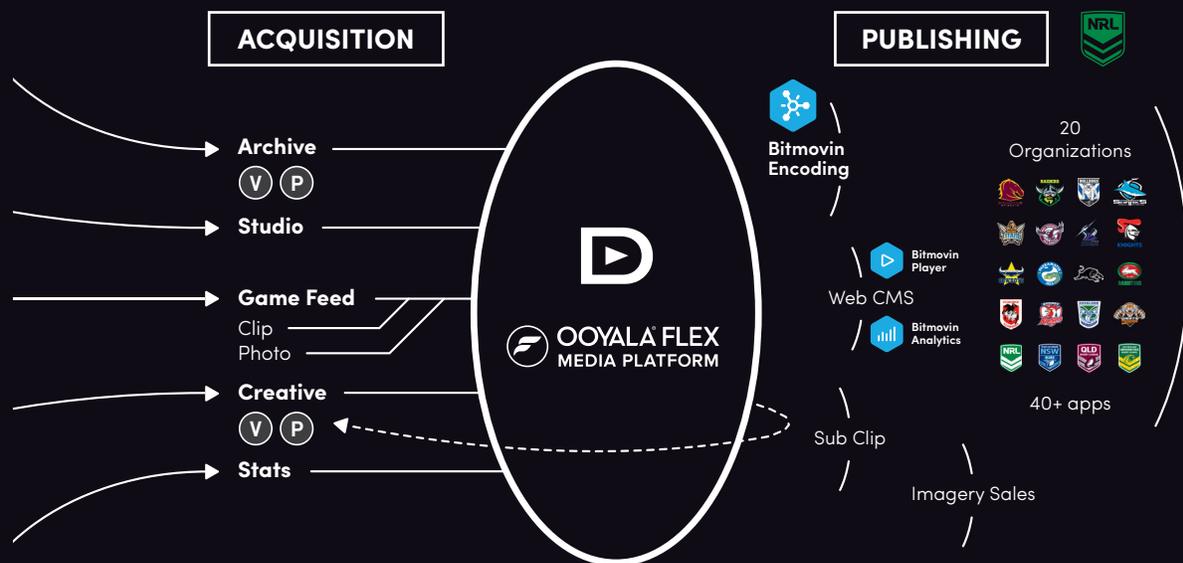
A Big Win for the NRL and Its Fans

With Dalet and Bitmovin, the NRL reports being able to easily expand existing offerings into new markets and geographies at scale, engage fans through multiple services such as VOD, apps and subscriptions, and augment revenue opportunities thanks to better visibility across their production and distribution operations.

When compared to the NRL's previous system, the encoded assets have a perceivably improved visual quality for a better viewer experience.

Benefits of the Dalet and Bitmovin Integration

- **Accelerated Delivery:** The time it takes assets, including live clips, to be processed, encoded and published on the website was reduced by as much as half while the ability to parallel encode assets increased from one to 20+. The automation, speed and cost efficiency delivered by Dalet and Bitmovin enabled a reduced NRL digital team to continue operating during the COVID-19 quarantine.

- **Redefined Viewer Experience:** The NRL can stream stunning high quality video at lower bitrates on every device that plays perfectly every time.

- **Greater Flexibility:** A single asset can take multiple paths based on metadata, syndicator or originator for custom bugging and publishing. This allows a common workflow to be used for all content sources and syndicators.

- **Timely and Unified Engagement:** The NRL can deliver compelling teasers with consistent brand identity and quality across all outlets.

- **Bigger Audiences and Revenues:** The increased speed-to-market and faster fan engagement (especially publishing live event highlights on social media) helped the NRL reach 100M viewers and become #1 of all Australian sports on Facebook.

- **Reduced Cost:** Efficiencies obtained by streamlining processes and bandwidth savings allowed the project to come in on budget.

- **Increased Fan Engagement:** The NRL was able to significantly increase its subscriber base by delivering more content to more outlets in less time, allowing for fast expansion to new sites, apps and devices.

- **Richer Inventory for Better Stories:** The NRL can present more content from the same catalogue, including enriched promos, highlights, and collections.
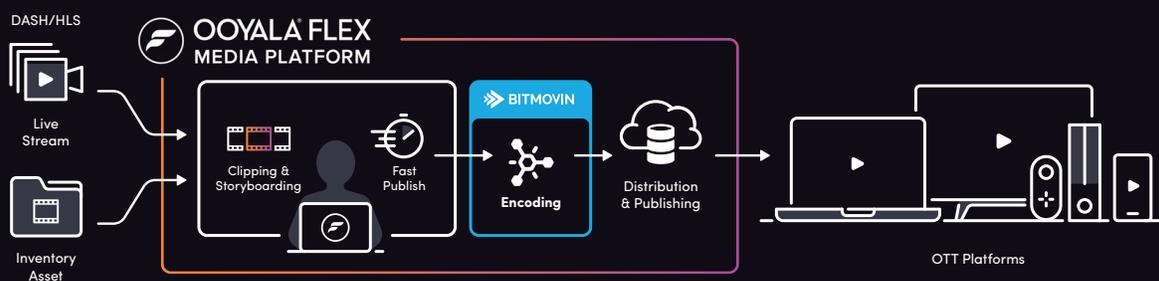
The common workflow that can be used for all content sources and syndicators.

> " When working with video content from varying sources that needs to be published online (live, near-live or on-demand content), every workflow, metadata layer and media processing step adds time and complexity getting content to the audience. By combining the Ooyala Flex Media Platform and the Bitmovin solutions we have been able to reduce complexity and issues, optimising inefficient steps while successfully accelerating our online delivery workflows. "

Quanah McBride
Head of Digital Media Operations
The National Rugby League

About Bitmovin

Bitmovin is a leading provider of video infrastructure for online media companies around the world. The company has been at the forefront of all major developments in online video – from building the world's first commercial adaptive streaming player to deploying first software-defined encoding service that runs on any cloud provider or in a data centre. Bitmovin works with media companies across the globe to build innovative video products.

Bitmovin has been a first mover in almost every significant development in online video, including building and deploying the world's first commercial adaptive streaming (MPEG-DASH/HLS) HTML5 Player. Bitmovin customers collectively deliver several billion videos to consumers every day.

To find out more, please visit www.bitmovin.com

About Dalet Digital Media Systems

About Dalet Digital Media Systems
Dalet solutions and services enable media organizations to create, manage, and distribute content faster and more efficiently, fully maximizing the value of assets.
The integration of the Ooyala Flex Media Platform business has opened vast opportunities for Dalet customers to deploy successful strategies that better address their audiences with agile multi-platform content distribution in a wider range of markets, such as sports for teams and leagues, brands and corporate organizations, as well as Media and Entertainment companies looking to scale up their digital offerings.

Dalet® is a registered trademark of Dalet Digital Media Systems. All other products and trademarks mentioned herein belong to their respective owners.

For more information on Dalet, visit www.dalet.com

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