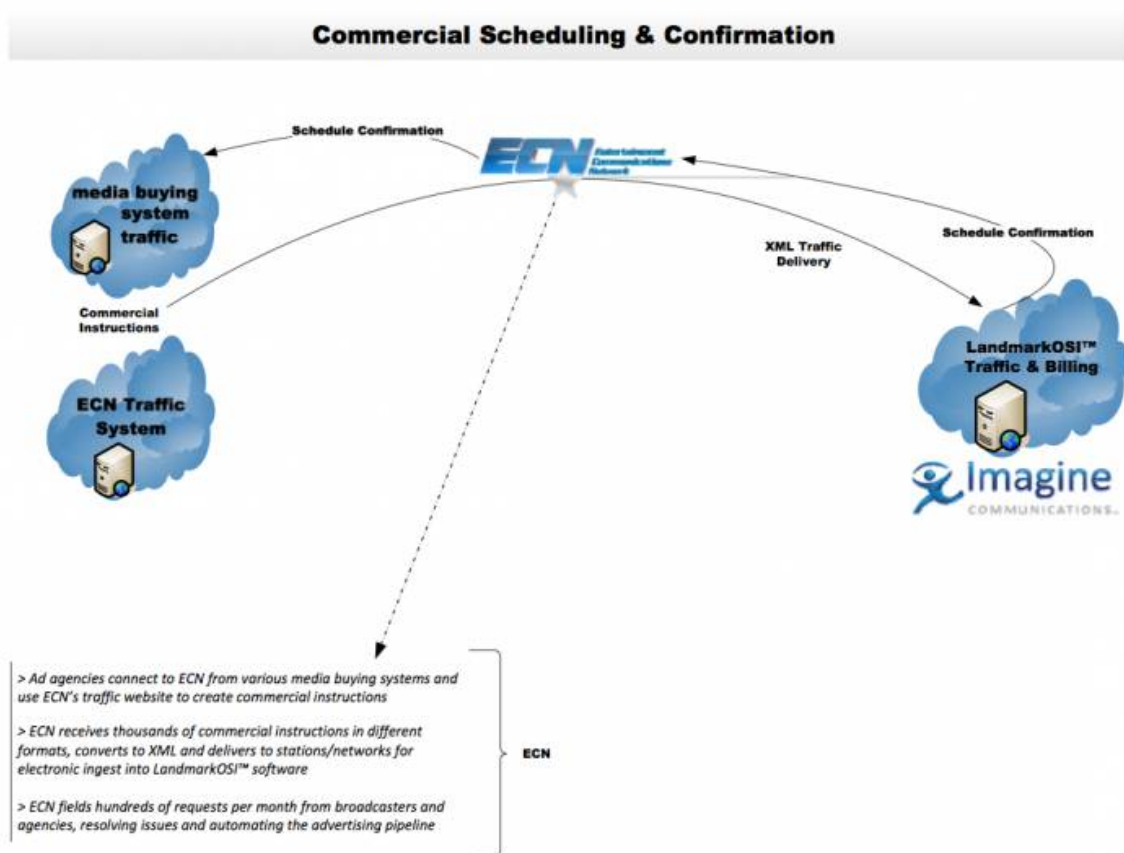


SOFTWARE BROADCAST INFRASTRUCTURE THE ——— BRIDGE

Menu

Imagine Communications Further Automates Traffic And Billing, In Compliance With BXF 3.0 Standard



An “automated copy feature” feature was developed in partnership with Entertainment Communications Network.

By leveraging the well-established Broadcast Exchange Format (BXF) for integrating traffic and billing systems with related parts of a broadcast infrastructure, vendors of such administrative systems for TV and radio stations can improve the handling of commercial content by reducing human error as well as ensuring that the spots air at the right time and within the desired program.

More than 15 years ago the industry saw automated contract entry and, later, automatically generated invoices. Now, Imagine Communications, in partnership with the Entertainment Communications Network (ECN), has added new functionality to its LandmarkOSI traffic and billing software that is fully compatible with the new SMPTE Broadcast eXchange Format (BXF) 3.0 standard.

ECN operates a file-based automated commercial delivery service used by ad agencies to deliver thousands of commercial instructions to broadcast TV and radio stations every day. The new functionality streamlines the ordering and handling of commercials by bringing what was a manual process into the digital age.

“For more than 40 years the focus for digital automation for billing has been on the order for a commercial and on the invoice after a spot has run,” said Angela Tietze, president, CEO of ECN. “Yet, a lot of people didn’t look at that internal processes required to get the spot to air. As great as the creative may be, the most critical step in the process to ensure that spot airs correctly is getting it scheduled into the traffic system. Imagine has now done that, based on our requests, and I think LandmarkOSI customers will be very pleased.” The new feature, is called “automated copy”.

Currently, many stations receive instructions related to commercial campaigns via fax machine or email, but it still has to be input manually into the broadcaster’s traffic system. Now stations can receive these instructions electronically and send them to an “electronic copy box” that matches all elements of that spot and combines them automatically with associated metadata, all without human intervention. Along with full BXF 3.0 compliance, the new “metadata matching” feature is part of the latest version (8.4) of Imagine’s LandmarkOSI software and is scheduled to be released soon.

A blue rectangular box with a white border containing the text: "How much revenue do you lose on make-goods for ads that didn't run as scheduled?"

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Aside from technical enhancements to the previous standard, BXF 3.0's biggest improvement is in the area of commercial content and how it is entered into a traffic system. "Copy errors are very costly to our broadcast customers and when they are made, a lot of the time they are not discovered until after the contract has ended," said Allison Coquet, senior product manager for Imagine Communications.

Currently, stations and networks spend an average of three to four minutes inputting commercial copy by entering the airdate, advertiser, brand, commercial code (Ad-ID or ISCI), length and other details into their traffic systems.

The integration between ECN's service and LandmarkOSI is designed to significantly accelerate workflows between media placement and airtime. Commercial schedules are ingested using XML, which eliminates the need to manually enter the information. By leveraging XML delivery of agency-approved commercial instructions, broadcasters can more quickly review, reconcile, revise and reach consumers—all with greater accuracy

and less expense. Some Imagine customers say they expect to see 50 percent efficiency once it's deployed. Other benefits of the "automated copy feature" include closer-to-air ad buys, last-minute scheduling changes and immediate scheduling confirmation.



Imagine's LandmarkOSI traffic and billing software is fully compatible with the new SMPTE BXF 3.0 standard and streamlines the ordering and handling of commercials.

"We've been working on integrating our system with Imagine's, so that we can translate this large volume of instructions we receive from all of these different sources in a way that Imagine can read it so that the LandmarkOSI platform can ingest it," ECN's Tietze said. An example of an "instruction" would be information that identifies a specific spot and establishes when and where it should run. The new functionality also enables changes to be made on the fly, based on regions it is airing in or other factors; giving ad agencies more flexibility.

The key benefit is that broadcasters can take the metadata related to a commercial and automatically feed it into the software. Staff at the receiving end can focus on entering the media itself, not the raw metadata. LandmarkOSI Traffic & Billing customers can now electronically confirm and accept incoming instructions with a click of the button while having a streamlined process for order updates.

“The new automated copy feature can yield significant efficiency gains for our LandmarkOSI Traffic & Billing customers, improving productivity and reducing copy input mistakes and discrepancies,” said Sarah Foss, vice president, product management, advertising management systems, at Imagine Communications. “Manually typing copy instructions from e-mail or fax originals into the traffic system is now a thing of the past.”