

Case Study RTLNetherlands Interactive

RTLNetherlands Interactive represents a new type of member for AMS-IX. As a major content provider with a focus on audio and video streaming they are defining the new media business model as we speak. AMS-IX plays an important facilitating role in this model. Jan Paul Dekker, manager of RTLNetherlands Interactive explains.

Jan Paul Dekker: “Just last week a delegation of Bertelsmann Corporation, a media conglomerate and our shareholder visited RTLNetherlands Interactive and were very impressed with our business model. They are thinking of extending the concept throughout their international subsidiaries.”

Content providers are not yet familiar with the use of Internet Exchanges as a means of routing their IP traffic. Frequently they just make a deal with one or more ISP’s and trust them to route their traffic efficiently, without having the autonomy of network. Jan Paul: “With an investment in autonomy of infrastructure by applying for an AS number at RIPE, using dynamic routing protocol BGP-4 and somewhat heavier equipment than before, as well as attract some skilled engineers, we were ready to connect to AMS-IX. What it brought us was a means to off-load a minimum of 93% of our traffic through peerings and a very low stable cost base. Our cost per Mb is now 9 Eurocents and we know that most of our colleagues in the market pay at least 10-fold per Mb sometimes even a lot more.

RTLNetherlands Interactive is responsible for a network of over 200 sites of the Holland Media Group that includes Dutch tv channels RTL4, RTL5 and Yorin and radio stations Yorin FM/ RTL FM. All tv-programs on the channels have their own site that complements the program and thus adds its own value to the mix of broadcast and online. Often reruns can be viewed online. Also combinations of online and live activities are initiated more and more such as the live Idols video-chat. Some programs can be viewed online before they have been “on the air”. This is all done with 800 kbps video-streaming with PAL resolution which gives an almost tv-like appearance. The current infrastructure allows around 6000 simultaneous broadband/ streaming viewers.

“We could not do online/live broadcasts were it not for our AMS-IX connection. It would just be much too expensive in terms of bandwidth purchase and probably too slow for the user due to too many network hops between user and content.” says Jan Paul “Even with over 50 % of our viewers having broadband connections, which is much higher broadband % than the average site has.”

Another large part of their traffic is represented by audio-streaming. Yorin FM has 7000 simultaneous listeners. Funny is that this traffic has quite another

profile, it peaks during work-hours and then fades. Regular web or video-streaming traffic peaks after working hours.

The peering policy* of RTLNetherlands Interactive is open. Since they want their content to be available to as many users at the best possible quality they pursue as many peers as possible. RTL splits peering traffic from transit traffic to other servers to offer their peers even better quality.

Apart from AMS-IX, RTLNetherlands Interactive also peers at the NL-IX, mainly for redundancy reasons but also serving some local peering needs and smaller parties not present at AMS-IX.

The first AMS-IX connection was established in 2000, a 100 Mbps connection. Quite soon afterwards RTLNetherlands Interactive upgraded to a 1 Gigabit per second port and is now at 10GE the largest available peering connection available. Jan Paul: "Since we do have to cater for the peaks of the live & online events we will always have quite a large safe-margin on our port capacity."

The neutrality & independence of AMS-IX is important because it brings many different types of peers for RTLNederland Interactief, from all local ISPs, small and large, to international carriers bringing their content worldwide. The price/service quality ratio is excellent, in fact it enables our business, since AMS-IX is increasingly important to us we are investigating a more redundant solution currently.

Content providers will push for new regional IX centers to load-off of more local traffic, with AMS-IX becoming an even more national and international hub.

For more information on RTLNederland Interactief:
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* NB: AMS-IX is not involved in any of the peering negotiations or settlements between its members. AMS-IX's objective is to facilitate connections and maintain the infrastructure.