

## Crown Media Takes Advantage of Akamai Adaptive Media Player to Nearly Double Hallmark Channel Online Audience Reach and Unlock New Sources of Revenue



### Supporting New Consumer Viewing Preferences

Building upon its legacy as the oldest and largest greeting card manufacturer in the United States, Hallmark has become synonymous with the holidays – most notably, Christmas. In fact, since 2008, Hallmark Channel has produced over 136 original Christmas movies and is regularly ranked as one of the top three most-watched cable channels during the Christmas season.

The network is owned by Crown Media Family Networks, a subsidiary of Hallmark Cards, Inc. In recent years, Crown Media needed to deliver its content through a wider variety of platforms to meet new consumer viewing preferences. Seeing opportunity in the fact that many viewers are embracing more platforms, Crown Media is continually finding ways to make its programming accessible to a broader audience. Though mainly known for Hallmark Channel, Crown Media has launched two additional linear networks – Hallmark Movies & Mysteries and Hallmark Drama – along with both video on demand (VOD) and subscription video on demand (SVOD) platforms.

### Needing to Evolve From Basic to Sophisticated Workflows

Programming is no problem for Crown Media. The network has produced so much content over the years that it can easily run movies 24/7 during the holiday season. But reaching viewers on new platforms while tracking and understanding them to best serve advertisers is no small feat, and requires increasingly sophisticated workflows, media players, and reporting.

## CrownMedia



#### COMPANY

Crown Media  
Studio City, California  
corporate.crownmedia.com

#### INDUSTRY

Media & Entertainment

#### SOLUTIONS

- Adaptive Media Player
- Adaptive Media Delivery
- Media Services Live
- Media Analytics

#### KEY IMPACTS

- Seamlessly supported all platforms with a single player
- Simplified internal operations and application development
- Enabled third-party requirements: Nielsen, FreeWheel, Comscore, and Adobe
- Nearly doubled audience reach
- Gained ability to fully monetize content
- Earned higher app store ratings

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Crown Media had been working with multiple vendors to address various aspects of its multiplatform strategy, including online video, encoding, and tagging. Moreover, Crown Media had to manage multiple players native to each platform. The prior applications and media player solution did not adequately support live linear channels, nor did they support Nielsen viewer measurement.

Nielsen's TV audience ratings now include digital, enabling Crown Media to better understand viewing habits and monetize audiences beyond traditional television. While Nielsen certification is incredibly valuable to Crown Media, the process is time-consuming.

### Calling Upon a Trusted Partnership

Crown Media had already developed a trusted relationship with Akamai, using its solutions to distribute Crown Media's content. The company realized it could reduce the number of vendors it works with, and minimize integrations by also taking advantage of the Akamai Adaptive Media Player (AMP).

In addition to optimized adaptive bitrate playback, AMP includes Nielsen tracking, media analytics, FreeWheel AdManager integration, and live linear content support. It also supports business-critical measurement tools, namely Adobe Analytics and Comscore.

*The Akamai solution eliminated the need to rebuild the same functionality for every web, mobile, and television platform. This helped Crown Media double their audience.*

**Crown Media: Akamai Case Study**

### Expanding Audience Reach and Going Beyond Traditional Advertising

With Akamai Adaptive Media Player in place, Crown Media was able to pursue its multiplatform vision with a new approach. Crown Media previously had to repeatedly build out the same functionality for each player. With the AMP SDK, Crown Media was able to launch a single player for all platforms: web (desktop and mobile), mobile (iOS and Android), and TV (tvOS and Fire TV). Plus, since Akamai is experienced in certifying on Nielsen and integrating robust advertising, Crown Media enjoyed a relatively straightforward certification process.

AMP's Engineering and Professional Services experts helped maximize the impact of Crown Media's video player deployment. For example, Crown Media now faces fewer touchpoints in spite of having a more sophisticated workflow incorporating an internal CMS and advanced analytics.

Now Crown Media has a player that supports VOD and linear on major platforms, with Nielsen tracking across all of them. The new player enabled Crown Media to nearly double its audience reach over the Christmas 2018 season. Plus, it made it possible for the company to fully monetize its content, resulting in higher app store ratings.

Going forward, Crown Media is positioned to take advantage of Akamai's experience and AMP to continually advance its capabilities. With support for header bidding and server-side ad integration, AMP will make it possible to further monetize Crown Media content. In the meantime, Crown Media is already enjoying the benefits of expanding its partnership with Akamai.

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## About Crown Media Family Networks

Crown Media Family Networks is a subsidiary of Hallmark Cards, Inc., housing cable’s leading family-friendly networks, Hallmark Channel, Hallmark Movies & Mysteries, and Hallmark Drama. Hallmark Channel features new original content, including movies, scripted series, annual specials, and a daily two-hour lifestyle show. Hallmark Channel is also home to the popular annual holiday franchise “Countdown to Christmas,” featuring a lineup of 24/7 holiday programming. Hallmark Movies & Mysteries is a 24-hour cable network featuring a unique mix of new original movies and acquired series focused on the lighter side of the suspense and mystery genres. The network also features its own annual holiday programming franchise, “Miracles of Christmas.” Hallmark Drama showcases the rich legacy of the Hallmark Hall of Fame library – and with zero duplication, spotlights movies and series from Crown Media’s collection of original dramatic content.

Crown Media Family Networks is also home to Hallmark Movies Now, the company’s subscription streaming service, which offers wholly distinct content from the company’s linear channels. Crown Media Family Networks’ digital publishing extension, Hallmark Publishing, is an e-book division that creates novelizations of previously aired original movie favorites.



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