Akamai Managed Content Delivery Network: Maximum Control and the Highest-Quality for Sky Italia Content

> " We tested many CDNs to complement the Akamai CDN, but only Aura MCDN proved to offer the same levels of reliability and quality."
> — **Massimo Bertolotti**, Head of Engineering and Innovation, Sky Italia

The Situation

Sky Italia launched in July 2003, serving up unique entertainment in Italy and transforming the TV model by combining the best national and international programming with the most innovative technologies. 4.7 million Italian households – with a total audience exceeding 13 million viewers – have chosen to subscribe to Sky. The company offers more than 170 themed and pay-per-view channels – including 66 in high definition and one in 3D – as well as more than 80 audio and digital radio channels.

Sky has been the first Italian television platform to broadcast a high-definition signal and provide its subscribers with a personal recorder, My Sky HD. Through Sky Go it was the first Italian broadcaster to offer a wide range of content and channels on demand, available also on the go, from the Internet connected devices. Moreover, it has been the first broadcaster to dedicate a channel to 3D broadcasting. Finally, it was the first to offer, through the Sky on Demand service, a rich video library constantly updated of movies, documentaries, children programmes, sport and much more.

The Challenge

With more than 1.2 million subscribers using Sky On Demand and over 2.2 million using Sky Go, the services are critical components of the Sky offering. Because of the growing importance of its online channel, Sky wanted maximum control over its content delivery and assurance that it could deliver content even during high on-line traffic peaks – such as big sports events. To satisfy this requirement, Sky decided to adopt a delivery architecture based on multiple Content Delivery Networks (CDNs).

The Goals

Sky needed to meet three key requirements to address its business goals:

- **Ensure consistent and reliable content quality –** Sky wanted to guarantee the best TV-quality viewing experience for broadcast and online users.

- **Optimize traffic distribution -** The company wanted the ability to avoid problems linked to a network operator or traffic volumes.

- **Stay on a steady roadmap.** Sky wanted to select a CDN solution with features and quality comparable with the Akamai solution Sky had already adopted.

COMPANY
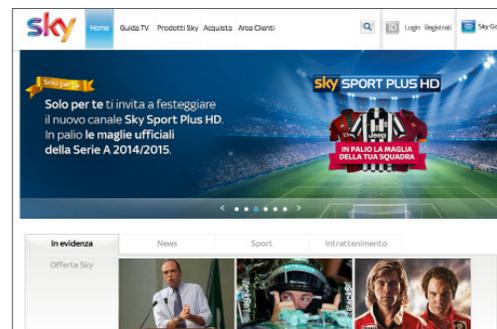
SKY ITALIA SRL
Milan, Italy
www.sky.it

INDUSTRY
Media & Entertainment

SOLUTIONS

- Akamai Aura Managed CDN

KEY IMPACTS

- Reduced bandwidth costs by 10%

- Improved download speed by 25% on average

- Gained more control of content distribution

SKY ITALIA

Why Akamai

A proven CDN

After a series of comparative tests of different CDNs, Sky selected Akamai's Aura MCDN solution for its reliability, quality and ability to scale. The Aura MCDN solution is dedicated to Sky content and can easily scale to support up their capacity needs of 100's of Gbps and beyond. "We tested many CDNs to complement the Akamai CDN, but only Aura MCDN proved to offer the same levels of reliability and quality" explained Bertolotti, Head of Engineering and Innovation, Sky Italia.

Moreover, Sky had been impressed by the evolution of Akamai's technology and solution offerings over the years. "We appreciate that Akamai keeps pace with technology evolution, as we can take advantage of this in the services we use to deliver our content. It's key to offering our subscribers the best viewer experience, both in terms of quality and functionality," continues Bertolotti.

Taking advantage of a fully integrated architecture

Aura MCDN integrates seamlessly with the Akamai Media Delivery service, allowing Sky the opportunity to seamlessly take advantage of that service as needed. The implementation of the Aura MCDN took the Akamai's team only two months of work, exceeding Sky's expectations. "We were struck by the ease of implementation of the Aura MCDN solution and the quality of the support offered by the Akamai team," says Bertolotti.

Accelerating delivery while reducing cost

With Akamai's Aura MCDN in place, Sky has gained the architectural infrastructure it sought. Because the Aura MCDN delivers more than 30% of traffic on behalf of Sky, the company is able to manage traffic peaks up to 250Gbps. At the same time, Sky has noticed a 25% average improvement in the download speed of its content. According to Bertolotti, this translates into a higher quality offering for its subscribers.

In addition, because Sky can now direct portions of its traffic portion to less expensive telecommunication networks, it has reduced bandwidth cost by 10%.

Looking forward with anticipation

Aware that the popularity of online content is constantly changing and growing, Sky expects to further invest in the necessary technology solutions. "Akamai provides flexible solutions that reduce our complexity while supporting our different content-related strategies. By partnering with Akamai, we can quickly respond to changing end user demands and maintain a competitive advantage," concludes Bertolotti.

About Sky Italia

Sky Italia is the Italian media company fully owned by Sky plc. Since it started in 2003, its customer base has rapidly grown up to 4 milion and 70thousand subscriptions recorded in September 2014. Sky is presently offering more than 170 dedicated theme and pay per view channels, with a rich offering including feature films, sport, news, entertainment and children's programmes. Sky is the first Italian television to broadcast a HD and live 3D content, offering a package of more than 60 High Definition channels and a channel fully dedicated to 3D programmes. Moreover, thanks to My Sky HD it is possible to record one's own favourite programmes and access the Sky On Demand service, while Sky Go offers mobile viewers a wide range of channels and on demand content. Further information available on: www.sky.it

Akamai *FASTER FORWARD*

Akamai® is the leading provider of cloud services for delivering, optimizing and securing online content and business applications. At the core of the company's solutions is the Akamai Intelligent Platform™ providing extensive reach, coupled with unmatched reliability, security, visibility and expertise. Akamai removes the complexities of connecting the increasingly mobile world, supporting 24/7 consumer demand, and enabling enterprises to securely leverage the cloud. To learn more about how Akamai is accelerating the pace of innovation in a hyperconnected world, please visit www.akamai.com and follow @Akamai on Twitter.

Akamai is headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts in the United States with operations in more than 40 offices around the world. Our services and renowned customer care are designed to enable businesses to provide an unparalleled Internet experience for their customers worldwide. Addresses, phone numbers and contact information for all locations are listed on www.akamai.com/locations.