

Has the future of delivering secured artistic content arrived?

Interview with Jackson Ball, chief technology officer of Artistes du Globe, worlds first broadband network for the arts.

So what is Artistes du Globe?

There is great need in the arts world for two big things - one is a really powerful, arts oriented social network that encompasses and empowers all performing and visual art disciplines, and the other is a means to deliver our artistic content safely in the lucrative digital economy. The two concepts are mutually supportive, the social network providing critical conversation, "voice" to empower change - and the content delivery system providing the structure for our revenue and security requirements.

The Artistes du Globe social network is based on Telligent Enterprise, the same core technology powering MySpace, Electronic Arts, Microsoft, Dell and many other global communities. We are customizing it with a calendar of events, media galleries and deep profiles, jobs and auditions, nested communities so companies can have their own public or private mini community, an e-commerce system so costumes, props, materials and services can be bought and sold, wikis, forums, blogs, RSS, external links and more. And it encompasses all performing and visual art forms.

Clearly, there is a very great opportunity and very painful convergence occurring in the world of performing arts. Revenue generation in the arts today is largely based on ticket sales for physical performances. An emerging approach involves leveraging on-demand, repeating royalty based revenue channels by streaming HD video content securely to consumers TV's, computers, movie screens and mobile devices. We know that leading edge technologies finally allow these evolutions. It is painful as Producers all over the world are renegotiating contracts with unions and artists to allow for greater exploitation of their now

repeatable content, with language that supports its reuse in both traditional and emerging broadband markets.

The problem? There is no mechanism anywhere that could provide all of the streaming video services, content security, HD quality, supporting web applications and detailed payment systems to facilitate these new "recurring royalty" possibilities, and model the resulting art industry interactions that would be needed in web portals.

A compelling Arts oriented Social Network connected to an interactive streaming HD broadband video system that secures premium content and pays everyone in near real-time!

New "interactive video" technology supports revolutionary e-learning models, connecting student and art school, artists and choreographer in real time with free or paid courses, interactive, public and private video and audio with chat. Producers can upload-stream LIVE performances to servers, which then stream out to paid subscribers worldwide.

All of these compelling solutions and more is what Artistes du Globe is all about. Two years of groundwork and programming, substantial investment, no venture capital and debt free. Now we are ready for the arts to embrace the dream and make a difference together.

How exactly is the content controlled and delivered?

We have a strategic alliance with Adobe Systems for Flash based multi-directional interactive video technology. With it, we stream content from source to screen in an encrypted format to prevent network piracy. With it we maintain a connection to the custom Player. Streaming is secure because it plays once and dumps the file. Adobe's technology addresses

the fact that not everyone can receive HD content across their internet connection. We monitor the real time latency, and automatically vary the bit-rate to assure optimized seamless viewing. We employ technologies like secure applications, real time verification of the content going to the right consumer and the right player, and other server based security. We will start doing it all from end to end and move to a network like Akamai with 12,000 global servers once justified by the market.

The visual images will be directed to wireless, large format picture display units with user controlled matting colors and simulated textures. Consumers will select images to display around the home or office. If the artist has a gallery in the area, that gallery can be credited when a local consumer in their area selects their contracted art. After explaining how it works, a gallery owner in Sante-Fe literally chased me down to make sure we contact him upon launch, in fact every artist and gallery we approached gave a resounding yes to this approach and they will sell the service and displays. In addition to the wall displays, Artists can enable their images to be purchased for straight download, similar to IStock or Getty Images.

So what will it cost to use this service? How does the industry make money?

This is a very cool part of the story. Consumers will have an unprecedented variety of low cost arts on demand. Dance, opera, symphony, plays, artistic/acrobatics, grass root highly entertaining independent or formal arts of

high quality from around the world played up to HD quality to full-screen TV, computers and mobile devices. Because Artistes du Globe is delivered across the internet, costs are lower and getting lower. With most revenue going back to stakeholders, consumer costs can be low, yet profitable.

Producers can create consumer viewing rules like number of permitted views and over what date range, and for what countries around the world. Producers can create stakeholders or import Artists and associate them to a particular Performance, assigning precise Acorn credit amounts for each consumer purchase. Acorn balances are credited in near real time, automatically flowing to all the stakeholders according to the payment rules. Artists have their own Portal where they see all their Acorn earnings across all shows and producers floating in the economy, and can convert them into their own Acorn balance as well as to cash credit on their credit card. We might go after our own Artistes du Globe branded card.

About Acorns. Early in the system design, considering all the different interactions between consumers, artists, producers, art schools, students, galleries and humanitarians, it was seen that a synthetic currency made great sense. We built Artistes du Globe from the ground up to support the use of "Acorns" to power the "economy". I must admit that we hope that like squirrels, members will hoard Acorns in the system, which helps us with cash flow and float so we can do ever greater things for the arts.

A feature of Artistes du Globe is a technology enabled spirit of giving. We enable consumers to give extra Acorns to Artists, Producers and Humanitarians using a "tip-jar" system, or directly give to their favorite humanitarian as they purchase art. I joyfully predict many occasions where some named or anonymous benefactor will deposit a lot of Acorns into some deserving re-

cipients account. The Artistes du Globe Foundation will emerge to help build the arts and artists with education, filming and market reach scholarships.

You mentioned you have no venture capital, why is that?

This subject goes right to the heart of Artistes du Globe values, strategies and long term philosophy. It's not that we have not spoken to a few venture capitalists. This is a big project with a lot of complexities, and we have accomplished most of it already, so we are not a typical angel round. We have no revenue yet, and we have a prevailing social conscience orientation. We do not need to dilute ourselves and lose control of our destiny. We would rather attract a few private believer/investors or donations.

Another rub involves our revenue philosophy. This whole project is not about us padding our pockets. It is about investing the resources we have to reach this vision, enable and prosper the Arts with leading edge technologies delivered as a cost effective service that increases market reach and directly benefits the arts.

We believe and others will too. We will charge \$7 a year to join the community and nothing for the Art-Serve delivery network, \$17 for a professional membership, and there are group memberships, sponsors and e-commerce memberships. We charge 50 acorns to encode, encrypt and enable Producer content to the live network.

We see much of our revenue going right back into scholarships for art students to work with global interactive instruction and coaching, and for HD filming for the network. It is only going to get faster as bandwidth multiplies in coming years. And now that TiVo, FOX and ABC are moving to Flash for their HD broadband offering, it is only going to get much better and fast.

Artists are givers by nature I think, and our way is too giving oriented for traditional investment thinking. This is for the long term benefit of reaching new consumers with diverse art, connecting with artists and industry professionals in conversation and commerce. I can't see selling out to traditional media like Viacom or Time Warner. Maybe Disney or Discovery would continue our values.

The industry need for the solutions embraced by Artistes du Globe is so compelling, we feel that the Arts world will support it, and we will do extraordinary things together. This is indeed a feel-good endeavor for everyone. I predict the Art-Serve Network will start slowly, and build substantially over 3-5 years as great content is added and consumers are informed. Those who provide the best content early will benefit most. We would love to see the community go viral quickly because that will accelerate everything and provide the marketing funds and publicity to grow the media network customer base.

When will you be open for business?

We are about 98% complete - over 800 functions across seven Portals. Every user category can now register themselves. No actual content yet. This was planned. We are on target for Spring 2010 and a solid plan for market awareness and growth. Shout out to Dell for the incredible server infrastructure they provided. What a start.

We encourage all readers to sign up for our newsletter. See the link on our home page. System training videos coming soon.

Artistes du Globe
the art of making a difference together