

Content Steering Readiness Checklist

10 items to verify your stack ships HLS / DASH Content Steering correctly.

Use this checklist when scoping a new content steering deployment, auditing an existing one, or onboarding a vendor steering server. Every item maps to a concrete artefact — a manifest tag, a server endpoint, a dashboard panel, a runbook page. If you cannot point at the artefact, the item is not done.

☐ 1. Origin URL design is uniform across CDNs

Segment URLs are structurally identical across every candidate CDN — same path, same filename, same query parameters; only the host differs.

PATHWAY-CLONES on the steering server depends on this. Diverging URL shapes block mid-session CDN addition.

☐ 2. Manifest carries every pathway

Each variant is published once per CDN, with PATHWAY-ID (HLS) or BaseURL@serviceLocation (DASH) identifying the CDN.

EXT-X-CONTENT-STEERING / <ContentSteering> tag present; default pathway named explicitly.

☐ 3. Steering server runs on resilient infrastructure

Steering endpoint is hosted independently of the CDNs you are steering between. Health-checked from at least two regions.

If the steering server goes down, players fall back to the manifest pathway order — and the multi-CDN benefit evaporates.

☐ 4. Steering manifest TTL chosen with intent

TTL = a function of player buffer (≤ 30 s for live), CMCD aggregation window (~ 60 s), and steering-server request-rate budget.

Working range: 60-300 s. Marquee live events: 30-60 s. Long-form VOD: 300 s is fine.

☐ 5. CMCD upstream is configured on every player

Player attaches CMCD via HTTP header (preferred) or query string. If query string, the CDN strips it from the cache key.

Without CMCD upstream, the steering server is steering blind. Without cache-key exclusion, the cache fragments per session.

☐ 6. Player versions meet the minimum

hls.js ≥ 1.4 , dash.js ≥ 4.5 , Shaka Player ≥ 4.5 , Video.js v10 with VHS, AVPlayer iOS 15+/tvOS 15+, Android Media3 1.4+.

Older versions in the install base will not steer. Document the minimum, audit user-agent strings.

☐ 7. Smart-TV install-base gap covered

Late-model Tizen / webOS / Vidaa firmware ships steering-capable engines. Older firmware does not.

Keep DNS-based or static failover in place for the non-steering segment. Monitor steering-capable share monthly.

☐ 8. Steering-server observability is real

Dashboards: request rate, JSON content history, per-pathway viewer counts, CMCD aggregation metrics, decision-logic audit log.

An undebugged steering server is a hidden incident waiting to happen.

☐ 9. Failure-mode runbook documented

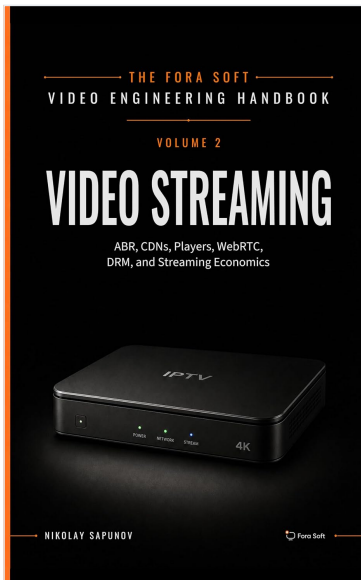
Three scenarios written down: (a) steering endpoint unreachable, (b) one CDN goes red, (c) all CDNs go yellow at once.

On-call should be able to follow the runbook without paging the architect.

☐ 10. A/B rollout planned before 100% cutover

Roll steering to a percentage of the audience first. Measure rebuffer ratio, startup time, exits-before-start, and origin egress.

Compare against the non-steering control. Flip 100% only when the deltas are positive and stable.



GO DEEPER · VOLUME 3 OF 7

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This checklist covers the ten artefacts that prove HLS and DASH Content Steering is wired correctly, from pathway clones to the A/B cutover. Volume 3 covers the delivery side in depth: CDNs and caching, multi-CDN behaviour in players, recovery from stalls, QoE monitoring and the economics of delivery.

WHAT YOU WILL FIND INSIDE

- CDN caching and cache keys
- QoE monitoring per CDN
- How players react to CDN failure
- Delivery cost and egress economics

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