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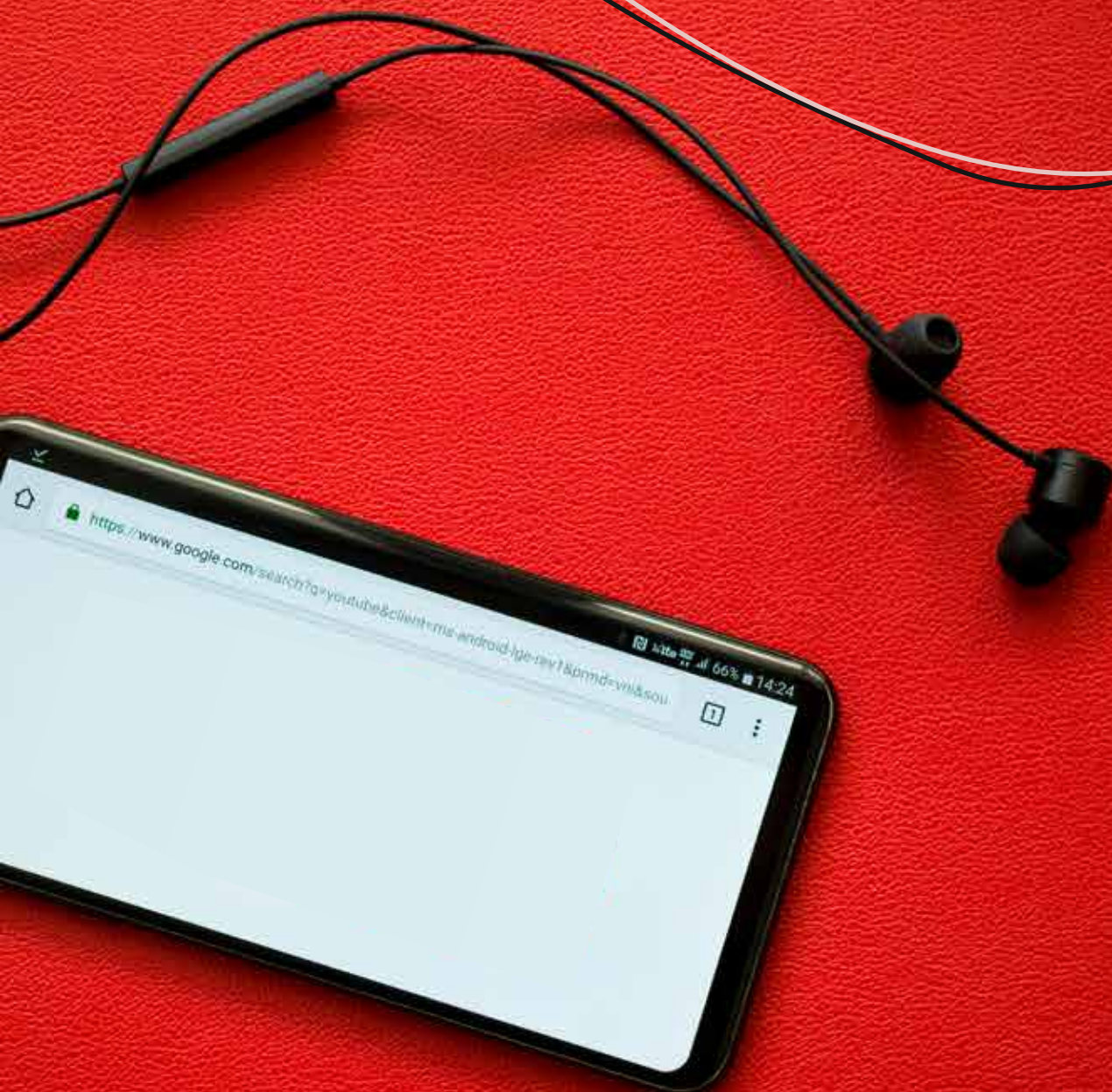
An Amagi Point of View

January 2022

# YouTube to FAST

## The road critical to your success

YouTube is a great asset as you begin your content journey, but as you grow, you must think about Free Ad Supported Streaming TV (FAST).



# Why **YouTube** creators have an edge over the others

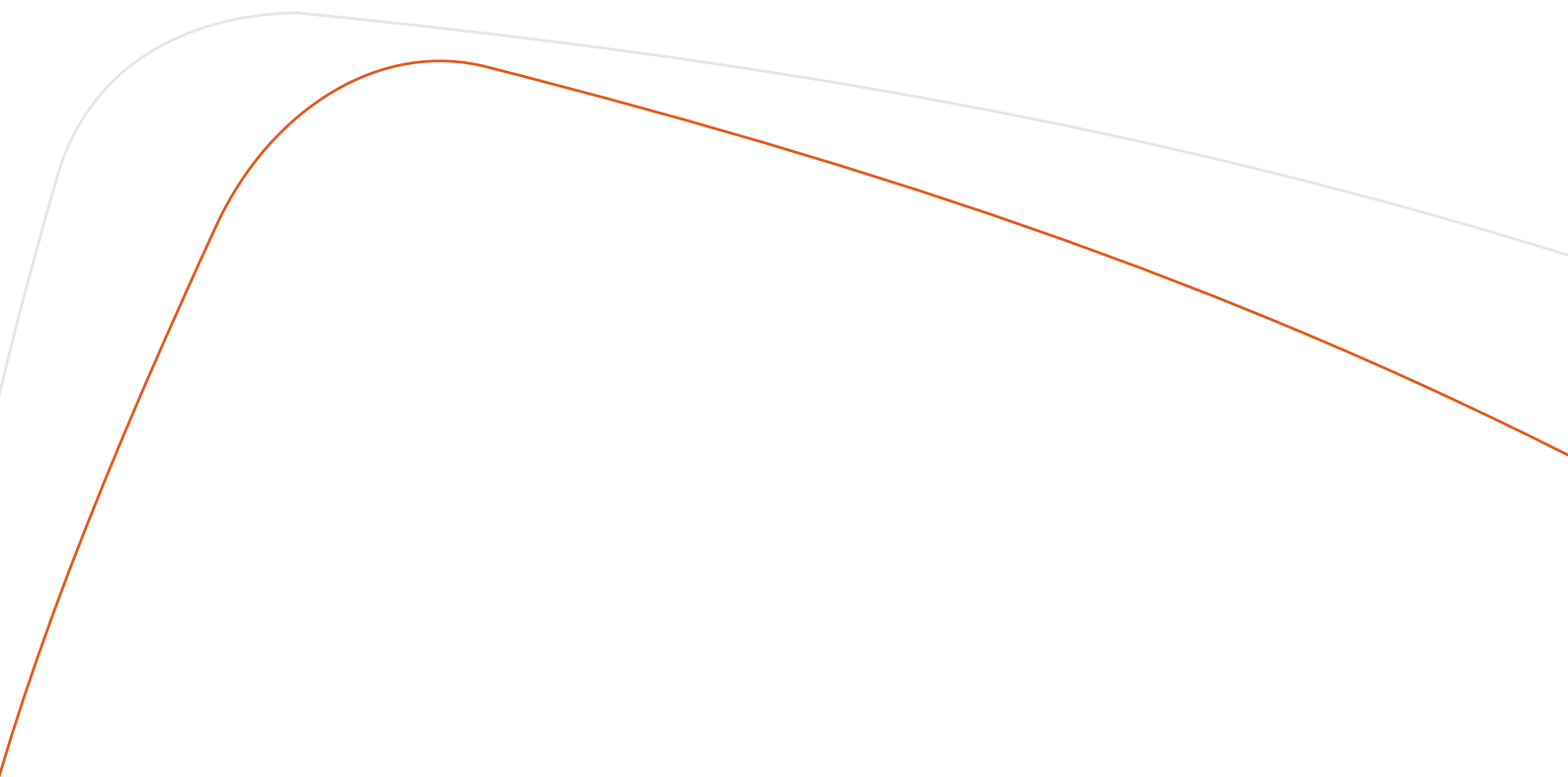
If you're just getting started as a content creator, YouTube is likely to be your first port of call. The platform has the reputation of being the world's video repository of choice – for everything from family home movies to TVOD content from major studios.

As live streaming gained popularity, some major broadcasts started featuring a YouTube component to support the main content to keep up with the changing audience preferences.



If we talk gaming, Amazon-owned Twitch still rules the streaming market. However, YouTube has not given up trying to make inroads with the global audience for gaming content as well. A report from Statista showed that [Twitch](#) was by far the top game streamer, with almost six billion hours of content watched in Q3 of 2021, followed by Facebook with 1.2 billion hours watched, and YouTube just behind with 1.1 billion. Lately, YouTube has begun to lure major streamers away from Twitch to its YouTube Gaming platform.

The world's second-most visited site – after Google itself – YouTube excels at content discoverability, boosted by Google's array of sophisticated algorithms. Whereas Twitch algorithms tend to prioritize channels with higher numbers of subscribers and viewers, YouTube creators have an opportunity to build audiences based on content relevance.



# YouTube to FAST. When to make the leap?

Whether you're a corporate, a brand, an individual or a sports club, YouTube video has become essential to growth. Major content businesses have been built solely on YouTube, with devoted – and monetizable – followings.

After beginning their content journeys with YouTube, there comes a time when these questions become inevitable:

- Is it time to expand or migrate the business to a channel on our own platform?
- Should we transition to other broadcast platforms like Free Ad-Supported Streaming TV (FAST)?
- When should companies make this leap?
- Timing is everything, plus a thorough knowledge of our own business – what is our vision?
- What are our ultimate financial goals?

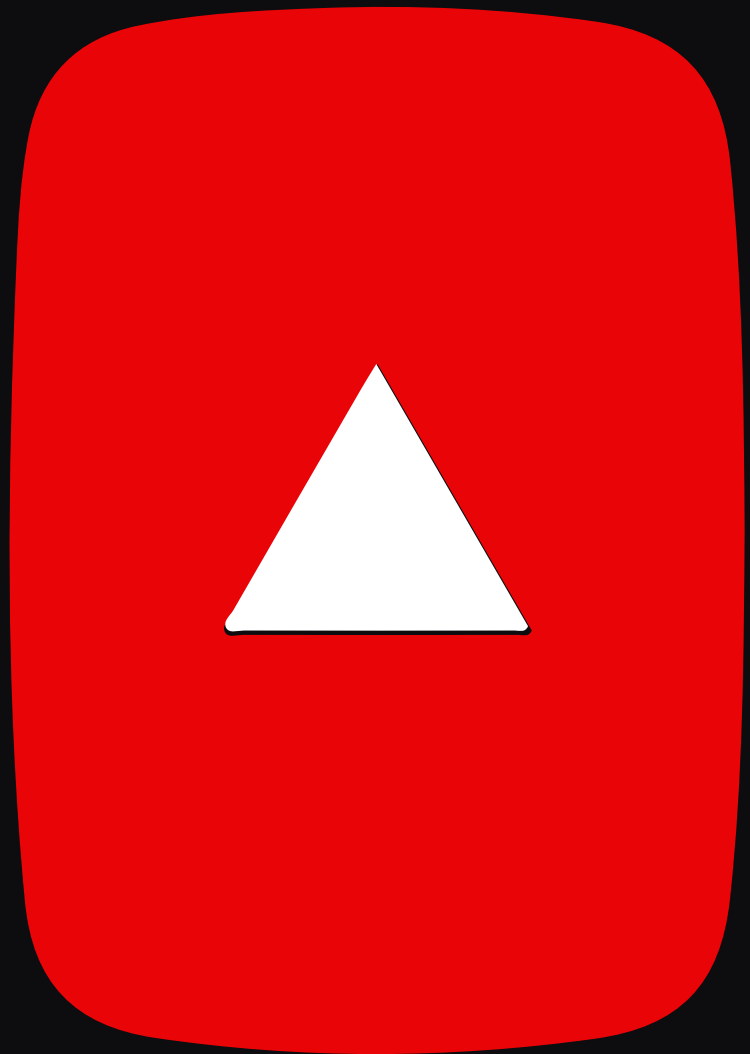
# When is it time to reassess your relationship with YouTube?

Once you reach that critical mass of content – and viewers – you need to think of a plan B to make the most of your content. YouTube is a great first stage of the rocket, but there are limitations that may prevent you from entering the second stage.

Most companies tend to enter a steady state once they have built a good community of subscribers on YouTube. What next? All the crazy fans of your content are already following you and you have reached a state of saturation. How can you discover new audiences and further monetize your content?

When such questions start to pop up, it's time to rethink your strategy.

# Are you getting enough ad action on YouTube?



Another issue that can weigh down a blossoming YouTube channel is that the mega-platform's ad system is skewed against creators. In the case of many popular influencers on YouTube, revenue is based on sponsored content and product placement, not YouTube ad revenue. That unsatisfactory ad revenue has created fertile soil for sponsorship platforms like Patreon, where subscribers can directly support content creators and guarantee a channel a more consistent bottom line.


A report by Pluto TV, published in Variety in 2020, concluded that AVOD is going to be the fastest-growing source of video revenue over the next five years, a trend driven by the decline in live TV viewing. The report finds that despite the popularity of SVOD platforms, 40% of all streaming time is still spent on ad-supported platforms.

# Why take the FAST lane to go big

- **Lower ad load:** FAST tends to have a lower ad load than traditional TV, making it attractive to viewers who are tired of traditional linear advertising.

According to the Pluto TV report, FAST services have an hourly ad load of between 8 to 10 minutes. On the other hand, traditional TV has 10 to 16 minutes per hour and keeps growing further.

- **Better targeting:** FAST's ability to target advertising to viewers on connected TVs or devices promises a future of fewer ads of higher value.



All in all, FAST helps develop and nurture a much better advertising relationship for both content owners and viewers. This makes it the choice of the hour.

# Take charge of your own destiny

**FAST ecosystems provide a huge opportunity for people to create independent brands that can stand on their own.**

While making the transition from YouTube to FAST is the need of the hour, this switch needs to happen systematically. A certain amount of analysis, planning and timing is essential. Doing your research first is a good starting point.

**FAST is still a work in progress. This means that opportunities are presenting themselves all the time, but can be a moving target to chase.**

## FAST: Where to begin?

### Here's your checklist

- Start by comparing your content's genre and subgenre with what is available in the FAST ecosystem.
- Check whether your genre is over- or under-represented.
- Across big players like Pluto TV, Xumo, LG, Roku, etc., where is the genre saturation and what is lacking?

**If you are the only game in town, unique in what you're presenting, it could mean two things.**

- One – you can corner the market with your own niche.
- Two – there isn't much demand for that kind of content – at least not yet.



If you happen to be a part of a cluttered genre with many similar offerings, it's surely going to be a tough ride.

**Another key thing that you need to do is analyze your genre's performance in terms of viewer numbers and hours of viewership across the platforms based on what's already out there.**

All these steps together can help you understand the economic outlook, allowing you to manage expenses as your FAST transition ramps up.

# Choose the right pillion rider in the **FAST** journey

Channel creation, distribution and monetization are all things sure to be affected by the technology partner you choose.

**Finding the right FAST platform partner is critical. Here are a couple of things you must keep in mind:**

- Find someone who is already reaching your potential audience
- Ensure that you aren't hit by a lot of other competing channels

Cutting through the noise and standing out from the competition is one of the most basic problems in our content-saturated world, and is often solved by the right distribution solution.



Another element that new channels can misjudge is marketing expense. Placing your content on a FAST platform isn't enough. You need to ensure that your content is easily discoverable or else it is bound to get lost in clutter.

There are some platforms that offer their own EPGs and smart marketing tools. You could go for one of them to make things simpler. A change of schedule can have a large impact on the audience you have. You cannot randomly make these changes. This needs to be a data-driven decision. Also, this isn't all. You also need to use a content planner to be able to make it more effective.

**One of the most important considerations in selecting the tech stack for your FAST channel is scheduling.** FAST is a linear experience – and how the content is scheduled is critical. To get the most out of it, you need human expertise in the form of a planner, who understands the psyche of your audience. This includes combining analysis of the viewing data with creative decisions about how the watcher might respond to different rhythms and content types, in any given playlist schedule.

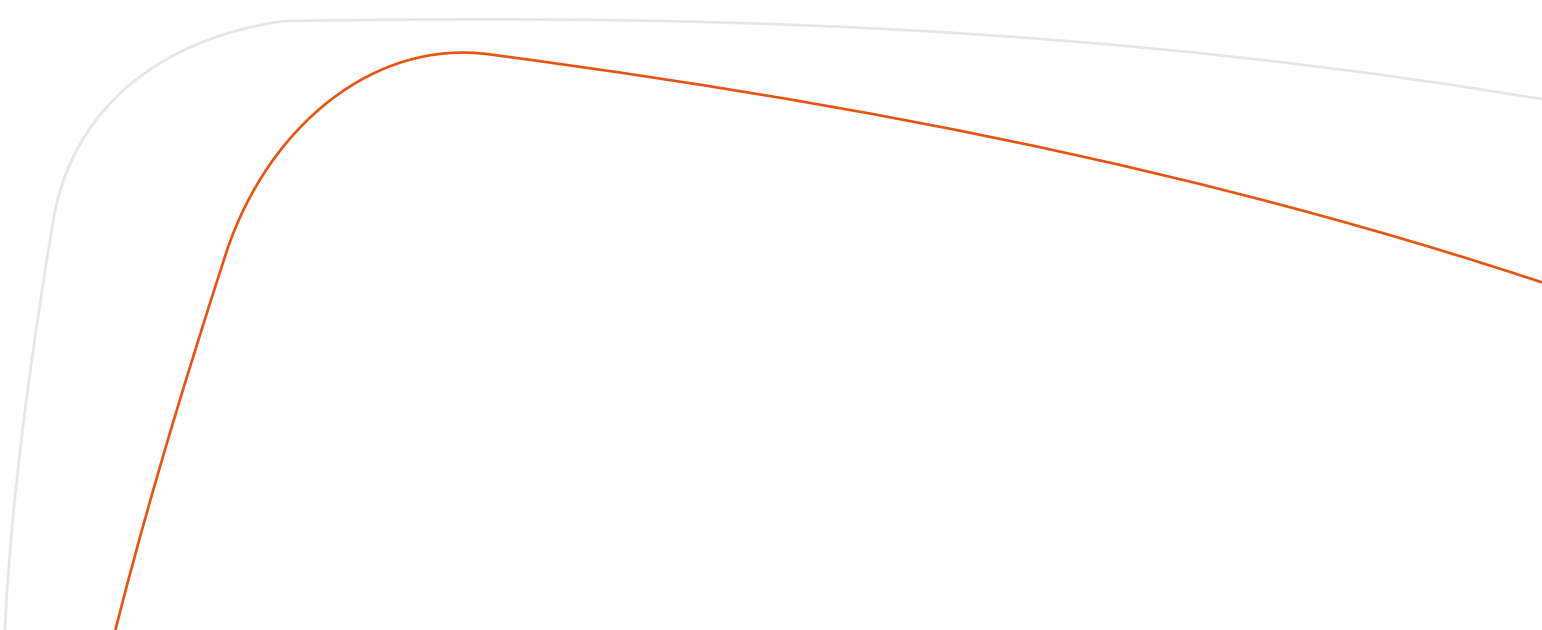
# Metadata is the key to success

Getting your metadata in an effective order can be highly challenging. Therefore, in addition to empowered scheduling, you also want your tech platforms to help you work easily and effectively with metadata.

Metadata essentially represents everything from artists, genres, episodes and storylines, to additional promos and thumbnails. These need to not just be executed correctly, but also made into something that adds value for the user

**To maximize content monetization, you must have rich metadata and great scheduling in place.**

## Why metadata is critical

- Deep, accurate, carefully crafted metadata can reawaken dormant content and give audiences a new way of engagement.
  - It helps your audiences associate with other stuff they might like, or introduce simple facts that can be a hook to encourage a potential viewer to explore further.
  - It is a cost-effective refurb of content that you might not be sure what to do with.
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Another simple, yet important feature of any successful tech platform is how it's going to make your channel look. For good or ill, first impressions are everything in the digital world. FAST is a TV-like experience. The psychology of watching the linear experience of FAST content is very different from snacking on social media clips or selecting videos on VOD.

The VOD and social media experiences give the viewer more potential to swipe or click somewhere else. A good FAST TV experience tends to erase the sense of the digital, creating a lean-back experience of traditional television – along with the idea of the high-quality TV they've got used to.

Creating quality interventions and interstitials with graphics can have a practical benefit in terms of directing people to content on your channel, while improving the overall customer experience.

# Focus on content, not technology

If you have the right technology partner, the mechanics of the transition to FAST can be relatively pain free. It could just involve the migration of your content to cloud storage, along with the all-important enhancement of metadata.

With quality browser-based interfaces being the main point of interaction for most cloud platforms, there are virtually no technology changes the content owner needs to make in-house. As they manage all technology-related aspects, all you need to focus on is the content.

## Amagi has seen two major approaches here:

- Some channels take the approach of continuing to pay equal attention to their YouTube and new FAST channels, releasing content simultaneously on each platform.
- Others use YouTube just as only as a promotion platform, with the goal of driving audiences to adoption of the FAST channel

## While transitioning from YouTube to FAST, you could face a number of challenges

- What do you do with your YouTube audience?
- Do you try to bring them with you?
- Do you just let them go?

## The answers again depend on your ultimate goals.

The approach is to gently withhold content from your YouTube subscribers, slowly letting them know they can watch it on your channel on whatever FAST platform is your distributor.

The idea of not giving your subscribers everything they want seems counterintuitive, but tends to pay off in the long run. More direct access to viewers through your own brand and channel far outweighs any viewers you might lose in the transition.



# Build your brand

If you look outside the US TV ecosystem, there are many smaller channels who have dumped old episodes on YouTube and received ad revenue in return.

While doing so, some of these channels discovered that audiences were essentially using YouTube as a DVR. They were using it to catch up on past episodes they had missed on linear TV. YouTube emerged as the DVR of choice.

**When some of these content creators saw how much that traffic was going up, they started to move content onto their own OTT platforms. It was a painful journey that took 12 to 18 months.**

Amagi customer Tastemade is a California-based lifestyle network built around food, design and travel. The brand launched on YouTube and found a faithful audience. But they aspired to become a globally recognized destination for food and fine living content.

This desire drove Tastemade to become an early adopter of the FAST ecosystem, which is now bringing them to an international audience.

An early adopter of this space was an alternative news and commentary channel. The brand knew its audience well, developed a loyal following and was able to bring its existing audience with it. But thanks to exposure to lean-back audiences through FAST, they're reaching a whole new audience segment now.



# Get the Amagi advantage!

## **Simplify your YouTube to FAST journey with Amagi**

- Reach 200+ million homes
- Distribute content to over 50 platforms
- Enable broadcast-grade quality
- Get fully managed services
- Monetize content with dynamic ad insertion combined with real-time dashboard and analytics

# Thrive with us!

Reach out to us at [cloudandme@amagi.com](mailto:cloudandme@amagi.com)

## About Amagi

Amagi is a next-gen media tech company that provides cloud broadcast and streaming TV solutions to TV networks, content owners and streaming TV platforms. Amagi enables content owners to launch, distribute and monetize live linear channels on Free-Ad-Supported TV and SVOD platforms. Amagi also offers 24x7 cloud managed services bringing simplicity, advanced automation, and transparency to the entire broadcast operations for traditional TV networks. Amagi delivers 500+ channels with deployments in over 40 countries. Amagi has offices in New York, Los Angeles, London, Singapore, New Delhi and Bangalore.

[www.amagi.com](http://www.amagi.com)

The Amagi logo is centered in the lower half of the page. It consists of the word "amagi" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. Behind the text are two large, flowing, curved lines: one is orange and the other is white, creating a dynamic, abstract background for the logo.

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