# IAMT MediaTech Forum – Visual Podcast

*The Software-Defined Revolution: Lawo CEO, Jamie Dunn, on What's Next for MediaTech*

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**00:00:00 – 00:00:07 MATT STAGG**
[upbeat music]

**00:00:07 – 00:00:30 MATT STAGG**
Hi, everyone, and welcome back to the IAMT podcast with me, Matt Stagg. I've got a very special guest, and we were lucky to get Jamie in at the last minute. Jamie Dunn from Lawo is CEO, and Jamie, do you want to give us a little intro into what you do and what Lawo do?

**00:00:30 – 00:01:16 JAMIE DUNN**
Yeah, sure. So, I think in the last couple of months I took over the role of CEO of Lawo. Lawo is, I think, a well-established brand. We are 56 years old, originally coming from an audio background, so most people will know us from that. But actually, over the last 10 years we've been absolutely transforming and adding the video component to our portfolio, and now we'd really categorize ourselves more as a media company rather than an audio or video company. So, I've just taken over the last two months as CEO — I've actually been with the company 15 years, so it's not a brand-new thing for me. It's an exciting time right now, very transformational in the industry.

**00:01:22 – 00:01:23 JAMIE DUNN**
And maybe you want to talk a little bit about that.

**00:01:23 – 00:01:46 MATT STAGG**
Yeah, and I think it's interesting, because I work with a lot of audio guys, but we also do a lot of private 5G in my company. One of the big things — if you go from audio to video, you've already nailed it, because as someone once said, 'your ears don't blink, so you better get it right.' [laughs] It's tough.

**00:01:46 – 00:01:53 JAMIE DUNN**
[laughs] Well, as an audio company, we always used to say, 'picture without sound is nothing, but sound without picture is radio.'

**00:01:53 – 00:01:55 MATT STAGG**
Brilliant. [laughs] Yeah, that's perfect.

**00:01:55 – 00:02:08 MATT STAGG**
I'd be really interested — you've stepped up into the role. As you came into it, what would you see as your core focus in the near term as you're evolving Lawo?

**00:02:08 – 00:02:53 JAMIE DUNN**
Well, as I said, it's been a very transformational time in the company. The last five years we've had a strategy to bring a brand-new technology stack to the portfolio, which is about convergence. I think this is the key topic — the fact that we're able to cover the audio and video aspects, the convergence of these two things, is really now the key in terms of how we now address the customer challenges, which, let's be

honest, is about budgets and commercial topics. So we've come to a point where the technology is just purely an enabler to be able to address those topics. How is the question, of course.

**00:02:53 – 00:03:15** **MATT STAGG**
Yeah, and that's the interesting part — that's why having companies like yours that can help with that transition matters. We know we're all going to move from single-purpose products to a more platform-based approach. But are you seeing a difficulty in people being able to make that shift?

**00:03:15 – 00:04:03** **JAMIE DUNN**
Well, yeah, absolutely. First and foremost, the convergence that I talk about, in terms of bringing onto a platform — the advantage of that is the ability, with modern software, which is basically what our platform is about, to take containerized functionality and spin it up onto standard IT technology, standard server CPU compute. Being able to spin that up and spin it down is where the dynamic nature of infrastructure comes in. You've probably heard the term 'dynamic media facility' — that's literally about utilization. I have a firm belief that the only way to truly save costs is to maximize utilization of the assets you purchase.

**00:04:03 – 00:04:06** **MATT STAGG**
Yeah, of course — you've got to sweat them.

**00:04:06 – 00:04:25** **JAMIE DUNN**
So, with an architecture where we move the infrastructure to standard IT — of course, on the network side, the IP transition is still, I'd say, globally mostly incomplete: most of the infrastructure is still SDI.

**00:04:25 – 00:04:38** **MATT STAGG**
Yeah, no, I know — you'll drag some of those engineers kicking and screaming [laughs] before you get there. We joke about that, but part of that transition is bringing people along with you.

**00:04:38 – 00:05:03** **JAMIE DUNN**
Yeah, absolutely. The transition to IP was never about just going to IP. Where we are today in terms of software — and this is the key part — the journey to IP was always about getting to software. Because once we're in software, on standard compute, we have an agile infrastructure, and that allows us to address the topic of utilization.

**00:05:03 – 00:05:18** **JAMIE DUNN**
Typically, if you were building a facility or an OB truck, you were always thinking about the maximum requirements you need, the investment you're making, and the money you have — you always try to think about the maximum.

**00:05:18 – 00:05:21** **MATT STAGG**
Yeah, and then we didn't use half of it half the time.

**00:05:21 – 00:05:30** **JAMIE DUNN**
Right. So if you walk around a facility these days, you could say that maybe even 20% of that infrastructure is used at one time.

**00:05:30 – 00:05:54** **JAMIE DUNN**
If that's the case, if we have the ability with dynamic or flexible infrastructure to address that 80%, by saying, 'Okay, we're only using 20% of our infrastructure most of the time' —

**00:05:54 – 00:06:03** **JAMIE DUNN**
— then by being able to agilely change the functionality of an infrastructure you've invested in, dynamically, you're able to address serious cost savings. Tie that into a commercial model, and that's the important part.

**00:06:03 – 00:06:08** **JAMIE DUNN**
Obviously, CapEx is a very traditional way that this market, at least —

**00:06:08 – 00:06:16** **MATT STAGG**
Yeah, and I think we'll be one of the last. [laughs] We're slow to get over that CapEx-to-OpEx —

**00:06:16 – 00:06:18** **JAMIE DUNN**
Exactly — way. And there's a place for both.

**00:06:18 – 00:06:31** **JAMIE DUNN**
And actually, even though we offer our licensing both on a perpetual basis — because we believe that if you use something all the time, and there are some things you use all the time, then the best return on investment is to buy it, right? That's true.

**00:06:31 – 00:06:39** **MATT STAGG**
Yeah, yeah. But you're right — perpetual licensing is a CapEx, but you're still getting the elasticity of —

**00:06:39 – 00:07:43** **JAMIE DUNN**
Right — and elasticity is a great word for this, because on a software base, with the elasticity you talked about — in other words, the ability to spin up a mixing console onto the same infrastructure, or spin up a multiviewer or an up-down cross — the thing is, by being able to do this dynamically, you're able to give a software asset that's not attached to a specific function, and this is the beauty of a platform: we have all of this functionality in a platform, and as you spin up a function, it takes a credit. It uses that credit whilst you use that function, but once you stop, because you're not using it anymore, you put the software asset back into your wallet, and use it somewhere else in your facility. This is about addressing the commercial challenges our customers face, and we really have solutions today. It is very confusing, though, and I think it's a very transitional time — because everyone talks about IP, but IP is only the way to get to this software.

**00:07:43 – 00:08:01** **MATT STAGG**
Yeah, that's been put brilliantly. People are thinking IP is just replacing one cable for another, a router and a switch. But it's all about being able to get to the software.

**00:08:01 – 00:08:35** **JAMIE DUNN**
Correct. And actually, this isn't new for us — for Lawo, we've had this technology for two years. It's mature. I think people don't believe that this containerized software infrastructure is actually working. It is. We're using it on the largest global events. This infrastructure exists today, and we have the tools — others do too — to talk about the commercial challenges our customers face.

**00:08:35 – 00:08:36** **MATT STAGG**
Yeah. Yeah.

**00:08:36 – 00:08:48** **JAMIE DUNN**

And I think that's really what this is about. The interesting thing is that this is now a business discussion, not a technology discussion.

**00:08:48 – 00:09:30** **MATT STAGG**

You know, and totally — the technology will always find a way to fix something, but the commercial models, and organizationally, people need to adjust. I was just going to go back to one thing: when we moved to remote production, that was great in terms of your carbon footprint — of an OB, hotels, and everything. But you were saying you're walking around a facility and only using about 20%, and it's still powered on. Do you see a sustainability benefit there, of only using it when you want it?

**00:09:30 – 00:09:46** **JAMIE DUNN**

Of course. So if you're only using 20% of the infrastructure, and you can flexibly use the assets that manage that infrastructure, you can save costs in all aspects.

**00:09:47 – 00:09:56** **JAMIE DUNN**

A server, for instance — when its processing isn't being used, its power consumption goes down. So, simple things like that.

**00:09:56 – 00:10:11** **JAMIE DUNN**

This isn't the future — it's here today. There are tools available to address the commercial squeeze everyone's feeling, but infrastructure is the key element.

**00:10:11 – 00:10:22** **JAMIE DUNN**

And we decided a long time ago that, on the processing side — as I said, I think it's quite revolutionary, although it's very hard to bring this message across —

**00:10:22 – 00:10:36** **JAMIE DUNN**

that if you take a standard server, on that server I can spin up a mixing console, but on the same server I can also spin up a multiviewer. Now you start to understand what we mean — we're extracting the hardware from the software.

**00:10:36 – 00:11:06** **MATT STAGG**

Yeah. And interestingly, this is where we've seen other industries do it before — it's AWS, and understanding that cloud piece. But it is... you come to somewhere like NAB, and it used to be really easy to show people what they were getting. Part of the problem is it's very difficult if someone's not from that world and they're saying, 'We want to do this,' because broadcasters are used to seeing stuff.

**00:11:06 – 00:11:12** **MATT STAGG**

And that's where some of the pushback comes from — like, where is it?

**00:11:12 – 00:11:26** **JAMIE DUNN**

Sure. We're used to taking bits of hardware and saying, 'Okay, this is dedicated to this function.' And now we move to a completely software-orientated world, where a server can do any of those functions at any time.

**00:11:26 – 00:11:44** **JAMIE DUNN**

And I think that's part of the challenge we have right now — a lot of people are still in SDI. I'd still say the majority of the market is in SDI. They haven't made the transition to IP, yet vendors like us are asking them to think about software, which is the step further —

**00:11:44 – 00:11:48** **JAMIE DUNN**
and the destination of where IP was always supposed to be. And that's not easy.

**00:11:47 – 00:11:51** **MATT STAGG**
Yeah, yeah, yeah — that's a great...

**00:11:51 – 00:12:13** **MATT STAGG**
Having you come on here is great, because some of IAMT's customers need to understand the vendor community, as well as the media and buyers of that tech need to understand how it all fits together. Because you're not just going to have one person's mixing desk come up on software —

**00:12:13 – 00:12:34** **MATT STAGG**
so everybody needs to work that out. What I did want to do before we wrap up — because we've got you here, and your company's visionary, you have a clear view — is ask: by next year's NAB, how much further would you think our industry will have gone down that route? What's the inevitable path?

**00:12:34 – 00:12:52** **JAMIE DUNN**
Well, let's say the industry has started on that. In one year's time, of course, vendors like us who are already providing those solutions will just add further value to those platforms.

**00:12:52 – 00:13:00** **JAMIE DUNN**
We're not the only platform, that's clear — there are other platforms. But I think interoperability between vendors is very important.

**00:13:00 – 00:13:14** **JAMIE DUNN**
To be frank, I think customers are probably going to need to look at fewer vendors, because, in terms of complexity — or managing such an infrastructure — you're going to need fewer partners to build with.

**00:13:14 – 00:13:24** **MATT STAGG**
Well, and also it comes down to fragmentation leading to complexity, technically and commercially, and that doesn't benefit anyone.

**00:13:24 – 00:13:37** **JAMIE DUNN**
No, exactly. I think we're on a journey here, on a pathway. I'll be truly honest with you — I believe right now we're in a bit of the technology adoption chasm, as you'd call it.

**00:13:37 – 00:13:49** **JAMIE DUNN**
We have early adopters, but a lot of confusion in the market, I think. My message is that this technology is out there, it works — we're one of the vendors who offers that.

**00:13:49 – 00:14:03** **JAMIE DUNN**
We're not the only one, there are others. But the tendency in the marketplace right now, from other vendors too, is driving towards containerized software as infrastructure. So it's an exciting time.

**00:14:03 – 00:14:14** **MATT STAGG**
Yeah, it is a very exciting time, and we're going to see a lot more. People are going to be increasingly knocking on your door to help them through this transitional phase. Jamie, thank you for joining us today.

**00:14:14 – 00:14:16** **JAMIE DUNN**
You're welcome.

**00:14:14 – 00:14:16** **MATT STAGG**
It's been an absolute pleasure.

**00:14:16 – 00:14:16** **JAMIE DUNN**
Absolutely. Thank you.

**00:14:23 – 00:14:23**
[upbeat music]