



MediaKind Strengthens Content Security and Geo-Restriction Enforcement for Sports Streaming with Digital Element's Advanced IP Data Solutions

Scenario

As the streaming industry continues to grow to meet the increasing demand of an expanding connected subscriber base, MediaKind is dedicated to providing the best in live premium video streaming experiences, delivering highly scalable and secure direct-to-consumer solutions for top-tier sports. However, with the proliferation of online video content, people—in their hunt for free or cheap entertainment—are constantly developing new ways to access these services illegally. One popular piracy strategy for circumventing geo-restricted video content involves the usage of Virtual Private Networks (VPNs).

More than three-quarters of people use VPNs for personal use.¹ Protecting personal data and activities online are often cited as the main reasons people give for using VPNs. However, recent research indicates 62 percent of VPN users are actually trying to bypass geographical restrictions.²

With these types of statistics, companies like MediaKind, that offer global video-delivery services, are constantly looking for technology solutions to help prevent illegal access to geo-restricted content.

“MediaKind is trusted by the world’s leading sports leagues, content owners, broadcasters, and cable operators to deliver a high-quality video experience,” said Cory Zachman, senior vice president of engineering and services at MediaKind. “Our customers have a lot of restrictions when delivering their content. They need to ensure that they’re offering the right content, at the right price to users

depending on their locations. Over the last few years, we've seen fraudulent activity increase as more users are spoofing their locations via VPNs and other tricks to watch content for free—or at a price that is lower than what it should be.”

Zachman highlighted that while his team had experimented with other geolocation data solutions, they struggled with inconsistent accuracy, which limited their ability to fully address the problem. In addition to precise geolocation data, he emphasized the need for comprehensive VPN and proxy detection to effectively identify and mitigate suspicious traffic that might be masking its true location.

Recognizing these challenges, one of MediaKind's tier-1 sports clients, who had been leveraging Digital Element's IP data and technology since 2001, recommended the company's solutions, citing Digital Element's ability to bolster the security and enforcement of digital rights for streaming content while offering a comprehensive data sets to help solve the growing issues MediaKind was facing.

Solution

“We had used other solutions in the past and found that Digital Element had a much more accurate data model,” said Zachman. “We were also very interested in the VPN-detection service which would allow us to prompt users to change their network connectivity to get content properly.”

Zachman's team tested Digital Element's data with MediaKind's software. The team also conducted extensive scale testing and Digital Element was able to handle thousands of requests per second to support the millions of concurrent online users often associated with live sporting events.

“We performed an integration with Digital Element's data services and really liked the model where we could run their software locally in our cluster as a container. This allowed for faster response times and more secure communications,” Zachman added.



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Cory Zachman

Senior VP of Engineering and Services, MediaKind

To support their content security efforts, MediaKind has been utilizing the following Digital Element solutions:

NetAcuity Pulse™: The industry's first mobile-centric, IP-targeting database that effectively reaches more of today's online traffic—which is made up of both connected and mobile users.

NetAcuity Proxy & VPN Databases: Proxy and VPN decisioning datasets that help control access to networks, detect suspicious traffic, prevent online fraud, manage the distribution of digital rights, and comply with location-based legal restrictions.

GeoMprint: Reverse geocoding solution targeted at mobile device traffic, converting a device's raw location coordinates into more useful geographic information.

“We chose Digital Element over other IP data providers because of its proven reliability, accuracy, and customer support,” Zachman said. “The support team is very responsive, especially if we need to update an IP address or location.”

Success

MediaKind leverages Digital Element's IP data to manage geolocation restrictions for two of its tier-1 sports leagues, as well as several regional sports networks that are bound by strict rules about where their content can be accessed. These networks must ensure that content is only available in authorized locations, often due to licensing agreements. In addition to managing these location-based restrictions, MediaKind uses Digital Element's solutions to enforce “couch rights.” This concept allows users to access content outside of their designated home region for up to 30 days. However, after this period, users lose access to the content unless they return to their home location, helping to prevent extended unauthorized viewing in different regions.

“This has been a really easy solution to integrate. The setup process is very simple and we have been able to completely automate it for any new deployment—launching quickly and at scale,” Zachman said.

After integrating Digital Element’s IP data, one of MediaKind’s customers, a regional sports network devoted exclusively to baseball, has beat its planned number of subscriptions by 20 percent with almost no technical glitches. “This means the content is not being stolen and people are paying to use the service,” Zachman added.

MediaKind plans to continue using Digital Element as the default solution for all new customer deployments well into the future.

According to Zachman, “Since deploying Digital Element’s data solutions, the experience has been smooth, especially in the realm of content security, where “no news is good news.” The partnership has been seamless, with Digital Element delivering a reliable, top-tier product, accurate data, and excellent support. Their solutions have integrated effortlessly into our business model, ensuring mutual success.”

¹ <https://privacysavvy.com/vpn/guides/vpn-statistics/>

² <https://wifitalents.com/statistic/vpn-usage/>

About Digital Element

Digital Element is the global IP geolocation and intelligence leader. In business for more than two decades, the company has unrivaled expertise in leveraging IP address insights to deliver new value to companies in a privacy-sensitive, transparent manner. Leveraged by the world’s most recognized brands, Digital Element provides clients with innovative solutions designed to optimize engagement across industries and applications, creating unique value at every consumer touchpoint.