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StreamGuys Powers In-Store Broadcasts for Custom Channels

Cloud-based streaming architecture supports custom music services with dynamic ad insertions for businesses

BAYSIDE, CALIFORNIA, October 15, 2013 — Internet music service [Custom Channels](#) is helping retail businesses like Whole Foods Markets transform in-store environments with broadcast-quality audio programs, mixing music and dynamic advertising that deliver a branded, radio-like experience. The company is relying on robust, cloud-based streaming services from [StreamGuys](#) to support its customers.

Custom Channels brings a rare broadcast perspective to the growing business of in-store audio streaming. Its principal partners, including President/Co-Founder Dave Rahn, launched Custom Channels following years of experience working at and consulting for radio stations. Today, Rahn and his team leverage their professional production skills and broadcast programming knowledge to build custom in-store programs for retailers like Whole Foods Markets, for which they support two-thirds of their stores.

The company recently switched to StreamGuys for content delivery support, recognizing its broadcast expertise as well as its shared spirit of customization to meet client needs.

“We have always used an outside CDN because the specialized technical knowledge required to maintain servers, bandwidth and overall infrastructure is frankly beyond our area of expertise,” said Rahn. “The difference with StreamGuys is that they are not forcing us into one business model for streaming services. They instead provide us with the streaming services that are right for our model, and deliver the ongoing recommendations, support and troubleshooting we need. That helps us keep costs low and leaves us to focus on program content and customer relationships — which is what we do best.”

Custom Channels takes program content beyond music by incorporating dynamic ad insertions in the form of “mid-rolls,” which Rahn cites as a particularly strong tool to trigger ads and promos for in-store streaming models. StreamGuys incorporates third-party ad insertion software into its streaming architecture, targeting broadcasters and IP-based music services that wish to incorporate promotional content in the form of pre-rolls, mid-rolls and post-rolls — and potentially generate new revenue streams.

“The ad insertion software in the StreamGuys architecture allows us to manage content at the server side as opposed to just pushing messages to individual players and boxes,” said Rahn. “For example, we work with a large chain of dental offices, Comfort Dental, with offices all over the country. The mid-roll insertions allow us to take a single Comfort Dental radio channel and insert specialized ads for each region, or even down to the local office level. The messages don’t have to live in the origin stream; instead, we create a place in the stream and insert them on a very targeted basis. It’s a very efficient model, and makes for good use of IP delivery.”

Rahn’s broadcast experience also means a focus on audio quality. Custom Channels currently delivers most audio content using the AAC+ codec at bitrates ranging from 64 to 96 kb/s, and uses other high-quality codecs like Ogg Vorbis for specialty services such as ReMix, which allows customers to create their own custom mixes. Rahn will explore Ogg Opus moving forward, the new versatile, open-source audio codec for low-latency, high-quality audio streaming. StreamGuys is the first CDN to announce support for Ogg Opus audio streaming.

“We’re dealing with businesses, and we try to keep as light of a footprint as possible since there are other demands on their bandwidth and technical infrastructures,” said Rahn. “StreamGuys allows us to use various high-quality, bandwidth-friendly formats so we are comparable to FM quality and usually higher than satellite quality — a sweet spot that our clients can easily handle on their networks.”

Rahn also points to several restaurant brands as Custom Channels clients, including the 200-plus Which Wich sandwich shop chain; and the fast casual Mod Pizza chain based in the Seattle region. Another interesting client is Floyd’s Barbershop, which operates more than 70 barbershops around the country. Custom Channels produces a true “retail radio” station in this case, with full-blown professional production, deejays and live requests.

“We focus on music-conscious brands that essentially want custom radio stations, and many of these clients also stream their channels on their websites,” said Rahn. “Ultimately, StreamGuys offers an ideal service for in-store delivery, whether it’s conventional streaming of a radio station or a business that wants something a little more unique.”

More information on Custom Channels can be found at <http://www.customchannels.net>.

About StreamGuys, Inc.

In business since 2000, StreamGuys is a provider of audio and video streaming toolsets and services. The company has a reputation for outstanding customer service, a robust and reliable network, and competitive rates. More than 600 clients worldwide, across many industries, depend on their mission-critical service. Projects include serving as the technology backbone for live streaming/podcasting for top

public broadcasters such as New York Public Radio, WAMU Washington D.C., KQED San Francisco and WXPB Philadelphia; live video events for major auto racing circuits and the British Royal Wedding; audio streaming for government entities such as D.C. Court of Appeals, U.S. Army, and the National Science Foundation; mobile video content for Cisco Systems; and IPTV content for international broadcaster ABS-CBN.

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