

How AWS and IAMT Are Driving Industry Collaboration

Matt Stagg in conversation with Noor Hassan, AWS

IAMT Studio Visual Podcast Series

Duration: 10:41

Hi, everyone. Welcome back to the IAMT podcast studio. I'm delighted to have our latest guest, Noor Hassan, who is the principal partner solutions architect for media and entertainment at AWS. But also, we're going to talk about the Dynamic Software Licensing initiative that Noor has been integral in setting up here. So if I can come to you — if you just want to give a little bit of background to you and your work that you do within AWS, and then we'll come on more specifically to DSL.

Sure. First of all, Matt, thanks for having me. Same for the IAMT. It's great to be here. My role with AWS is to work with our partner network, so independent software vendors, or ISVs, and system integrators who are focusing on broadcast and sports, and help them in their journey in having cloud and hybrid solutions. And so my role, I'm very lucky to work with many of these partners, specialising in their technological roadmaps and strategy.

Oh, that's fantastic. So very busy. I think one of the things that's — you know, especially as we're here and we've had the IAMT relaunch and we're talking about ways that we can collaborate as an industry, and I'd be really interested if you could share some of what you feel the value of having these peer-to-peer groups when, you know, potentially they say peer-to-peer groups and people sort of think, "Is that competitor?" But they're led very differently. If you could sort of expand on some of that.

I can't remember the person who said this, but it is so much harder to accomplish something alone. And it makes so much more sense to collaborate. When we have a community like what the IAMT is doing, right? Bringing together, let's say, personas and perspectives from the industry covering different areas, whether that is system integrators or vendors or, you know, in this case representing cloud, and of course end customers, right? Essentially, it becomes this native space where we can think about how do we collectively solve for the industry. And so for me, there's like a level of osmosis of ideas that can come up as a group that is working together, which I think can further and enhance our industry as a whole collective.

That's great. And is that kind of part of the reason — because it's almost a safe space, if you like — to have IAMT as a sort of umbrella? Was that part of the reason you didn't just launch an AWS initiative and say, you know, "Come and work with us"? Is it to get more of that collaborative approach?

Yes. Because the industry is very familiar with IAMT, already existing members for, you know, many customers and, again, partners, what we refer to as partners. And so I think it's a lot more effective to take that path and be able to, again, bring in ideas from the different personas representing, and give the comfort, let's say, level that when folks are participating, they are

participating in an initiative that is under the umbrella of a body like IAMT.

Yeah. And I think it is one of the key things with working groups and industry working groups: fragmentation doesn't help anybody. You know, it leads to technical complexity. It stifles innovation. But if you can have a collaborative base where some things, you know, like, you know, the DSL and the Dynamic Software — it'd be really interesting if you can go into sort of some of the history, why you set DSL up, what it looks to accomplish and, you know, what's happened so far. I think it'd be really, really interesting for our audience.

By the way, I love what you said about innovation. It's true, like environments like this do foster a lot of innovation, which is a key thing that we want to achieve. So the Dynamic Software Licensing is an initiative that stemmed out of common understanding of challenges in the industry relative to application licensing, right? So if we look at the way broadcast system software — the licensing models that they have, right? Because many of these, let's say, softwares started long time back, whether it is an on-premises-only version, and then, you know, in more recent years a software version, cloud, hybrid, et cetera. So there had been multiple licensing models for how — yeah, how do you activate licensing on these applications?

And in many cases, right, because of the nature of, let's say, more traditional way of how the applications operated, it was almost always perpetual. You know, but then as you advance into more software-based licensing, especially in environments where you need multi-vendor interoperability, where a system is not comprised of a single-vendor end-to-end solution, right? Licensing adds a layer of complexity, especially if it's tied to something like, for example, a MAC address on hardware. Right? In a world where customers are expecting something that is way more dynamic, right? Pay-as-you-go, it is able to essentially move along the way that you're spinning up and spinning down the actual solutions. And so about, I would say, a year ago, we came together with some representations from vendors and SIs and end customers, and we outlined what are some of the key challenges that we all agree exist around licensing. And then what would make sense to address in a meaningful way to the industry? And that's where essentially DSL started. And then we had the pleasure, of course, of collaborating with IAMT to say, "Hey, you know, this would be awesome to be hosted by IAMT." And here we are.

Yeah. I mean, and it's brilliant. I have seen some of the works that's been done, and it's — if you work in media and entertainment, and I'm from a live sport broadcaster background, the worst thing is something doesn't — like, we're used to something doesn't work or breaks, you get another one. Or you go and get another cable, or you run some fibre very quickly, because it can. Worst thing is when you move, especially as moving to a software is, you know — we have quite a, you know, a broadcast production that take a while to bring along on a journey. And then you say, "Right, okay. We're doing this software-based," and then someone says, "The licence isn't there." And then, you know, it's not like you go, "Okay. Well, we'll sort that out."

Puts it on hold anyway, right? Yeah. It's completely down.

And then the panic that comes from not being able to physically fix something is why I was — you know, the dynamic licensing thing is amazing. And I really want to dig in to get some of your thoughts of, you know, what made or makes a collaboration working group successful?

It's a really good question. I believe it is everyone's — all the participants' — intention to work towards a common goal. Right? I think coming in to say, "You know what? Everybody in the

room has a unique set of expertise and has so much experience." Like, all the members we're working with, everyone has incredible experience in the field, right? And everyone has seen challenges like that. Everyone experienced them. And so what makes it successful is when the members come in together and say, "Okay. Yes. You know, we're going to work towards having a common set of best practices." By the way, that's what we're defining the DSL to be. Meaning, you know, not defining it as a standard, rather a set of best practices. And saying, "You know what? Everyone's kind of different lens." So for example, we have members who have a lot of experience in the business development side, so they have that lens to say, "You know what? You can't just focus on the technical aspect. You have to tie it with meaningful use cases." And then you have on the other side of the spectrum, folks who are extremely experienced in areas like software development, right? Or have a lens on security. And so all of it coming together to make this perfect cake, hopefully.

Yeah. And I've been involved in quite a few. And actually, it's not just the sort of technical and the work thing. You do get to become, you know, friends with the people you're working with because you're seeing them not in a day-to-day working environment where everyone's sitting down. You actually can talk and, you know, everybody in a group, so. Lastly, I'd like to come on and see what are your sort of vision and hopes for the working group as a whole over the next 12 months?

I think, first of all, I would love to see, you know, more maybe organisations become at least curious about it and kind of say, "You know what?" Like, "Yes, we're facing these challenges," or like, "Hey, we'd love to have a voice in it." Because again, the idea is to work towards something that makes sense for the industry. And also we're working alongside the members obviously to put together a GitHub that has documentations and samples. So I'm very excited to kind of start to see that getting built further and further so that we can share it with the wider industry. And maybe in 12 months, if we're becoming ambitious, to see some samples being out there and tested.

Yeah. Well, that's been amazing. And I really hope people do get on board because it's in everybody's interest. You know, these things, if you try to set them up, you don't actually realise the amount of time. And having the umbrella, as you said, of IAMT, that really brings that collaboration together. Well, we could talk for hours. It's really interesting. But we're going to leave it there. I'll be back later on with another one, but thank you, Noor. It's been amazing.

Yeah. Matt, it was awesome. Thanks for having me.

Thank you.