

Exhibitor Opinion

# The future of content identification

Video fingerprinting is the enabling technology for future digital media control believes **Joshua Cohen**, chief executive officer, iPharro Media



**Joshua Cohen:** 'Broadcast news producers know the pain of ensuring that rights are respected at all times'

Remember the good old days when you'd actually watch a TV show on TV as it was broadcast, or, if you were really adventurous, listen to that shiny piece of plastic as it spun round and round in your CD player? Those days are coming to an end and, to the dismay of some, they're not coming back. Anyone

who works with content these days is fraught with a particular frustration relating to controlling the mass of media that envelops us all. However, there are certain enabling technologies that will allow mediaplayers to bring this situation under control. Video fingerprinting is one such technology.

Video fingerprinting is a computer-based content identification technique in which a video's unique visual characteristics are extracted, summarised and stored in a compact file – a 'fingerprint'. Think of a video fingerprint as a short description of a particular video that can be used to identify that video – and millions of others – when it appears in any source. This is not to be confused with watermarking, in which a readable signature is inserted into a video so that it can later be identified. With fingerprinting, the video isn't altered; it is only analysed for later identification.

Video fingerprinting was originally used to automatically identify commercial advertisements as they appeared on television: create and store fingerprints for all advertisements, analyse the live

broadcast TV streams and identify every commercial as it appears – all of this with a standard PC. But this was only the starting point.

Broadcast news producers know all too well the pain of ensuring that rights and other content specific information are maintained throughout the DAM/MAM workflow. Video repositories are filled with duplicate content or related content that isn't linked. More than this, conquering the Wild Wild West of the media world – the internet – seems to be an unattainable goal. Each of these problems is solvable when viewed from within the prism of the right technology – video fingerprinting.

iPharro's video fingerprinting technology, originally developed at Germany's esteemed Fraunhofer IGD, was designed to meet the market's growing need for accurate and efficient content identification. Customers such as the Nielsen Company have integrated iPharro solutions to automate manually-intensive content identification processes. With the iPharro Enterprise server, a flexible content identification engine at

the core of iPharro's products and services, fingerprinting can be integrated into any workflow.

A few things to remember: A good video fingerprinting technology should be flexible, scalable and accurate. It should be able to identify content using just a few seconds of video and should be robust to distortions and cropping. Most importantly, and this is the key, the technology is only half the story.

It is imperative that any video fingerprinting provider has proven experience in understanding workflows and implementing solutions. These days, research-level technologies are abundant, but making them market ready is really the challenge – and this can take years.

As you walk through IBC this year and see companies that run the gamut of the media space, ask yourself two questions: 1) How did the digital revolution drive this particular business and its business model? 2) In light of this changing landscape, how would video fingerprinting serve this business? You will be amazed when you consider the extent to which video fingerprinting can and will impact the media world. This is the future of content identification and, of media in general. *7.B01*

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