

Inside the Race to Innovate MediaTech with IAMT, EVS, Irdeto and The CW Network

Chris Evans (IAMT) in conversation with Oscar Teran (EVS), Lisa Spencer (Irdeto) and Jeff Burgess (The CW Network)

IAMT Studio Visual Podcast Series

Duration: 26:43

Hello, and welcome to IAMT Studio. I'm Chris Evans, head of business intelligence, and I'm joined today by a group of guests from our membership. We've got Oscar Teran, EVP markets and solutions at EVS; Jeff Burgess, VP technical program management and affiliate relations at The CW Network; and we've got Lisa Spencer, VP marketing communications at Irdeto. Welcome, everyone. So let's just start off with a little bit of a personal introduction about yourself and also the role of your company. Oscar?

Yeah. My name is Oscar Teran. As you said, I'm EVP markets and solutions, so basically I oversee the product management and go-to-market for the whole EVS portfolio, so also looking at the five-year business plan realisation with the P&L.

Jeff?

I'm vice president of technical program management and affiliate relations at The CW Network, and my role is primarily focused on satellite distribution, working with all the CW Network affiliate stations across the country who are downlinking our feed, making sure they've got the right equipment, overseeing technology migrations. And prior to that, I spent time in other companies in master control, distribution, newsroom computer systems. I've just spent a lot of time with migrations to cloud and IP.

Welcome. Lisa?

Great. Hi. So I help tell Irdeto's story globally in terms of cybersecurity, and also help with, you know, making sure that we create awareness around the dangers of cybersecurity, and the anti-piracy measures that can help make sure that our industry stays around for a long time.

Fantastic. So in today's episode of the podcast, we're going to be talking about the State of MediaTech report from IAMT. This is our flagship business intelligence report, and we'll be digging into some of the key trends and topics we've seen in it. So to start off, we're going to take a look, reviewing the technology roadmap. AI and ML tops the all-industry ranking of technology roadmap trends for the fourth consecutive edition of the IAMT State of MediaTech report. We saw that 66% of respondents to our latest MediaTech industry tracker survey cited it as an important area of their roadmap. And when asked to name only one top priority, AI and ML still ranks top, with 34% of the sample citing it. So if AI continues to lead organisations' technology investment priorities, where's AI delivering value? Oscar?

Actually, it's a very good question. I think we cannot deny that there's a hype around the technology itself. And I think that it has an impact, with all of us making usage of this incredible

technology day by day. But it's also relevant the way that you bring things together to actually add value to customers. In our case, in the case of EVS, I think that we look at it from two different look angles. First of all, productivity internally, you know, how we can become more efficient. In the other one, how can we help our customers to become more productive and more efficient, and offer them as well a new generation of creative tools. I think that's an important axis, you know, also enhance creativity without perhaps entering into the field of altering reality or creating a parallel reality, as mostly all the organisations that we serve, they are storytellers that are bound to actually stick themselves to reality. So that's a key component, I would say.

Yeah. I'd say in my experience, where I've seen the most immediate impact was with ASR, automatic speech recognition, closed captioning. That really has been very successful in a lot of circumstances. It's not the best tool for every type of content, but for the content that it's suited for, it works really well, and that's immediate impact to the bottom line in terms of cost. But that metadata has also been an area that I've seen a lot of progress in, being able to just tag content very easily, make it very findable, make it very searchable, allow editors to work much more quickly, maybe even automating off of that. And then I think localisation is the next big thing, I think, where we're going to see some big changes.

Yeah. And Lisa, at Irdeto, you see, you know, also some challenges coming with introducing AI and ML into organisations, right?

Yeah. I mean, I think, with everything, there's two sides to a coin, right? I think AI within the industry is really helping in terms of improving search and content recommendations that really helps our customers personalise things for their customers, which is obviously really important and gives a competitive edge. For us, the way we are continuing to use AI and ML is really in making sure that our anti-piracy offerings are much more robust, much more thorough and quicker in terms of being able to scan the open and the dark web for any kind of infringements. But indeed, I mean, it's really great at making organisations faster and leaner and more useful to customers. But also, you know, when we talk about deepfakes and when we talk about IP infringement and things like that, AI is getting so sophisticated that it's really hard to now distinguish what's real and what's fake, and that's something that has potentially a really negative brand impact on the IP of customers.

So I think what we're really seeing here is that, you know, there's an acceleration in how we're having to adapt to bring AI and ML into organisations. But also, as we unlock those new capabilities, we're also unlocking new challenges, and we've got to navigate those. And one of the other aspects that relates to this that we saw in the report as well is the importance of trust, right? So as we bring these new features in — one of the leading themes of the report in particular — we saw that provenance and authenticity is an emerging area of focus in technology roadmaps. So this was initially led by respondents in the Americas. So we saw last year, in 2025, that the Americas had been a leader, but now other key regions like EMEA and Asia-Pac, they're also catching up to a comparable level of engagement and seeing as well that provenance and authenticity is very important to their workflows. So in terms of the purchase decision-making, vendor reputation and relationship, this is also a key factor for MediaTech buyers. So Jeff, you know, what does establishing and maintaining trust look like in your organisation?

I think a large part of it is security. Because a lot of these AI workflows, one of the first things you hear is data, and if you want it to really work for you, well, you need to feed it data. It needs to be informed about your organisation, but then this is one of your most valuable assets, and so I think what Lisa was saying about security, it's interesting. You think, "I have to feed it data, but do I trust it not to get out?" Right? Because that would — basically, it blows up in your face at that point. So I think that's where a lot of the trust has to really be built.

And how does that look like on your side, Lisa, you know, helping your partners, your customers to find that trust and, you know, evidence that with your solutions?

Yeah. I mean, I think gone are the days when, you know, you could just trust a brand because of that brand recognition. I think with deepfakes and with AI, you're seeing a lot of uncertainty around what to believe. Can you trust what you're reading? Can you trust what you're seeing? So, you know, if we go back to talking about technology, it's part of an entire, I guess, like, provenance or trust chain. At Irdeto, we recently joined C2PA, so that kind of ability to verify that the trusted image or thing that you're reading is actually real. It's really easy to strip out metadata now, so to be able to lock that in, coupled with watermarking and then enforcements and takedowns and prosecution, the whole end-to-end chain really is important in making sure that you're establishing trust right from the jump, so that you can, you know, engender that trust and that accountability with your customers and your partners.

And what does that look like at EVS, Oscar?

I think that I can confirm that, especially since, I would say, late 2025, we started to see that the specific key RFPs, they start questioning about how — if you use AI, how do you use it? And what is the degree of, I would say, commitment with regards to respecting reality into the tools that you provide actually to different broadcasters and content owners, right? So there's that awareness. I would say that is a little bit biased by what we see in our phones and perhaps our own self-experience about what is possible, you know, and what we see in different social media channels, that that is the truth. In reality, the technology has a huge potential. So in the first pillar, as I said, I think that is productivity, pretty much in line with what you mentioned about creating metadata, making content more searchable. And also automate workflows that before they were not possible, right? How do you select a specific content that might be relevant for a specific audience? There is content personalisation. In there, there's no risk of a hallucination. However, there's another axis. In our case, for example, we launched already years ago a tool called XtraMotion that creates a slow motion, actually interpolating frames across different frames, so we can create a slow-mo out of whatever clip that we have ingested in our machines. And that initially created lots of questions, right? But in any case, whether you use AI or not, the need for interpolating the frame, it will be there. Is it something that is irresponsible because you are creating something new within a specific timeframe? Well, we were doing it before. The point is that now you put a stamp of AI, and people get somehow a little bit concerned about what you're doing behind.

So we need to be — vendors, we need to be clear what is the impact that it has in reality when we process video or we process audio. But in general, if it serves a storytelling and you are not truly manipulating what is reality, I think that it has great potential, right? And that is different than what it would be, pure hallucinations, that there's a risk, unquestionably, or it would be manipulating or creating an alternative reality.

Yeah. So another aspect of this is, you know, in the deployment. So, you know, Jeff, are you buying single-vendor solutions or multi-vendor? Is interoperability important as well in this trust conversation?

Yeah, I'd say interoperability is incredibly important, and our approach is very multi-vendor. We've yet to see the single vendor who can do it all, and really, a lot of the case for a single vendor is often that interoperability. But I think we're starting to see that be more prioritised with APIs, control planes, things of that nature. It's a lot easier now to have a wide variety of vendors working together than it was 10 years ago, and I think that's — when you're looking at the vendors, that's really what you want to hear, is a rich API and really a willingness to collaborate with other vendors that they haven't worked with before.

And how do these types of customer requests translate to what you're doing at Irdeto, EVS? What does that look like?

Yeah. We see the same thing. A lot of our customers want to really avoid that vendor lock-in. So indeed, being able to play nicely with everybody else in the ecosystem is really key.

Indeed, I can confirm that openness, true openness, is a key parameter for unleashing efficiency with respect to reusing computational resources, with respect to reusing tools in different contexts. So collaboration across all the different vendors is key. And perhaps the previous reality was based and was built around the standards. In the current days, after many years of open software communities, thanks to AI and AI development, we are going to be facing an era of really fast acceleration in interoperability requirements and how solutions and the technology stack interact, one vendor with another. So it's truly exciting times.

And I think the —

Yeah, and —

Sorry, go ahead.

Sorry. And I think, you know, in our industry right now, there's so much M&A activity going on that, at the end of the day, when you're trying to stitch together multiple backends and you have broadcast platforms and streaming platforms, you know, you don't want to throw everything out and start building from the ground up. So you need to work with vendors and partners that can help make sure that everything stays working and it doesn't break, so that you can still continue to deliver that great service to your customers.

I was going to say, it's hard for me sometimes to take, like, a five-year plan seriously. Right? I mean — or, like, a one-year plan, I'm like, "Okay, maybe."

It's go month by month.

I think that feeds back into this topic of agility, though, that we've also been talking about in the reports as well. You know, software-defined, as you mentioned, gives us that. Also, open ecosystems as well, you know. These are all things that bring together to make a more, kind of, agile and dynamic way of working. We've also talked about how we can increase the utilisation of what we've already got. So again, Jeff, I'd be interested, you know, what does that look like on the ground in terms of the deployments or the workflows that you've got going? How are you kind of challenging yourself to become more agile?

I think that, for us, it really gets back to being strategic about the ecosystem, really making sure that we're picking vendors and equipment that's future-proofed. We don't know exactly where we're going, but you have an idea. And then being able to ask those right questions. And really, I think one of the big things right now for us is building in observability, telemetry, control, that sort of thing, because a lot of the systems that we're migrating away from were very locked down. Like, satellite is something that I'm dealing with a lot right now. Like, satellite was very much you set it, you lock it in, and you may not need to touch it again for years. We're moving now to more, like, dynamic technologies, which can do many more things, but there's also a lot more that can break, like, right from the beginning. And so whereas maybe we did not need to have visibility into IRDs on the far end before, or very limited, you know, now we need to know more about it. We need to know more about the environment that we're delivering to, so if something goes wrong, we can react faster.

Interesting. And then we see, you know, kind of building on top of that observability point, one of the other key themes coming out, again, is evaluation. You know, looking at the investment and the transformation in organisations, return on investment, total cost of ownership. These were two of the other aspects of purchase decision-making that we identified that became the most important to MediaTech buyers in the latest data. We also saw that a smaller proportion of respondents expect their budgets to grow in the year ahead, and almost an equivalent, you know, number of those expected their budget to decrease. So as every investment itself is now under scrutiny, what outcomes are most important to measure? You know, what metrics do you see being most important, where you're focusing in the MediaTech supply chain? And I put that out as an open question, you know, whether that's things that — EVS or Irdeco — you're seeing, requests from your customers you're responding to. Jeff, you know, if you've kind of got directives in terms of what you're looking to surface, you know, for reporting and measurement. Does anyone want to jump in on that one?

Yeah, sure. I mean, I think just to build on, Jeff, what you were saying is, you know, you don't know what's going to be coming down in, you know, a few years in terms of technology, in terms of new innovations, in terms of where the market's heading. So for us, what we're seeing is to really be a true partner to our customers, not just a vendor, not just "Here's our, you know, widget that we're selling you." It's really understanding your business, working with organisations such as IAMT to understand where the market is heading, so that we can, from where we sit from a security point of view, advise best on how to make sure your business is secure and future-proof going forward. So I think indeed the agility comes back. We talk about trust. Trust isn't only from a technology point of view, but also trusting the people with whom you work. At the end of the day, we do business with people, not logos. So to have that relationship, to understand, you know, where the business is going, where the media landscape is going, and working together to achieve a safe, enjoyable experience for customers is really key for us in what we do day in, day out.

From an EVS perspective, actually, one of our key values is customer intimacy. So I think that the journey starts actually not at the end, not with the technology, but understanding what are the customer needs and what is his business case. So if you can attach yourself to those needs and prove that you can actually contribute to the realisation of that business within the metrics that the customer is aiming for, I think that you have more chances to pursue subsequent discussions in which perhaps technology is more relevant. So unquestionably, from that point

onwards, I think that being able to prove later on that the resources that you're providing to the customer are going to be used, and be able to have dashboards that prove usability, number of hours, SLA uptime, and that the customer understands that throughout the life cycle of the investment they've made, it managed to actually realise the business objectives that they had. I think that that is a secondary step that it has all sets. But in general, human relationships, I fully agree with Lisa, they are the first stepping stone. You need to be able to establish that relationship and speak the same language and align yourself with the objectives of the customer himself.

Yeah, I'd say for me, when it comes to, you know, ROI and equipment, a lot of that hasn't changed for me. A lot of it still comes back to the viewer, the viewer experience. Like, if we've gotten rights to the content they want to see, great, but it's got to be delivered to them. You have to have quality on that side. And so reliability, uptime, quality of experience for the viewers, I think that's still paramount, because that's ultimately who we're trying to deliver to.

Yeah. So on both sides of the fence, I can see that's very clear in terms of, you know, the delivery on the promise, you know, to your audience, and, you know, to your customers, the media end users. That's very clear. And I think as well, when, you know, we've got these other aspects like trust that might be seen as kind of more qualitative aspects to a relationship or kind of doing business — we've talked a lot about productivity, we've talked about return on investment, and all of these kind of areas, you know, increasing the volume of content that's being fed out to audiences across more devices than ever. But we can also reframe the way that we evaluate the success or the outcome of a project or a technology deployment or transformation, and, you know, can we take a more holistic approach to measuring outcomes, or are there other measurements that you're thinking about in your organisations, you know, right now? We talked maybe a little bit about team and culture, motivating innovation and product development, maybe some of the engineering aspects, maybe predictability, you know. Does anyone want to weigh in on that topic?

Indeed, it's a very interesting question. I would say that by definition the media broadcast industry has changed over time, so we are not engaging with the audience — and that is a clear fact — through a single window. So by definition, all the products that we bring to our customers, they should allow to engage with multiple audiences through multiple outlets. I know that perhaps is a motto that has been overused during the last years, but it's unthinkable that you launch a product in which you only enable the engagement with just a single group of an audience for our customers. So that is one axis. The second one is that, reconnecting with AI, AI is enabling fast prototyping as well, and the ability for being able to understand what might or might not work for the customers, hence for the company you work for. So combining these two axes, and I think that with a good understanding of what are the objectives that the customers have in mind, enable us perhaps to raise the bar and actually deliver enhanced value. That is going to be an ongoing requirement moving forward.

Yeah. And I think, you know, just what we were talking about, making sure that you are a vendor and a partner that's really agile and being really flexible. Because I think the way people consume content today, it's not like it was, you know, back in the day when you'd sit in front of the TV in the living room. Like, people are consuming content on all types of connected devices, and they're also, not only in terms of the devices, but consuming it in a different way. Irdeeto,

we're a global company, so we have, you know, customers who have very high ARPU and who are, like, always on, but then we also have use cases for customers in India who can maybe only — you know, the security guard who wants to watch, like, 15 minutes of a football match on his phone on his break.

And we have to enable our customers to be able to monetise subscriptions like that. So it's not only just being able to be flexible and agile in terms of what devices, you know, we enable our customers to provide viewing for their customers, but also how do you monetise that, and what's the different advertising strategies? So it's really, again, just being super flexible to the needs — the different geographic needs, the different age group needs — and working with your customers to understand that and then provide the technology that can support that.

Yeah. When I think right now, like, about holistic, everything's so fragmented. There's so many ways to watch. There's so many ways to consume, and so there's so many more things that can break. And, you know, I come from master control, so we're always like, "Okay, spot a problem. How can we automatically detect that?" And that's come a long way, but there's still so many things that break that require somebody to complain, and for the right person to hear it, and then to initiate action and fix it. And so when I hear about, you know, agentic AI and all these things, my mind immediately goes there. Like, can we get to the data? Can we spot an issue faster? Can we fix it faster? Because there's just so many things now that are still — the data is in different places. You can't access it in a single place. Like, there's a lot of opportunity there just to move in a more automated way, fix problems.

One of the other dimensions we talked a little bit about as well was ESG and, you know, if we're seeing that continue to be present in RFPs and pieces like that, as well as one of these other metrics of performance. So does anyone want to kind of offer their perspective on that?

Yeah. I think for us, we're seeing — so it's both a push and a pull. So at Irdeto, we've been very heavily involved in ESG for the past decade. We're not — you know, we're a software security company, so we have Scope 3 emissions, more so than actual hardware things. But we're really trying to limit that. In terms of how we use AI, we try to use it responsibly because, as we know, it consumes an incredible amount of resources that's actually impacting today, you know, the storage capacity and everything else. So we try to use AI responsibly internally. But also from customers, we're seeing that that's a requirement now, that they want to work with companies who are ethical, who have ESG postures. We have some customers who are very, very all in, and even they look at some of the documentation that we provide. There's, you know, traditional kind of coding language that's like master, slave, and white box, black box, and even things like that. They're like, "We need to find a better way on how to communicate this." So it's something that we take seriously. It's something that our customers take seriously, and it's just the right thing to do.

I would agree. Actually, EVS is a publicly traded company. We report on ESG matters, so from a different axis, from security to carbon footprint, to responsible hiring, talent management, you know, impact on local and wider communities. So it's part of our DNA. Actually, it's translated even to the product design phase. So as a code of good practice internally, we used to assign to all the different product managers and solutions managers to at least be able to impact one metric around carbon footprint. Which is a little bit controversial because it can be measured from different look angles, right? So if you're just thinking the global impact that you do overall by

actually processing video, unless you establish a market per hour or per volume, it is very unlikely that you will be able to grow the P&L and at the same time reduce drastically your carbon footprint. So it's a challenge that has, I would say, a marketing component, but if you take it seriously — and we do — it also impacts the design process on the products themselves, and perhaps even holistically how you're going to help in transforming, at the end, the industry that is based on storytelling, you know, from one angle or another. So very interesting, you know, and actually a point for attention for the whole industry.

Yeah. I've seen the level of corporate responsibility, you know, evolve to become a greater issue. Typically, for me, my role is typically more at the corporate level. It is defined there. But we, of course, you know, believe in these ethical approaches to solving these problems. And a lot of times things align. A lot of times, you know — it's better for the environment not to have these AI cycles. It's better for the company. Like, you know, I think aligning — the company is in business to make money, but at the same time, you can do both. You can do both. And finding those ways to where we can be responsible financially and also ethical at the same time, you know, they line up quite a lot.

Yeah. I think that, you know, that topic as you mentioned about evaluation, think about outcomes, think about purpose. This is becoming much more clear in the State of MediaTech right now in terms of organisations throughout the value supply chain having to be very clear in their direction, and then again, that comes back to the leadership in terms of understanding, you know, what the key objectives are. So, you know, I really appreciate everyone sharing their perspectives, you know, Lisa, Jeff, Oscar, in terms of getting us into the deeper aspects of these topics of trust, evaluation, and agility. So thank you all for joining me today.

Thank you.

Appreciate it. And if you want to have more information about the business intelligence at IAMT, you can find out more about accessing the State of MediaTech on our brand-new website, and then also check out more about the other member benefits on theiamt.org.