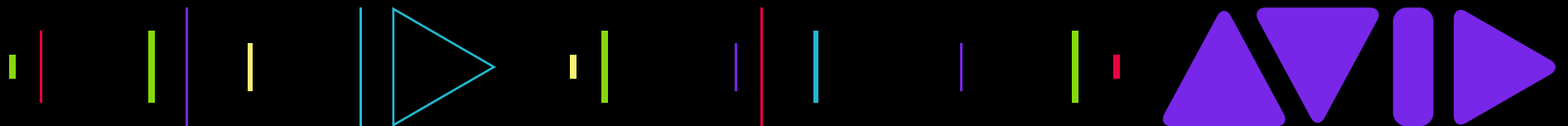
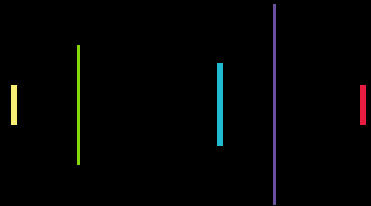




# HOW CONTENT FROM ANYWHERE IS CHANGING BROADCASTING





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# THE STORY OF TELEVISION NEWS

is one of innovation and transformation. A long line of successive technology advancements has helped newsrooms get the job done even as the job keeps changing. Workflows have to stay agile, ready to meet the evolving goals of news managers.

Most recently, these goals have centered on producing news content from anywhere. Leveraging technology advancements such as phones, news apps, video streaming platforms, and virtual private networks (VPNs), this concept aims to tear down geographic limitations—growing story counts and making stories more relevant to news consumers in the process.

The COVID-19 pandemic that gripped the world in the spring of 2020 accelerated one aspect of this strategy in particular: faced with social distancing mandates, many newsrooms instructed news staff to work from home. Some took the opportunity to direct reporters to stay in the field and work community or institutional beats, rarely returning to the station even as lockdowns eased.

This move ended up bringing more benefits than just protecting those who remained in the newsroom from the pandemic, however. Embedding journalists in the communities they're covering **promotes better, more empathetic stories**. It can also increase story counts, since reporters are saved a commute and can devote more time to reporting.

These benefits go hand in hand with story-centric workflows, another trend guiding the direction of modern newsrooms. As newsrooms generate more and better stories, they not only enhance their on-air product but also create opportunities to strengthen their **presence on social media** and their stations' websites, helping them stay competitive in today's digital news environment.

Many local TV newsrooms in the United States have followed this approach to content from anywhere, but the strategy is far from an America-only phenomenon. Broadcasters outside the US bet on similar strategies to remain relevant to news consumers and capitalize on more workflow efficiencies.

Today, it's  
so easy to  
get into the  
broadcast  
industry  
with a  
smartphone



They use a variety of technologies to enable this shift, including:

- **Wi-Fi connectivity, wireless mobile networks, and the internet**
- **Phones and media tablets equipped with 1080p HD and 4K cameras**
- **A library of media-related apps for nonlinear video editing, high-speed file transfers, and other common news production tasks**
- **VPNs that enable secure encrypted connectivity to newsroom workstations**
- **The cloud**

This eBook will examine the impact of decentralized production on modern broadcast news. Content from anywhere has implications for both the production models broadcasters use daily and future news workflows, and it invites new possibilities for the role of user-generated content. However, in order to be realized, this ongoing transition requires newsrooms to lean on the right technology.

# KEEPING UP WITH EVOLVING NEWS PRACTICES

Station management and TV news executives have been on a 20-year mission to find greater newsgathering efficiencies.

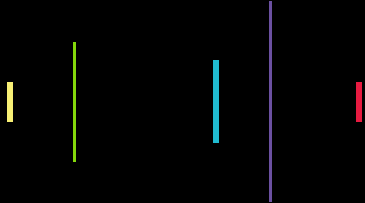
In that time, they've overseen a laundry list of technology and workflow updates. Where two- or three-person crews once went into the field to gather news, it's become the standard in many newsrooms for a single multimedia journalist (MMJ) to be responsible for not only reporting but also shooting video, micing, lighting, and editing.

Similarly, where newsrooms were once surrounded by craft editing suites, most news stories are now edited by reporters. Only a few craft editors may remain on staff to handle stories requiring more complex treatments. To a certain degree, the same is true for creating and adding **news graphics to stories**, although those efficiencies have largely been realized by centralizing graphics creation on a group-wide basis.

Savings have been far from the sole driver of these changes. Rather, many news managers have reallocated personnel and at least a portion of the savings to grow story count, an essential element in remaining competitive in today's changing news landscape. As news consumers turn online to get their news, executives have worked to bolster news organizations by helping journalists improve how their stories connect with audiences on the station's website, on the air, and via social media.

As part of this newsroom focus on connection, TV newsrooms are embedding reporters more deeply in the communities they work. Journalists get to spend more time connecting with the communities they cover, unearthing more relatable, in-depth coverage. Meanwhile, from a workflow perspective, **enabling mobile journalists in the field** relieves reporters of a daily commute to the newsroom for editorial meetings or to work on stories. They can use that time reporting, editing, and filing stories—from wherever they're assigned—for use on any distribution platform.

**Most news stories are now edited by reporters**



# BREAKING DOWN THE NUMBERS BEHIND CONTENT FROM ANYWHERE

News from anywhere as a strategy is carried by several economic drivers. Higher story counts and greater story relevancy are key ingredients in elevating the news leadership status of a station, which in turn translates to greater public trust, more viewers, higher ratings, and greater ad revenue for the station.

Another driver is the relative affordability of reporting from the field for extended stretches, especially when compared with even a few years ago. Rather than relying on expensive electronic newsgathering (ENG) vans to produce and transmit quick hits from the site of breaking news, embedded journalists have a variety of far less expensive tools at their disposal, including laptop computers with Wi-Fi connectivity, dedicated wireless IP routers and transmitters, and VPN connectivity to access software tools on their newsroom workstations and content stored on the station's media asset management (MAM) system.

More recently, even less expensive—and, in many ways, more powerful—tools have emerged to support this style of news production. Phones with built-in HD and 4K cameras and an extensive library of apps for live video streaming, nonlinear video editing, accelerated file transfer, direct-to-digital publishing, and news collaboration are outfitting embedded reporters with powerful newsgathering capabilities while dramatically reducing what it costs to report from the field.

For example, a fully equipped ENG vehicle that supports live remote field reporting might cost in excess of \$100,000. Regular vehicle maintenance, fuel, safety inspections, insurance, and licensing can add thousands more.

By comparison, the cost of the tools embedded reporters need to shoot, edit, and contribute stories is minuscule, whether they're localized in one community or working a distant beat like a state capital. For example, reporters for **NDTV in New Delhi** have

shot and edited stories exclusively on their phones since the summer of 2017. The broadcaster notes the cost savings, speed, responsiveness to breaking news, and production efficiency brought by committing entirely to newsgathering by phone.

Swedish national public television broadcaster SVT also shook off traditional workflows in favor of a more efficient approach to news coverage—even of large international events. Some 20 years ago, SVT shed its outside broadcast trucks and pursued a strategy that separated on-site acquisition of camera signals from centralized, remote production. An early adopter of Remote Integration Model (REMI) production, SVT applied the strategy to great effect when covering the 2012 summer games, recalled SVT CTO Adde Granberg to Avid's [Making the Media](#) podcast.

“We had 60 accreditations,” he says. “Should I spend 30 of them on technology crew? Or should I spend five on technology crew? With remote production, I needed five instead of 30, and I could have journalists instead, so that was a big success for SVT.”

The technology has further evolved since then, and Granberg wants his production team to keep up. “I have 300 people working in production. They need to adapt to new technology. They need to understand what the technology in an iPhone can do for the television industry,” he says.

“Today, it’s so easy to get into the broadcast industry with a smartphone. You can start to film in 4K, you can edit, you can put on capture, and you can transmit it on a YouTube platform. Everybody can do it.”

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# ADOPTING STORY-CENTRIC NEWS WORKFLOWS

As newsrooms look for ways to compete and win against digital news alternatives, they're shifting the focus of production by introducing story-centric news workflows.

At first glance, this term might seem rather redundant. After all, isn't news story-centric by definition? However, the term carries decades of history, during which TV newsrooms focused their efforts on producing news stories for a newscast. Much of a workflow's organization went into producing stories for the newscast. Control room automation orchestrated all of the elements of the newscast rundown via the Media Object Server (MOS) protocol. Although effective for what it was, this approach the newscast as the focal point of newsroom production.

Now, the rise of websites and social media has offered news consumers plenty of alternatives to the broadcast show, and newsrooms have had to begin reinventing themselves—placing the story, not the news show, at the heart of the news workflow. The distribution platform no longer plays the central organizing role for newsrooms. The story sits center stage; the various distribution paths to the public, whether social media, a station website, or the on-air show, all play supporting parts.

The content from anywhere model fits hand in glove with story-centric news workflows. The same tools embedded reporters use to create their on-air stories are equally adept at publishing to digital and social media destinations or producing in-depth, on-air versions.

Newsrooms can also leverage collaboration apps among embedded reporters to enable assignment editors, producers, and other news managers to conduct virtual editorial meetings and track story progress. Amid the pandemic-driven rush to work remotely, apps like Slack, Zoom, Skype, FaceTime, and Microsoft Teams have helped news managers and embedded journalists communicate.

Meanwhile, professional solutions such as Avid [MediaCentral | Collaborate](#) allow assignment editors to keep tabs on stories as they develop, assign, or redirect reporters to new stories and schedule and deploy newsgathering resources. Content can also be easily shared between reporters and editors regardless of the distribution platform they are working toward, creating greater efficiencies in the production process.

The initial success station groups have had in embedding reporters, due in part to these tools, makes it conceivable that the physical size of the newsroom may shrink as the number of remote personnel rises. This shift could improve the bottom line and free up budget for more reporters and newsgathering resources.

# UNCOVERING NEW SOURCES OF CONTENT

Although the stage is set for embedded MMJs and reporters to remain the primary creators of local news, some newsrooms will turn to technological advancements to find entirely new sources of footage for breaking stories and newsmaker interviews.

Social media videos represent one rich source of news. Government agencies, for instance, regularly publish footage of press conferences on social media and broadcast instructions online for what to do in an emergency. This can prove to be valuable news footage, as can material from videoconferencing apps such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Slack. Rather than dispatching reporters to the office of a politician or coach, reporters and anchors can—and, for a time during the pandemic, were expected to—interview them from the station.

## Social media videos represent one rich source of news

The variety of sources offering video footage will only proliferate as time goes by and the technology becomes more intuitive. Sports figures, local celebrities, politicians, and police and fire spokespeople are just the tip of the iceberg; others in the community with the same access to streaming apps and social media may jump on the opportunity to offer their own perspectives.



# EMBRACING THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY TO ENABLE DISTRIBUTED NEWS PRODUCTION

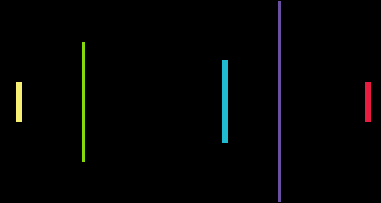
Technology is this strategy's great enabler. Video streaming, VPNs, phones, tablets and, to a lesser extent at least for the moment, **cloud computing** make the transition from old news workflows possible.

The ability to stream video to newsrooms replaces the need to send out ENG or SNG vehicles. They still have value in certain newsgathering situations, but ultimately wireless carriers, Wi-Fi networks, and ethernet connectivity contribute the bulk of news from the field. Without these internet on-ramps, it's hard to imagine how newsrooms could make the dramatic, ongoing shift toward content from anywhere.

*"Reporting teams in the field need technology that is simple to use and delivers a high-quality product. They cannot rely on dedicated technical support at the end of a phone or someone popping around to their desk to fix an issue. It needs to work; to deliver just what they need when they need it. This is what makes the usability of the tools so important."*

– Craig Wilson, Avid Global Media and Cloud Product Evangelist

A series of different professional IP transport protocols such as SRT, NDI, and Zixi help ensure that video streaming is a viable alternative. For example, a powerful IP stream ingest solution such as **MediaCentral | Stream** can enable multiple compressed streams to be ingested into your production environment from anywhere. VPNs also play a critical role for reporters embedded in the community: a VPN provides secure, encrypted access to





newsroom workstations, where remote reporters can access resources and tools including newswires, scriptwriting tools, archived news footage, nonlinear video editing tools, and news graphics.

At least for the foreseeable future, newsroom workstations will continue to need VPNs as they cycle through their amortization schedule. Eventually, however, the role of VPNs may diminish as those workstations are replaced by virtualized equivalents running newsroom computer systems (NRCS), video editors, MAMs, and other essential news tools in the cloud.

Phones and tablets are doing their part to accelerate the transition to content from anywhere, placing affordable HD and 4K cameras in the pockets of reporters and the public alike. While ENG cameras aren't going away anytime soon, putting alternatives in the hands of embedded reporters and trusted stringers can expand potential sources of news footage and reduce the time between when a story breaks and footage is on air.

As Indian broadcaster NDTV put it when announcing its shift to smartphones, "Mobile journalism means reports are lightning quick and much more efficiently produced—a priority for any news company."

# CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARD REMOTE

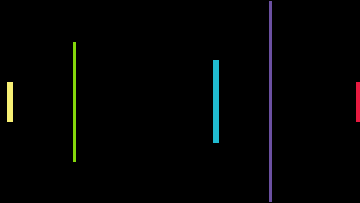
Perhaps due to the success these technologies have had in reshaping newsgathering and news production, news managers and station IT professionals have largely pushed for the uptake of this strategy within their organizations.

Prior to COVID-19, security concerns limited how willing news organizations were to expose their IT news infrastructure to connectivity with the outside world. However, as the pandemic forced journalists to go remote and restricted their access to the newsroom, priorities shifted. IT departments had a real and urgent need to find secure methods for journalists in the field to access newsroom resources.

Technology is helping to change attitudes about the seeming Achilles' heel of embedding reporters—the lack of collaboration among news colleagues that goes on daily in the newsroom. Social and videoconferencing tech enables journalists to work together on stories and share insights, ideas, and resources, making it easier to work closely with colleagues who are far away.

The need to support reporters in the field has prompted a rethink of attitudes toward the security of storing media assets in the cloud. Once a nonstarter for many media professionals, the decision to develop and deploy remote cloud-based news workflows was only possible at an industry-wide scale amid the pandemic—and only then because public cloud vendors went to great lengths to keep client data safe and secure.

Technology  
is helping  
to change  
attitudes



# INSPIRING GREATER CLOUD ACCEPTANCE

As newsroom workstations are amortized, a strategy that promotes news from anywhere also offers greater workflow efficiencies in the cloud. Embedded reporters, armed with a phone and an internet connection, can rely on virtualized cloud instances of news production tools to get a story out. From a journalist's point of view, the cloud can make collaborating on stories easier, enabling reporters, producers, and news executives to share insights on footage at the same time.

From a news production standpoint, the cloud's strengths lie in its compute-on-demand and artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities, which can automate tasks and save time for the news team. For instance, speech-to-text algorithms generate closed captions automatically, while facial and text recognition algorithms can create detailed metadata and help **monetize archived news footage**.

From a business point of view, moving to the cloud shifts newsroom technology spending from a CapEx to an OpEx model. In other words, it enables a subscription approach that can put an end to huge initial outlays for hardware, maintenance, and replacements and setting out for financial flexibility and scalability. The cloud also offers newsrooms robust disaster recovery strategies to ensure business continuity in the event of a catastrophe.

While all of these advantages of the cloud provide good reasons to make the transition, it's likely the shift will happen gradually. The first step will likely entail building confidence in the cloud. Small news-related tasks may move to the cloud simply to see if it lives up to its billing.

“What we are seeing is an increasing willingness for news organizations to experiment, to test out what is realistic and possible in the cloud at the right cost. It is not going to be an overnight shift, where one day everything on premises is switched off and workflows move to the cloud—it will be more gradual. But we are already seeing a shift in mindset toward what the cloud can enable teams to do.”

– Craig Wilson, Avid Global Media and Cloud Product Evangelist

Once news managers are sure the cloud is reliable and can do what they need, newsrooms will look for ways to optimize news workflows in the cloud. Only after this step can news organizations consider moving everything to the cloud or enabling a true hybrid environment that connects on-prem studios and infrastructure with cloud-hosted systems.



# RECOGNIZING THE HUMAN ELEMENT

The journey to adopting a content from anywhere news strategy involves more than technology. The team will ultimately make or break the transition.

Reducing the physical presence of journalists in newsrooms by embedding them in the field and adopting changes such as using streaming technology rather than conducting in-person interviews will require news managers to pay special attention to their staff.

Even when teams use technology that promotes collaboration among news colleagues, the need for face-to-face interaction will continue for as long as people are part of the news workflow. The greatest technology in the world cannot replace the ability to turn to another reporter, producer, or news manager in the newsroom and ask, “What do you think?” However, taking steps to maintain regular personal contact with reporters in the field can go a long way toward keeping journalists from becoming isolated.

“I think the organic interaction that exists when the groups of people in newsrooms, in particular, are together is hard to replicate,” said Bob Ellis, vice president and general manager of WJXT and WCWJ in Jacksonville, Florida, to Avid’s [Making the Media](#) podcast.

Since the pandemic-prompted exodus from the newsroom in favor of remote work, news managers have taken steps to maintain personal interaction with staff despite the physical separation.

“[W]e’ve tried to make sure that we have some conversations with people,” Ellis said. “My staff has had . . . calls in small groups throughout this whole process. We may have a call with just reporters or just photographers. You know, small groups where it feels a little more intimate.”

Ellis himself has made many one-on-one calls with employees during the pandemic to check on staff. “My philosophy—and kind of what I try to preach to our staff—is if you communicate with people, and you coach people, and you make people realize you care, a lot can be accomplished,” he said.

Collaboration tools can make tracking what’s happening in the field clearer. However, technology complements, not replaces, human interaction. Although tools such as MediaCentral | Collaborate can help assignment editors assign and track story progress and manage reporters and photographers, calls and visits with journalists will be key to helping news managers track the well-being of reporters and photographers in the field.

# | THAT'S A WRAP

For some time, news managers looking to increase story count and make their organization's news more relevant to local audiences have embraced elements of a content-from-anywhere strategy. With the entrance of the COVID-19 pandemic, these efforts accelerated; traditional workflows were forced to change to accommodate social distancing, and chances are low that newsrooms will simply return to these old workflows now.

A story-centric news production takes advantage of having coverage across multiple distribution platforms to satisfy the evolving needs of news consumers. As viewers learn they can depend on a local station, they deepen their trust in that broadcaster regardless of whether the news is delivered on social media or on the air. Newsrooms continue to embed reporters in communities, and news consumers come to see that the stories they're watching are in tune with what's happening in their neighborhoods.

To succeed, however, reporters who are embedded in geographical areas or



institutional beats need access to the same news production tools, content, and media assets at hand in the newsroom. VPNs have enabled embedded reporters to log on remotely to their newsroom workstations to access the news resources they need while maintaining the cybersecurity of their newsroom's IT infrastructure.

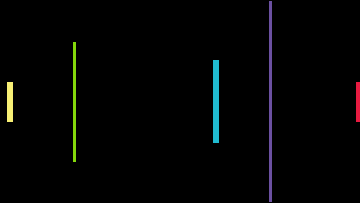
In the field, while handheld and shoulder-mount cameras and laptops continue to be newsgathering and production staples, some broadcasters are taking aggressive steps to enhance the mobility of their journalists in the field. A few, such as NDTV in New Delhi, have even forsaken the previous generation of newsgathering technology and now rely exclusively on putting phone cameras and apps in the hands of their reporters to bring in live stories.

Even as newsrooms accelerate efforts to integrate reporters more deeply into their beats, the industry is coming to recognize the need for connecting far-flung teams. Collaboration and videoconferencing tools can help recreate the give and take of the newsroom and protect remote reporters from feeling isolated.

Going forward, virtualized equivalents of newsroom tools running in the cloud may look to play a greater role in enabling the content from anywhere news strategy. Embedded reporters will access newsroom computer systems, video and audio editing functions, archived news content, and graphics and virtualized video encoders to publish content to any desired distribution platform—all from the cloud.

The cloud will prove to be even more valuable for news over time as AI and machine learning algorithms automate tasks like generating closed captions and creating detailed metadata, making it faster to find stored footage and thus offer new revenue opportunities. Newsroom adoption of the cloud will likely come in phases as broadcasters first entrust small tasks to the cloud before optimizing news workflows in the cloud as it gains their confidence.

Each of these technologies streamlines how reporters are deployed, **advancing distributed news production** to enhance coverage with dual goals—keeping the public informed from any platform and solidifying stations as news leaders in their markets.



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