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EBOOK

Streaming in 2035
From Camera to Personalized Couch

Sebastian Braun, CEO of 24i

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I. Introduction

The Future of Streaming Starts Here

The streaming industry stands at a fascinating crossroads. Over the past decade, it has grown from a disruptive challenger to the dominant form of media consumption across the world. Yet this success has also created new challenges: fragmentation, complexity, and a sense of fatigue among both consumers and providers. The promise of endless choice has turned into a maze of subscriptions, interfaces, and competing technologies.

At 24i, we believe the next ten years will be defined by a powerful counterforce: consolidation and intelligent unification. This does not mean returning to the rigid gatekeeping of the broadcast era, but rather, moving toward a world where the best of streaming - freedom, personalization, and accessibility - coexists with simplicity, interoperability, and sustainability.

This ebook brings together four essays from our Streaming in 2035 series by **Sebastian Braun, CEO of 24i**. Together, they paint a vision of how the streaming landscape will evolve from today's fragmented reality into tomorrow's seamless, personalized ecosystem.

Ultimately, this is not a story about technology alone. It is about re-centering the viewing experience around the individual, using innovation to remove friction rather than add it. The future of streaming will be defined by collaboration, open standards, and a shared commitment to delivering meaningful, intuitive entertainment experiences.

About the Author

Sebastian Braun is the CEO of 24i, a global innovator in streaming technology. He writes about the future of streaming, personalization, and business strategy, combining industry insight with a practical vision for transformation.

> "The future of streaming is not about endless choice, but about effortless connection. When technology truly understands context and intent, it stops being a barrier and becomes invisible, allowing stories to reach people in the most natural way possible."

Sebastian Braun, CEO at 24i

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II. Fragmentation Fatigue

Why Streaming Needs to Consolidate

Remember the promise of streaming? A vast library of content, readily available on any device, often at a lower cost than traditional cable. For a while, it delivered. We gleefully cut the cord, embracing the freedom to choose exactly what we wanted to watch, when we wanted to watch it. Fast forward to today, and the picture is considerably more complex. The initial wave of a few dominant players has fractured into a sprawling sea of services, each vying for our attention and, more importantly, our subscription dollars and consumption data. We juggle multiple accounts, each with its own exclusive content, its own interface, and its own monthly fee or ad monetization.

Finding that specific show everyone is talking about often involves a frustrating search across several platforms, or in the case of shorter-form content, fruitlessly searching a social media feed to find that one video clip that caught your eye and you forgot to bookmark. This isn't the liberating future we were promised. Instead, what we face is:

- **Subscription overload:** The cost of subscribing to multiple "must-have" services can quickly exceed the price of the very cable packages we sought to escape.
- **Content disparity:** The content we desire is often locked behind individual platform paywalls or spread out among different ad-supported services, forcing us to subscribe to services for just one or two specific shows or navigate between multiple offerings to get what we want, including short-form content on various social media sites.
- **Discovery deficit:** With an overwhelming abundance of content spread across numerous platforms, the joy of discovery has been replaced by the arduous task of endless scrolling and searching. We spend more time looking for something to watch than actually watching it.
- **App fatigue:** Navigating a multitude of different apps, each with its own unique user experience, adds another layer of friction to our entertainment consumption.

This fragmentation doesn't just frustrate viewers; it presents significant challenges for the entire industry.

Content Creators

The fragmented landscape makes distribution harder and limits reach. Negotiating with multiple platforms adds cost and complexity, while smaller content providers struggle to stand out against the marketing power of major players.

Streaming Platforms

Fierce competition for subscribers drives up content and marketing costs. Retaining audiences is a constant battle, pushing platforms to keep producing exclusive shows and unintentionally deepening the fragmentation cycle.

Technology Providers

The lack of standardization across platforms necessitates the development and maintenance of a wide array of technologies and integrations, increasing complexity and potentially hindering innovation.

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The Case for Consolidation

Imagine a future where accessing your favorite content is less of a logistical puzzle. Consolidation, in a thoughtful and strategic manner, offers a path towards a more streamlined and beneficial ecosystem for everyone:

- **Enhanced user experience:** A smaller number of robust platforms, potentially offering bundled content or easier cross-platform access, would simplify discovery and reduce subscription fatigue. Imagine a unified search across a curated selection of top-tier content.
- **Greater content accessibility:** Consolidation could lead to a more centralized marketplace for content, potentially making a wider variety of shows and movies available through fewer subscriptions.
- **Sustainable business models:** A more consolidated market could foster more stable and sustainable business models for streaming platforms, potentially leading to more reasonable subscription prices in the long run.
- **Increased efficiency and innovation:** Standardization and reduced complexity in the underlying infrastructure could free up resources for greater innovation in areas like personalization, streaming quality, and interactive experiences.
- **Better opportunities for niche content:** In a more consolidated environment with robust discovery tools, high-quality niche content could potentially find larger and more targeted audiences.

The current fragmented state of streaming, while initially offering choice, has inadvertently created a complex and often frustrating experience. As we move forward in this series, we will explore how the natural forces of market evolution, coupled with technological advancements, are likely to drive a significant wave of consolidation in the coming years.

This isn't about returning to the limitations of traditional broadcast but about forging a future where a more unified and intelligent ecosystem delivers on the original promise of streaming: vast content, easily accessible, and tailored to your individual preferences.

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Learning from the Long Road to Consolidation in Other Industries

As we look ahead at the evolving landscape of video streaming, the rapid pace of innovation and the sheer number of companies involved across the value chain are both exciting and, at times, overwhelming. To understand where this complex market may be headed, it's useful to look at how other industries have navigated similar phases of fragmentation before finding equilibrium. A compelling parallel can be found in the history of the credit card. Today, the near-universal acceptance of Visa and Mastercard feels like an obvious part of daily life, but it took decades of experimentation, competition, and gradual consolidation to reach that simplicity.

From Chaos to Standardization

In the early to mid-20th century, payments were local and inconsistent. Department stores, hotel chains, and even individual banks issued their own proprietary cards, valid only within limited regions or businesses. Traveling across the United States meant juggling multiple cards—one for each major retailer or chain. This patchwork of systems created friction for consumers and limited the potential for mass adoption.

The first step toward unification came in 1950 with the launch of the Diners Club card, accepted initially at just a few dozen restaurants. In 1958, American Express introduced its own charge card, leveraging its established reputation in travel and business services. These innovations helped expand the concept of credit but still operated as niche, short-term charge accounts.

The real turning point arrived when Bank of America launched the BankAmericard in Fresno, California, in 1958. It introduced the idea of revolving credit, allowing customers to carry balances over time, an innovation that transformed personal finance and set off a wave of competition. By 1966, a coalition of banks created the Interbank Card Association, which later became Mastercard.

Over the next two decades, these networks grew rapidly. Banks licensed their systems to one another, and merchants began accepting cards from multiple providers. New technologies, such as magnetic stripes and electronic authorization, reduced fraud and enabled faster transactions.

As more players adopted these shared standards, the industry naturally consolidated around the most efficient and widely accepted systems.

The Benefits of Consolidation

By the 1980s, Visa and Mastercard had become the dominant global networks, with American Express maintaining its strong niche. This consolidation didn't eliminate competition—it made it healthier. Consumers benefited from convenience and trust, knowing their cards worked almost anywhere, while merchants gained access to larger markets with fewer operational burdens.

The fragmented landscape had evolved into a streamlined ecosystem where interoperability, scale, and standardization created value for everyone involved.

The Parallel with Streaming

The streaming industry is at a similar turning point. Across encoding, playback, CMS, analytics, advertising, and subscriber management, providers rely on fragmented systems that often fail to work together. This complexity raises costs and slows innovation, frustrating both viewers and operators. Like the payments industry before it, streaming will move toward cooperation and shared standards, with fewer but more integrated players offering seamless, interoperable solutions.

We are already witnessing early signs of this transformation:

- **Integrated platform providers:** Companies offering full-service technology stacks from ingestion to playback, simplifying workflows and enabling smarter automation.
- **Standardization of formats and APIs:** Greater adoption of shared standards for encoding, DRM, and metadata will reduce friction and make integrations seamless.
- **Strategic mergers and acquisitions:** Larger technology firms will continue to absorb specialized vendors to create more holistic solutions.
- **Emerging platform leaders:** A few key technologies will become de facto standards, much like Visa and Mastercard became for global payments.

From Fragmentation to Fluidity

This transformation will take time, but its direction is clear. The forces of scale, efficiency, and user expectations all point toward greater interoperability and simplicity. Just as payments evolved from fragmented systems to seamless global networks, streaming will become a connected ecosystem where content flows easily across devices and platforms. Viewers will focus less on how they watch and more on what they watch, as complexity fades and reliability, choice, and connection take center stage.

The lesson from history is clear: thoughtful consolidation does not limit innovation, it enables it. By following the path taken by industries like finance, streaming can move beyond fragmentation and finally deliver true convenience, consistency, and enjoyment for audiences everywhere.

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IV. The Consumer's Wishlist

What a Seamless Streaming Experience Looks Like in 2035

Imagine this: It is 2035. You settle onto your sofa after a long day. There is no scrolling through app icons or trying to remember which service has your show. Your smart assistant, aware of your preferences and mood, simply asks, "Continue your current sci-fi drama, or would you like something new and adventurous tonight?"

You reply, "Something new, please."

A personalized holographic display appears on your wall, showing a single, perfectly curated suggestion, a gripping new adventure series from "Quantum Stream," a service you rarely browse. The system has analyzed your viewing history, recent searches, appliance activity, and even biofeedback from your wearable device to choose what will captivate you.

You tap to begin. The show starts instantly with no loading or buffering. The next morning, as you commute, the stream moves smoothly from your living room to your phone. The sound adjusts for your earbuds, and the visuals remain crisp and vibrant.

Midway through the episode, a character's jacket catches your eye. A small icon appears. One tap opens a simple overlay where you can instantly buy it from the show's store or a linked partner. The purchase is added to your delivery queue. It feels natural, not intrusive, a smooth and value adding extension of the story.

As the episode ends, your phone buzzes. "Based on your enjoyment of 'Quantum Stream,' you might like 'The Chronos Saga' on 'Epicflix.' A free trial for subscribers starts now." The system connects your interests across services, saving you from endless scrolling and helping you discover what truly fits your taste.

The Roadblocks of Today

The vision of 2035 is far removed from the fragmented reality of 2025. Today, we face:
- **Subscription Fatigue:** Too many services force consumers to juggle multiple accounts and pay for content they rarely watch, driving churn.
- **Content Discoverability:** With endless content across platforms, finding something engaging is difficult, and recommendations remain siloed.
- **Device Fragmentation:** Switching between devices is still clunky, with buffering, logins, and inconsistent interfaces.
- **Lack of Unified Profiles:** Preferences and viewing history are trapped in separate apps, limiting personalization.
- **Intrusive Advertising:** Ad-supported tiers are rising, but most ads still feel irrelevant and disruptive.
- **Limited Interactivity:** In-content commerce and engagement features are early and often awkward.

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Paving the Way to a Seamless Future

How do we move from today's frustrations to tomorrow's seamless experience?

1. **Open Standards and Interoperability:** Shared standards for delivery, profiles, and metadata will enable universal discovery across all subscribed services. Imagine a single "content passport" that carries your preferences everywhere.
2. **AI-Powered Aggregation and Curation:** Smarter AI will work across services to understand your evolving tastes and predict what you want to watch, creating a universal streaming dashboard.
3. **Contextual and Value-Added Interactivity:** Ads and commerce will evolve from interruptions to seamless extensions of storytelling, making interactions feel natural.
4. **Edge Computing and 5G/6G Networks:** Faster, low-latency infrastructure will make transitions between devices instant and eliminate buffering.
5. **Human-Centered Design:** Intuitive, adaptive interfaces will minimize friction and keep the viewer experience effortless and enjoyable.

The future of streaming is not about having more content but about making it smarter, simpler, and more personal. With collaboration, innovation, and a focus on user delight, the industry can finally deliver on streaming's full potential by 2035.

V. Beyond Personalized Recommendations

The Dawn of Contextual Curation

In this chapter, we explore a world where the frustrating "tyranny of choice" is a distant memory, replaced by a truly intelligent streaming experience that understands you as an individual. Imagine never wasting time scrolling through endless menus again. In 2035, you will simply get what you want to watch, when and where you want it, even before you consciously realize it yourself. This is the dawn of contextual curation, a new era powered by the extraordinary evolution of artificial intelligence and its ability to combine insight, emotion, and timing into a seamless experience.

From Simple Suggestions to Personalized Journeys

It was not long ago that finding something to watch was both simpler and more limited. When streaming first emerged, it promised freedom and variety but quickly created an ocean of choice that was difficult to navigate. Recommendation algorithms were introduced to help, guiding us through this abundance.

Early innovators such as Netflix and Spotify proved how data could transform discovery. Their first systems used collaborative filtering, recommending content based on what other users with similar tastes had enjoyed. Over time, these algorithms became more advanced, drawing from search data, viewing history, ratings, and even how long someone paused on a title. Netflix credited its system with saving billions through reduced churn, while Spotify's personalized playlists like "Discover Weekly" became famous for introducing listeners to artists they had never heard before but immediately loved.

These systems, however, were still limited. They could predict what we might want based on the past but could not truly understand us in the moment. They responded to our habits but did not anticipate our state of mind or the context in which we were watching. The streaming landscape of 2035 demands more than prediction. It requires awareness, sensitivity, and timing.

The Rise of Contextual Curation: AI as your Personal Content Oracle

By 2035, the recommendation engine will have evolved far beyond its current form. Artificial intelligence will become an active companion, analyzing data from multiple touchpoints to understand not only what you like but also when and why. It will adapt in real time to your needs and surroundings, creating a viewing experience that feels as natural as conversation.

Imagine arriving home after a demanding day. Before you even sit down, your home assistant, synchronized with your streaming profile, already knows what kind of evening you are having. It has sensed your stress through your wearable data, your tone of voice, and even the pace of your movements. The moment you settle in, your screen comes to life with the perfect suggestion: a relaxing documentary or a comedy you have never seen before but are guaranteed to enjoy. There is no searching, no loading, and no decision fatigue. Just the right content at the right time.

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This is the power of contextual curation in action. The AI understands many layers of your world:

- **Your tastes.** It learns from every choice you make, recognizing the emotional tone of what you enjoy, whether that is character driven drama, calming documentaries, or fast paced thrillers, and it adapts as your interests evolve.
- **Your mood and energy.** Using inputs like voice recognition, wearables, or behavior patterns, it senses your emotional state and adjusts your experience. Feeling calm? It offers something soothing. Energized or curious? It finds something bold and uplifting.
- **Your daily rhythm.** It knows you want quick news in the morning, deeper stories on weekends, and family shows in the evening. It follows you easily from the living room to your kitchen to your phone on the go.
- **Your environment.** It notices the rain and suggests a cozy mystery, or highlights key moments from a local sports event. Even the time of day or light in the room can shape what it recommends.

The End of the Tyranny of Choice

The result is a streaming experience where the traditional frustration of choosing disappears. The tyranny of choice, that endless scrolling through options, becomes a thing of the past. You no longer need to decide what to watch; the perfect option is always ready, waiting for you. This is not about reducing your freedom or limiting variety. It is about enhancing it. The AI filters out the noise so that every choice presented to you is relevant, engaging, and emotionally in tune with your moment. The experience becomes fluid, guided, and deeply human.

At 24i, we see this as a natural evolution of technology: from algorithms that predict to intelligence that understands. By combining advanced AI with ethical data practices, transparency, and design centered around the viewer, we can create a future where every interaction feels personal and effortless.

The future of streaming is not about more content or bigger libraries. It is about smarter systems that serve people in meaningful ways. It is about understanding the audience, anticipating needs, and turning watching into an experience that feels alive. Streaming in 2035 will not just deliver entertainment. It will deliver understanding, context, and connection.

VI. Conclusion

Building the Path to 2035

The journey to 2035 is already underway. Fragmentation fatigue has sparked innovation, and the drive toward unification is accelerating. As AI, open standards, and advanced infrastructure mature, the streaming industry will cross a pivotal threshold - from competition for attention to collaboration for experience.

For content owners, this means embracing interoperable systems and data-driven personalization. For platforms, it means prioritizing user simplicity and discovery. And for technology providers, it means building frameworks that enable creativity, not complexity.

The future of streaming will not be defined by who owns the most content, but by who delivers the best experience. The goal is simple: a world where every moment of viewing feels natural, intelligent, and human. Streaming in 2035 will not just be entertainment - it will be understanding, anticipation, and connection.

Step into the future of streaming with 24i Video Cloud.
Discover how we help platforms deliver seamless, scalable, and data-driven experiences that redefine engagement.

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