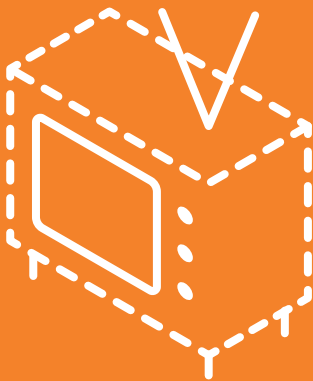


ITV & Virtual Channels

“To monetize its archive, ITV took the FAST road”

▶ A customer success story



Unified Streaming

▶ “Cost-effectiveness was the main motivator for adopting the technology.”

▶ Backstory

In September 2025, ITV, the British media and broadcasting company, announced that it is now using the Unified Virtual Channel solution from Unified Streaming to stream nearly one dozen FAST (free ad-supported television) channels.

Unified Virtual Channel is a software-only solution that repurposes existing video-on-demand (VOD) assets, aka catalog or archive content, into new live, linear streams. Mimicking the feel and familiarity of traditional broadcast television, the tech enables customers to launch channels that are customizable, localizable, and monetizable.

Eleven of ITV's popular archive content channels operate now as Unified Virtual Channel-powered FAST channels.

The particular channels running on the Unified solution are ITVS Kids; The 1% Club; The Only Way Is Essex TV; Love Island; The Chase; Saturday Night, Every Night; ITVSigned; Reality 24/7; Comedy 24/7; Vera; and Midsomer Murders.

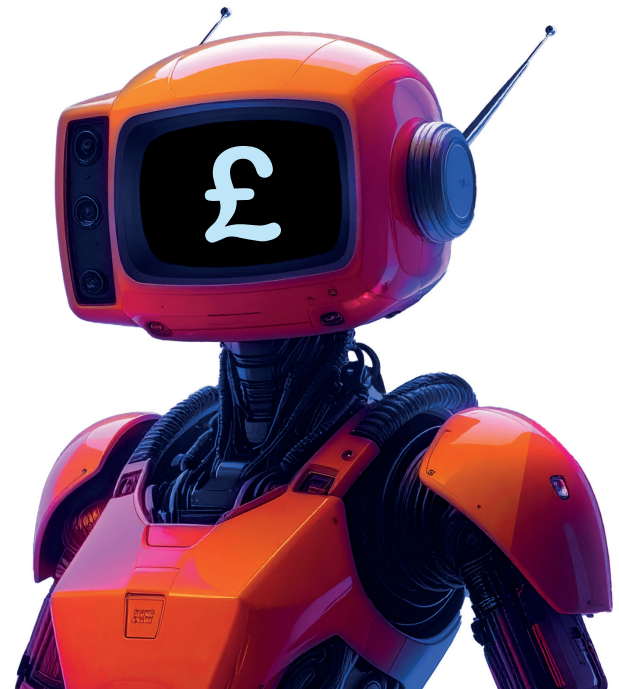
One of the channels currently running on Unified Streaming software, ITVSigned, is known for its dedication to accessibility. It is the world's first channel to offer all of its content “signed” with British Sign Language (BSL).

▶ Reason for switching to Unified Virtual Channel

Cost-effectiveness, according to ITV, was the main motivator for adopting the technology from Unified Streaming.

The broadcaster previously relied on a more traditional playout model involving encoders and distribution systems to bring these FAST channels online. While effective, this broadcast-style workflow was considered needlessly expensive for archive-driven channels.

The availability of support, insight, and knowledge from the Dutch company also played a significant role in the UK company's decision to choose Unified Virtual Channel over sundry products from competitors.



► “In January 2025 a team set to work.
On July 7, 2025, the channels went live.”

► Timeline of switching to Unified Virtual Channel

Amsterdam-based video delivery software company Unified Streaming has supplied streaming software to ITV since 2018. ITV streams content not only throughout the U.K., but to audiences worldwide, too.

In 2022, ITV launched ITVX, the UK streaming service from ITV that gives viewers free, ad-supported access to on-demand content, live TV, exclusive shows, and films. The company added new FAST channels to ITVX using a traditional broadcast playout scheme involving encoders and distribution systems. This approach worked, but was seen as needlessly expensive, especially given the type of channels.

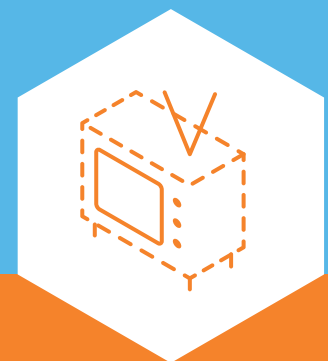
Three years later, ITV decided to replace its traditional scheme for a packager-based playout, favoring Unified Streaming’s Unified Virtual Channel.

In April 2025 the two companies announced in a press release that not only would they continue working together, they would also “expand their collaboration.” In hindsight, this statement hinted at what was underway at the time: testing and implementation of the Unified Virtual Channel solution.

Because it was the biggest change the British company had made to their video streams “for a very long time,” the process of converting the FAST channels to run on Unified Virtual Channel would keep ITV engineers busy. In January 2025 a team set to work on the project. While writing integration code, they ensured that ITV’s DRM (digital rights management), accessibility, and SSAI (server-side ad insertion) technology would fit together with Unified Streaming’s solution. The team made special efforts to keep the channels playable on the widest-possible gamut of devices, old to new.

On July 7, 2025, the channels, with Unified Virtual Channel under the hood, went live.

The project of integrating Unified Virtual Channel was delivered together with Eyeveinn Technology, who supplied engineers for the plan, and Unified’s partner JWP Connatix, who provided ITV with both advice and DRM technology.



Unified Virtual Channel

Create new channels and run experiments faster

▶ “The viewer hasn’t noticed any changes.”

▶ Result of switching to Unified Virtual Channel

One of the biggest compliments a tech provider can receive from a customer, after supplying software that inspires a complete makeover of a video streaming workflow, is that people don’t realize that anything is different.

“The viewer hasn’t noticed any changes. Also, within ITV, (the switch to Unified Virtual Channel) hasn’t had much attention, because it hasn’t made a lot of noise. And that’s a really good thing. We haven’t had crisis meetings, we haven’t had emergencies. It’s actually worked so quietly that no one’s noticed,” said Matt Hardiman, ITV engineer.

The switch to the new solution has affected the lives of ITV engineers, too, in a positive way.

“The schedulers who do scheduling of these channels, their workload is reduced as a part of this solution. So that’s a win,” said Hardiman.

▶ Summary

To meet challenges associated with ambitious growth, and to elevate its streaming services’ offerings, ITV requires efficient and innovative solutions. With Unified Streaming products packed inside the company’s core platform, ITV ensures the resilience, regularity, and reliability of its streaming system.

ITV has selected to embed Unified Virtual Channel within ITV’s playout pipeline, a change developed in tandem with Unified Streaming, in order to improve cost-effectiveness, and to help speed ITV’s tech evolution.

The switch to new tech helps the broadcaster provide an even more enjoyable viewing experience for millions of ITV customers.

▶ Quotes

“For us, making such a big switch, from the previous setup, to Unified Virtual Channel, meant taking on risk. Integrating a whole new product is always like that, but ultimately the effort is worth the gain. Thanks to Unified’s team, who collaborated with our team every step of the way, the transformation was smooth. Unified Virtual Channel not only works seamlessly on playout, it also integrates flawlessly with our DRM and our SSAI (server-side ad insertion) systems. We continue to target a huge range of devices and unlock the ability to further scale our VOD catalogue” said Mark Ison, Director of Engineering, ITV.

“From our earliest conversations, ITV made it clear they were willing to try something new. Their methodical approach, clear communication, and their hands-on effort from product owners, engineers, and ops meant we could work side-by-side to make this project a success. We encountered integration challenges along the way, all of which were resolved through close collaboration, and without affecting delivery. The result is a streaming solution, with Unified Virtual Channel at its heart, that integrates with their existing DRM and SSAI platforms, while meeting a wide range of device requirements to deliver FAST channels in a reliable, cost-effective way. It was the people—not the technology—who made this partnership. And we’re proud of what we built together,” said Jamie Fletcher, Senior Solution Engineer, Unified Streaming.



▶ “ITVX provides on-demand access to ITV’s programming alongside its live TV streaming offerings.”

▶ About ITV

ITV is one of the largest, most prominent television networks in the U.K., and is widely known for its commercial broadcasting and content production. Its network includes flagship channel ITV1 as well as other digital channels ITV2, ITV3, ITV4, ITV Quiz, and children’s programming channel CITV. Digital streaming service ITVX provides on-demand access to ITV’s programming alongside its live TV streaming offerings.

ITV’s subsidiary ITV Studios produces a wide range of content including drama, reality shows, and entertainment for its own platforms as well as for other global broadcasters and streaming services.

Renowned for iconic shows Coronation Street, Love Island, and The X Factor, ITV also holds the rights to celebrated sports events such as international football tournaments, horse racing, and rugby.



▶ www.itv.com

itv

“Producing software
for the largest and
best-known streaming
platforms and services.”

► About Unified Streaming

Unified Streaming is a creator of world-class streaming software and an authority in defining industry-advancing standards and specifications.

Founded in 2012, Unified Streaming leads the new wave of content aggregation, providing tools for dynamic and static packaging, capture, and enhanced playlist technology. By building stable and dependable software, Unified Streaming helps customers solve complex streaming challenges.

Companies deploy Unified Streaming solutions not just to unlock creative new ways for personalizing, protecting, and repurposing their content, but also to create great value.

With over 140 broadcasters, telcos, streaming platforms, content creators, and ecosystem partners worldwide, Unified Streaming produces software that is under the hood of the largest and best-known streaming platforms and services.

► www.unified-streaming.com

