“Fastly has been helping us improve video delivery quality, and they’ve taught us that a CDN doesn’t have to be a black box. Fastly is open and accessible.”
Carlos Santos, Video Platform Manager

Situation

Since its launch, Atresmedia has continuously expanded its streaming package, which represents a key line of business for the company. In addition to video on-demand (VoD) content, Atresmedia has turned to live streaming for broadcasting important events, such as sports finals or elections. These events have high ratings, and users expect an experience similar to that of broadcast television, with no delays and zero latency.

To cater to the increased traffic levels generated by live events, it was crucial for Atresmedia to prepare its entire infrastructure and partner with a CDN to support it, ensuring zero downtime, even if they experienced a tremendous spike in the number of users. Since implementing Fastly’s edge cloud platform, Atresmedia controls the precise capacity needed for its origin infrastructure at any given moment. Thanks to Fastly Media Shield, each object only requires one request to origin, maintaining consistent bandwidth consumption, even if there’s a spike in the number of connected users, or geographical distribution.

Atresmedia chose Fastly’s edge cloud platform for their content delivery needs, to proactively address the main challenges of live streaming:

- Avoiding latency and improving the quality of the user experience (QoE).
- Offering a reliable and scalable architecture that is able to absorb large and unpredictable traffic spikes.
- Reducing the costs associated with live streaming.
- Having greater control in order to make autonomous, quick changes through API or UI.

Atresmedia is one of the leading communication groups in Spain, through its various lines of business — cable and digital television, radio, film, internet, and advertising — and owns media such as Antena3, La Sexta, Neox, Onda Cero, and Europa FM. The company has its own streaming channels: Atresplayer, which offers shows from the group’s networks, and Atresplayer Premium, a paid version that includes access to exclusive content and premieres of its products intended for basic cable. Atresmedia reaches 26% of Spanish TV audiences and commands 40% of the Spanish TV market share.
**Solution**

Fastly’s edge cloud platform has provided Atresmedia with a flexible and highly scalable solution for distributing content, which has improved the QoE by reducing live streaming latency and guaranteeing its performance, even during traffic spikes. Fastly’s modern architecture allows Atresmedia to cache more content and works as an extension of the company’s infrastructure. It’s now possible for Atresmedia to make instant configuration or rule changes and hold full control and visibility of performance indicators and key data in real-time.

**Some of the benefits most significant to Atresmedia’s bottom line:**

- Minimizing latency to improve QoE.
- Ensuring a high-quality response and protecting the origin infrastructure with Media Shield.
- Instant configuration changes, including rollbacks, tests, and settings through Fastly’s UI and API.
- Statistics in real time, compatible with other systems of measurement, such as Kibana.
- Quick and easy changes to streaming settings with on-the-fly geo-blocking.

**Advantages**

**Peace of mind in the face of traffic spikes**

Due to the modern design of its architecture, Fastly has a greater capacity to store content in its cache, so Atresmedia’s origin servers only have to send information to cache once, rather than distributing from origin to every endpoint requesting data. Subsequent requests are served directly from the Fastly cache. As a result, Atresmedia can manage large numbers of concurrent users in a predictive way, while maintaining an optimal user experience.

**Cost reduction**

Having control over traffic management has enabled Atresmedia to adjust its origin server infrastructure — both on-premise and cloud — which helps them predict bandwidth needs, and avoid preventative oversizing.

Atresmedia has also worked with Fastly to reduce the total cost of ownership of its geolocation service. Thanks to Fastly’s on-the-fly geo-blocking, only one version of each streaming channel is necessary, cutting the required number of encoders and the complexity of geo-blocking management in half.
“One of the great improvements we have experienced with Fastly is our production readiness. We have gone from hours and even days to very short times. In terms of purging, previously, a purge could last several minutes, and with Fastly, we can hardly tell the time it takes to clear our cache.”
Óscar González, Architecture and Back End Manager

Independence and flexibility

It is important to Atresmedia that its CDN works as an extension of its infrastructure, making it possible to carry out developments on its own servers and in the cloud. Using VCL, the Atresmedia team can intervene directly and make adjustments. They have real-time access to their streaming logs and can change configuration in a matter of seconds.

Transparency and visibility of key information in real time

The Fastly network configuration delivers very detailed real-time logs, which provide relevant technical and market information. This enables Atresmedia to constantly keep track of traffic, infrastructure performance, quality of service, and key aspects of user profiles and segmentations — and make immediate adjustments if necessary.