

Providing a streaming solution for screaming fans

Hackensack-based LiveU making process easy and affordable

BY ANDREW SHELDON

When the schools in the football-playing portion of the Big East were forced to rebrand themselves as the American Athletic Conference in 2013 following the league's breakup, they knew they needed to do something to get maximum exposure for their new league.

Simply put, they wanted to get their live events in front of their fans. And do it in a way that works on social media and on mobile platforms.

Hackensack-based technology company LiveU provided the answer.

By utilizing wireless and mobile networks, the company has given organizations the ability to broadcast live events — at roughly one-tenth of the price of traditional satellite broadcasting — with equipment that can be stored in a backpack.

There is a variety of plans and prices, but LiveU's flagship product — including all hardware, software, bandwidth and data services — sells for roughly \$2,000 a month. Its users then have the opportunity to generate ad revenue.

For many, it's simply a marketing investment.

Working with LiveU, the AAC created the American Digital Network, giving the conference the ability to broadcast thousands of hours of events. Last spring, more than 80 hours of online content was produced during the league's basketball tournaments.

"Getting our brand out there has been important for us, since we're a relatively new conference," said **Mark Hodgkin**, assistant commissioner of digital media at the AAC. "So them being able to do that and do it in a cost-effective way has really helped us expand our brand."

LiveU executives are quick to point out that their product is more than just live broadcasts. The technology allows users to clip video shorts to be placed on social media even while the event is still taking place.



LiveU's Ken Zamkow holds company's LU200 video transmission device and LU500 video transmission backpack. —AARON HOUSTON

Spanning the globe ...

LiveU's customers played a big role in supplying online content from this year's World Cup, with more than 200 units, 80 broadcasters and 816 hours of live footage.



"What they'll do is have a private live feed with a camera in a LiveU backpack and then there's someone sitting back at the home office and picking the best stuff — then very quickly clipping it into **Twitter** and **Facebook**," said **Ken Zamkow**, vice president of marketing at LiveU. "Whenever something happens, literally within seconds, there's already a video clip being posted on social media."

So here's the obvious question: What's the quality?

Zamkow said it's so good it's tough to know the difference from a satellite broadcast.

"We combine a number of cellular connections like 4G, LTE, 3G and so on, on all the available carriers: **Verizon**, **AT&T**, **Sprint** and **T-Mobile**," Zamkow said. "By doing that, we get the bandwidth that we need and the stability that we need to transmit very high-quality video from anywhere."

And its merits go beyond

cost cutting. These cellular connections are more flexible than traditional satellite broadcasting.

The **New York Jets**, who just signed a deal with the company in November, utilize this flexibility during practices and pregame routines, producing both bonus live coverage and clips for social media.

"We can transmit on the move, so in the example of the Jets, they can walk around on the field, the tunnels, the locker room and so on, and transmit live the whole time," Zamkow said.

The Jets are just one of nearly two dozen **NFL** teams using LiveU.

The bigger market, however, is in college, as LiveU enables schools to broadcast sports that would never receive airtime on more traditional media.

"If you look at soccer, lacrosse, women's basketball, track and field, now a lot of schools

and conferences are using LiveU to put all this live content of actual competition on their websites and mobile apps," Zamkow said. "That's a very big trend."

Zamkow is quick to point out that LiveU is not just for sports.

"A lot of organizations that could not previously afford to produce live video, just because it wasn't part of their business model, now can actually produce live video," he said.

Apart from being more financially accessible, the LiveU backpacks are intuitive and easy to use for the companies who purchase the technology.

"In the vast majority of cases, the customers operate the equipment on their own: They provide their own camera crews and their own cameras," he said. "We provide the devices for the LiveU backpacks, the data services, all the cloud services, warranty, support and a 24/7 helpdesk."

If a customer is still confused, Zamkow said, the company has also provided short videos available on their website.

It's these forms of accessibility, easy use and affordability coupled with the growing mobile

The biz in brief

COMPANY: LiveU

HEADQUARTERS: Hackensack

FOUNDED: 2006

EMPLOYEES: 140

FINANCIALS: The private company would not release revenue, but said it's a venture-backed company that has raised more than \$50 million.

EXECUTIVES: Co-founder and CEO Samuel Wasserman; co-founder and COO Alvi Cohen.

trend that has helped the company grow.

Formed in 2006 by a handful of founders, the company now employs 140 people. Zamkow joined the team when the company expanded in 2009 as a result of the mobile boom.

And it's a market that only has the potential for growth, he said.

"We're very happy to see how far along we've come in the past few years as an industry, just in terms of the capacity that's available and its speed," Zamkow said. "And it's only going to get better, so in the next few years I think we'll see more and more deployment and faster networks."

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