



Hardware-based 4K content protection a growing requirement

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Hardware-based 4K Content Protection a Growing Concern Thanks to Faster than Expected UHD Penetration

SCOTTSDALE, Arizona — High resolution premium video, including 4K and UHD content, is a fast-growing market and therefore content protection services must follow suit with adaptability and preparedness for the expanding space. “UHD TV penetration is expected to reach 61% in North America by 2020, which is higher than expected”, says Eric Abbruzzese, Research Analyst. “Along with TVs, browser and application based streaming services will continue to roll out 4K content at a quickening rate, creating an expanding marketplace filled with premium content from studios that demand strong content protection.”

Guidelines for proper 4K content protection rely on deep hardware-level integration of security measures in combination with software security, creating an end-to-end secure system from publishing to consumption. This involves dedicated space on a SoC; Hardware Root of Trust and Trusted Execution Environments (TEE) will mean stronger security, but also reliance on new hardware. Legacy hardware, including STBs, Smart TVs, desktops, and mobile devices, could face difficulties with being supported in 4K-compliant security setups. On top of hardware security, technologies like forensic watermarking will be implemented for copyright and source identification.

The overall video market’s continuing focus on multiscreen means there are many more factors to consider for security than in years past. Not only more devices in general, but also many more device types need to be considered and supported in the security system, and the importance of end-to-end security adds another layer of difficulty. Thanks to the large number of parties involved—including chipset vendors, content studios, CE manufacturers, etc.—deploying an acceptable content protection scheme can be much more challenging. Video delivery companies have had to address this growth across their platforms with modular offerings to support multiple use case types; with 4K content looming, modularity in content protection is equally important.

These findings are part of ABI Research’s Set-Top Box and Home Networks and Multiscreen Video Middleware and DRM Market Research.