

fuboTV Delivers Broadcast-Quality, Over-the-Top Network Service While Dramatically Reducing Costs by Partnering with Akamai



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— **Sung Ho Choi**, CTO, fuboTV



The Situation

Launched in January 2015, fuboTV is already the largest online provider of live, streaming, and curated soccer content from networks all over the world. The company’s Over-the-Top (OTT) streaming service gives soccer fans access to live global games and tournaments via linear cable networks, 24-hour club channels, TV series, and news in one platform. Currently, fuboTV carries more than half of the major international soccer leagues in the world, including La Liga, Serie A, Ligue Un, Primeira Liga, Copa America, and English League Cup. Additionally, it holds club partnerships with AJAX Amsterdam, Borussia Dortmund, and Everton. As of late 2015, fuboTV was delivering 30-40 games per week to subscribers in Canada and the U.S., the latter of which has more than 60 million soccer fans.

The Challenge

According to Sung Ho Choi, CTO for fuboTV, one of the biggest challenges of delivering high-quality OTT is avoiding video interruptions while streaming over the public Internet. Initially, fuboTV managed its own servers for transcoding videos for streaming on another provider and complemented this by stitching together services from numerous *content delivery network (CDN)* providers. However, it still struggled to ensure high-quality streaming video without buffering. Moreover, Choi had assumed the use of multiple service providers was the most economical option for launching fuboTV. However, he found that the company was continually upgrading its *video streaming servers* on the other provider to accommodate growing traffic volumes.

The Goal

fuboTV needed to meet three key requirements to support its objectives:

- **Reduce TCO** – The company wanted to control its costs to serve streaming video as consumer demand rose for its service.
- **Improve performance** – fuboTV needed to deliver broadcast-quality, over-the-top (OTT) content to satisfy consumer expectations.
- **Ensure fast time to market** – As a startup, fuboTV’s timeline was being measured in weeks, not months.

Why Akamai

Going Live Quickly with a Proven Solution

To reduce costs and improve video performance, Choi considered online streaming video platform providers offering end-to-end solutions, but he found it difficult to justify the cost. Many of these providers are running on antiquated systems and couldn’t deliver streaming videos well in a live environment. “We found that only Akamai could deliver live video cost-effectively.”

Choi appreciated that Akamai’s *Adaptive Media Delivery* and *Media Services Live* offered a proven solution in large-scale environments. “Other providers claim they can deliver globally but Akamai is one of the few that has successfully delivered large-scale events.”

COMPANY

fuboTV
New York, New York
<http://www.fubo.tv>

INDUSTRY

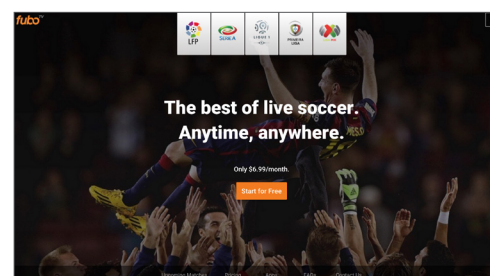
Media & Entertainment

SOLUTION

- Media Services Live
- Akamai Media Delivery Solutions
- Token Authentication
- Content Targeting
- NetStorage

KEY IMPACTS

- Enjoys predictable pricing.
- Flawlessly streamed two of the world’s largest soccer events.
- Supported 13,000 concurrent viewers.
- Achieved a 40-50% reduction in video buffering ratios.
- Expects to save up to \$12,000 per month by avoiding streaming server upgrades.
- Gained ability to refocus resources on developing its video player application.



fuboTV

Choi also liked that fuboTV would pay a flat fee no matter where in the world it needed to deliver video streams. Not knowing its ultimate costs detracted fuboTV from opting for other CDNs. In fact, it learned that the rate might be twice as high to deliver video to certain regions outside of the U.S., including Asia-Pacific, if it used these CDNs versus Akamai. "Predictability in pricing as we go global made Akamai an easy choice. I had always planned to take advantage of Akamai's services but was pleased it made economic sense to use them as a startup," says Choi.

Once Choi decided to go with Akamai's streaming video services, he and his team found it quick and easy to switch over. "The transition went smoothly because Akamai has battle-tested its solutions and developed clear procedures for migration and going live," continues Choi.

Slashing Costs

Already, Choi and his team are saving time and money. Previously, they had to send their encoded videos to a satellite facility for conversion to signals that could be sent over IP. This required at least one streaming video server for every two channels. As fuboTV expanded to offer 15 channels, the expense also grew. "Because Akamai handles all transcoding and packaging for a flat fee, we are already saving \$4,000-\$5,000 per month and expect to ultimately save as much as \$12,000 each month," says Choi.

Ensuring Optimal Viewing

Once Akamai began handling the ingestion and delivery of fuboTV's live streams, all performance issues were resolved. Not long after going live with Akamai's services, fuboTV successfully streamed two of the largest soccer events – El Clasico and Copa America – without a single hiccup in streaming performance. During preview mode of the El Clasico event, concurrent viewers reached 13,000. At the same time, the company has seen a 40-50% reduction in its buffering ratios.

About fuboTV

fuboTV is the ultimate destination for soccer fans and the largest online provider of live, streaming soccer content. Its platform is the first cloud-based TV service dedicated to bundling live sports, cable networks, 24-hour club channels, international blocks, TV series and news dedicated to soccer. fuboTV is a subscription service that is available on user's desktops via <http://www.fubo.tv> or mobile through Amazon Fire TV, Android phones and tablets, Chromecast, iPad, iPhone, Kindle Fire and Roku.



As the global leader in Content Delivery Network (CDN) services, Akamai makes the Internet fast, reliable and secure for its customers. The company's advanced web performance, mobile performance, cloud security and media delivery solutions are revolutionizing how businesses optimize consumer, enterprise and entertainment experiences for any device, anywhere. To learn how Akamai solutions and its team of Internet experts are helping businesses move faster forward, please visit www.akamai.com or blogs.akamai.com, and follow @Akamai on Twitter.

Akamai is headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts in the United States with operations in more than 57 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.

Staying Compliant with Licensing Agreements

Because fuboTV is licensing the content it serves, it must take measures to ensure it does not violate any distribution agreements. To that end, it purchased token authentication from Akamai, allowing it to protect its streams and encryption keys. It also selected Akamai's Content Targeting feature to ensure content is not streamed beyond geographically restricted areas. "In this way, Akamai helps us cover our liability in terms of licensing agreements," explains Choi.

Tapping into a Strategic Partnership

fuboTV's partnership with Akamai has opened new opportunities for the quickly growing startup. As Choi explains, "In addition to providing us with quality services, Akamai has served as a trusted advisor. We've gained insights that help us understand live streaming best practices and deliver OTT streaming that is closer to what consumers experience in the broadcast realm. By partnering with a world-class service provider like Akamai, we can focus our resources on delivering a great app experience instead of on resolving streaming issues," concludes Choi.