

# OpenMedia Facilitates Central Planning for WDR Newsrooms

Regions rely on OpenMedia for end-to-end production

Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR) is the largest regional broadcaster in Germany and second largest in all of Europe. Operating within the consortium of Germany's public broadcasters, WDR programs six radio channels and the state-wide television channel WDR Fernsehen. It also produces almost a quarter of the programming for the national network, Das Erste. WDR serves a population of over 18 million people in the western state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW).



Photo Credit: "Bild:WDR/Schulze"(S1)"



WDR Regional Studios



## the challenge

WDR has always emphasized the importance of regional news coverage in its programming and wanted to strengthen the services by unifying the news planning for the 10 regional studios and the station in the state capital at Dusseldorf to make the sharing more transparent.

Each of the locations independently produces and broadcasts a half-hour evening television newscast (M-Sa). Often a story produced in one location has relevance to another regional studio. Dortmund may cover a story that has interest in Essen. Or the state-wide public affairs program Aktuelle Stunde may request a story from a regional studio. But sharing and keeping critical information current was difficult. In the fast-paced newsrooms, communications by phone, fax and email were encumbered by time lags. "We were looking for an easier, more dynamic way to arrange, view and share planning," says Wolfgang Kaiser, WDR Head of Investment and Strategic Project Management. "OpenMedia was already installed in some of our operations, and as we realized the system's capabilities for sharing planning, we conceived the "OpenMedia Region" project.

## the solution

OpenMedia is an advanced Newsroom Computer System (NCS) that provides maximum flexibility, speed and scalability for handling the essential tasks of news production. OpenMedia is infinitely scalable with a client-server architecture that delivers robust, reliable performance even with thousands of simultaneous users connected to a single server. Highly configurable, the system can be adapted to meet diverse workflows. The extensive rights management and metadata infrastructure safeguards assets while making them more accessible for authorized sharing and repurposing. With full UNICODE support, OpenMedia operates in a familiar Windows environment with powerful desktop tools that facilitate planning, scripting, rundown creation and management. Playout functionality includes detailed show-tracking and sophisticated gallery features. The system is fully compliant with the Media Object Server (MOS) protocol, and the OpenMedia Interface Services (OMIS) framework facilitates the integration of 3rd party systems including video production systems, automation and studio devices.

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Wolfgang Kaiser, WDR  
Head of Investment  
and Strategic Project  
Management



"Bild:WDR" (S1)"



**Open Media at WDR**

11 Systems in Regional Studios  
1800 users

Newswire Distribution System  
Cologne - 4500 users

Centralized Radio System  
Cologne -100 users

"ARD Morgenmagazin (MoMa)  
Popular national 3 ½ Hour Morning Magazine  
Produced for "Das Erste"  
Cologne – 300 users

**OpenMedia - WDR Infrastructure**

HP IT environment

Microsoft SQL Server®

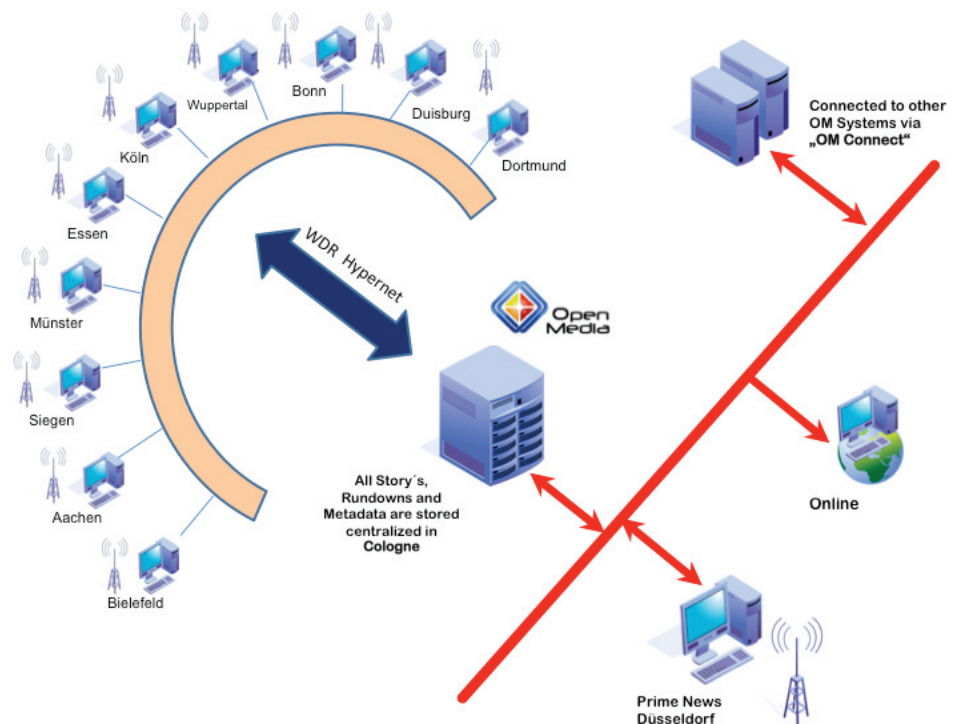
Microsoft Windows® OS

EMC Virtual Storage

**the workflow**

OpenMedia serves as the bi-directional, metadata and planning system for the entire radio and television editorial workflow for the WDR regions – from story concept production and scheduling, to transmission and beyond. The "OpenMedia Region" project was completed over a 2-year period as the studios each consecutively installed OpenMedia newswire systems to handle the intensive scripting, planning and rundown management within each location. With the studios all in the OpenMedia environment, the centralized planning and efficiency was achieved by using high speed connections to communicate with a dedicated OpenMedia Region server in Cologne, now the central repository for all planning data.

Unique configurations and rights management in OpenMedia allow users within a region to instantly access, view, manage, and update their own region's planning. They have "read only" rights to planning information from the other regions. Editors may assign a story to a journalist from their own unit or to someone from another region. The designated author is automatically granted the ability to write (or add) new information to relevant metadata fields linked to that story. As the new data is saved, it is stored in the central server where it is immediately available for viewing by all regional units.



**the benefits**

To extend the sharing capabilities, WDR has begun deploying OpenMedia Connect, a configuration which allows multiple OpenMedia systems to directly access each other. Authorized users from any of the OpenMedia Region servers can now access the separate OpenMedia Newswire Distribution System (NDS) in Cologne which manages agency newswires throughout WDR. The central archive is also accessible with rights controlled in OpenMedia by highly precise permissions that can be extended to individual metadata fields. Release of materials occurs only when the required approval level for the asset has been satisfied. The strong rights protocols and extensive metadata management features in OpenMedia can also be used to facilitate production of content for different purposes, such as educational outreach, VOD, or the web.

WDR is constantly finding new ways to use their OpenMedia systems to gain efficiencies. The regional studios are currently in the process of integrating OpenMedia with Avid Interplay and ISIS video production systems and playout servers to streamline production and enable semi-automatic playout. Also underway are integrations with the VCS playout management "DIRA SchedPlayer" used to control the playout with Avid Airspeed.



**ANNOVA Systems GmbH**  
Dachauer Straße 124  
D 80637 Munich Germany  
Phone: +49 (89) 158 155 0  
Fax: +49 (89) 158 155 555  
www.annova-systems.com  
info@annova-systems.com