



# Nothing is ever static

ITV manages its dynamic business processes using IBM Blueworks Live

by Leah Valentine

5-minute read

When it comes to business processes, Ian Cottrell is something of an expert, and he's got the papers to prove it. After more than a decade on the technology team at British media and entertainment company ITV, Cottrell returned to university to earn his Master of Business Administration (MBA) with a focus on business process management.

So in 2014, when he stepped in to his new role as ITV's Director of Channel Operations, he was somewhat surprised at the response he got when he asked to see his new team's processes.



“I was given a big, thick instruction manual and process diagrams that were printed out and then put in a cupboard,” he says. “I asked, ‘Is this really what you do?’ They said, ‘Well, yeah. Last time it was printed out, it was.’”

This meant the operations team was never sure what the current process was. It was also nearly impossible to see the evolving interdependencies among

processes and departments—a situation that can foster inefficiencies and duplicated efforts.

Cottrell knew there had to be a better way. He found it with the [IBM® Blueworks Live](#) offering, a cloud-based, software-as-a-service (SaaS) business process modelling application. Today, Blueworks Live is at the heart of everything Cottrell and his team do.

“IBM Blueworks Live is always representative of what’s going on, which is the beauty of the tool for me.”

**Ian Cottrell**, Director of Channel Operations, ITV

ITV must program and monitor **2.16 million** frames of content every day

Today, the organization experiences **< 1** programming incident per month, down from 6 per month in 2015

Learning to use Blueworks Live requires **< 1** hour

# The beauty of dynamic insight

Among the many duties that fall to Cottrell and ITV's operations team is scheduling each day's programming down to every frame (or 25th of a second), including programs, advertisements and announcements. "The job of our operations teams is to keep us on air all the time. We schedule every single frame, and it has to be seamless on screen," says Cottrell. With IBM Blueworks Live software, Cottrell and team work from a common process that users can easily access from any browser. That process, like all the processes the team has captured in Blueworks Live software, is always changing.



“If the output is a really tidy set of process maps, you’ve got it wrong. We don’t want things to be static, we don’t want it to be that file of diagrams in a drawer. We want to be constantly changing, constantly innovating, constantly improving,” says Cottrell. “If we have a static view of any one point in time, that stops us from moving on or changing it. Blueworks Live is always representative of what’s going on, which is the beauty of the tool for me.”

In addition to the scheduling process, ITV uses Blueworks Live software to manage the processes for content delivery, live program connectivity, output management and delivery to on-demand platforms, management of promotional campaigns and more. Each process has its own set of requirements and intricately connected tasks, along with plans for what to do if something goes wrong.

Cottrell finds the advertising process is particularly interesting because so

many different considerations come into play. “Within the commercial processes, there are all sorts of loops and validations because there are a number of business rules. There’s a lot of process checking, because some of these things are system tasks and primary validation, while others revolve around making sure you’re not running up against a competitive advertiser or playing a gambling ad during a children’s program.”

# A grand aspiration

Cottrell credits Blueworks Live software with helping his team work collaboratively and communicate efficiently on all processes. In the years since he came on board with the operations team, ITV has reduced the number of on-air incidents it experiences from six per month to less than one month, a remarkable improvement.

But Cottrell isn't done yet. He's looking to bring other departments on board, too. "If other departments can understand what we're doing with what they're handing over to us, and if we can understand what it takes for them to produce it, we're starting to join up. For business process management to



really work, it has to be end-to-end,” he explains.

With Blueworks Live, it’s easy to progress toward that goal by adding new processes to the existing framework. Cottrell estimates that it takes most employees—even those without IT backgrounds—less than an hour to understand how it works. Eventually, he’d like to have everyone at ITV working from the same, ever-changing but always-current set of processes.

“I’ve got this sort of nirvana vision where I could just click all the way through Blueworks and follow everything end-to-end. We’re getting closer to that all the time,” he concludes.

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### About ITV

[ITV \(external link\)](#) began broadcasting in 1955, and today it is one of the UK's largest commercial television production and distribution companies. In addition to producing a wide variety of its own content, ITV now operates a total of six channels and has expanded operations worldwide with it popular on demand station, BritBox International. Headquartered in London, ITV employs more than 6,400 people.

### Solution component

- IBM® Blueworks Live

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