Case Study

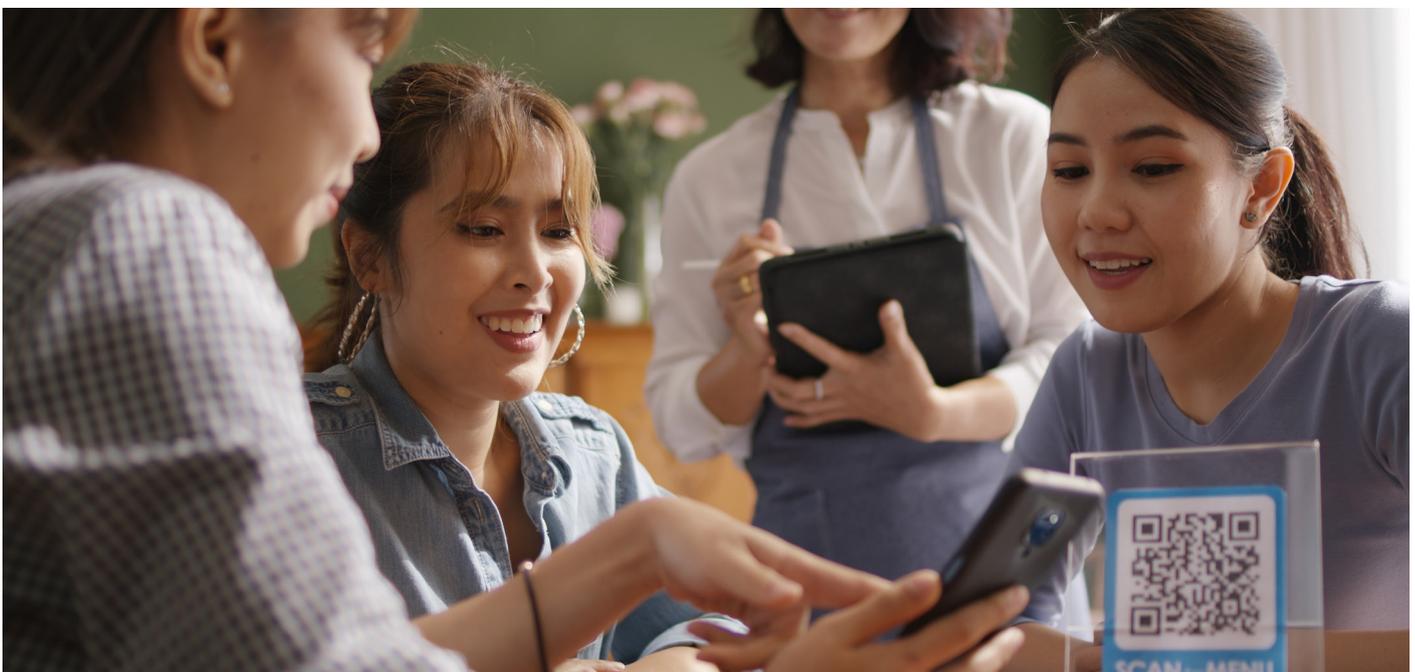# BytePlus Powers OpenRice's Leap into Next-Gen Dining Solutions

OpenRice's Strategic Digital Shift

For over two decades, since its inception in 1999, OpenRice swiftly became Hong Kong's premier online dining guide, thriving on the territory's rich culinary landscape and evolving consumer behaviors.

This ascent was propelled by its adept use of technology to capture and organize a vast array of user-generated content, thus providing comprehensive, real-time insights into the local dining scene. OpenRice leveraged this data to offer a wide range of features, including detailed restaurant listings, user reviews, online reservations, prepaid and premium menus, takeaway, vouchers, and innovative payment solutions through OpenRice Pay. This multifaceted approach not only enhance the dining experience but also embedded OpenRice deeply into the everyday lives of Hong Kong's food lovers.

Recognizing the dynamic shifts in the digital landscape, OpenRice embarked on a strategic journey to enhance its offerings and stay ahead in the rapidly evolving dining ecosystem. The decision to partner with BytePlus was driven by OpenRice's vision to accelerate innovation and deliver exceptional digital experiences to its users. BytePlus's advanced technology stack and global expertise aligned perfectly with OpenRice's goals, enabling the platform to seamlessly integrate new features, enhance personalization, and improve user engagement.

The choice between developing their own digital solutions or partnering with BytePlus presented a significant crossroads. Evaluating the 5-year Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) shed light on crucial factors: while in-house development might initially appear more cost-effective, the speed of market entry and the uncertainty of outcomes posed significant risks.

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Strategic Integration With BytePlus Paves the Digital Path

OpenRice's response to the competitive digital environment was both timely and strategic. By partnering with BytePlus, OpenRice embarked on a significant transformation, shifting from its traditional text-and-image format to a dynamic video-centric platform. This shift was not just about keeping up with digital trends but was aimed at capturing the essence of dining experiences in a format that resonates with today's users — vivid, fast, and interactive.

Enhanced Digital Menu:
Tools for Modern Storytelling

With tools provided by BytePlus, including a high-caliber video editor and AI-assisted background music matching, OpenRice was equipped to transform static images into captivating video stories. This enhancement was about amplifying the functionality and engagement of the OpenRice platform, ensuring every restaurant's narrative was compellingly told.

New explore page to feature video

Users can upload videos directly to the restaurant's page or through OpenRice's home screen

Users can search for specific food

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Strategic Partnership Goes Beyond Tools

BytePlus stood out as the strategic choice with its mature, proven systems, developed from the extensive expertise and successful innovations of its parent company, ByteDance, known for creating a suite of globally successful applications.

The proposition was not just about adopting new tools but embracing a partnership that offered deep industry insights and ready-made success templates. OpenRice's decision to go with BytePlus was influenced by the need for quick market adaptability — especially with its upcoming regional expansion plans in Asia.

The integration of BytePlus Effects and the BytePlus Video Editor into the OpenRice platform has been a critical endeavor aimed at elevating the user experience through more dynamic and interactive content. The details of this integration include:

All-In-One Solution

OpenRice utilized tailored solutions provided by BytePlus, particularly in terms of video editing and the application of high-quality visual effects. This customization was essential to meet the specific needs of OpenRice's diverse content and allows users to produce more visually appealing and engaging content, particularly by enhancing the representation of restaurant environments and menu items.

Engagement and Functionality

The use of the BytePlus Video Editor and Effects has focused not only on adding visual appeal but also on increasing functionality and user engagement. The aim was to make the content more immersive, thereby keeping users engaged longer and encouraging more frequent use of the platform.

Elevating Video Experience

OpenRice, with BytePlus, has enhanced video delivery for a seamless user experience. Improvements include automatic playback, consistent mute functionality, flicker-free navigation, and faster start-up times. Efficient transcoding and smart resolution adjustments optimize resources, maintaining high user satisfaction while conserving resources. These refinements ensure smooth and engaging interactions on the platform.

Performance Enhancements

The integration also prioritized optimizing content delivery performance, ensuring that videos and effects are rendered efficiently. This focus was crucial for maintaining fast load times and smooth interactions, especially important given the high volume of content managed by the OpenRice platform.

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5x Engagement Surge as Video Features Propel Restaurant Success

During the Chinese New Year 2024, OpenRice harnessed the capabilities of BytePlus technology to launch new video features, resulting in a significant uplift in user engagement. This strategic implementation proved highly effective, as evidenced by one partnering restaurant experiencing a significant surge in video impressions on OpenRice compared to its performance on other social media platforms. This remarkable achievement highlighted the enhanced reach and engagement facilitated by BytePlus tools during one of the busiest festive periods.

The decision to go live with these new features during the Chinese New Year capitalized on the heightened user interest in dining and culinary content, aligning perfectly with the festive season's peak in platform activity. The comprehensive integration included not only the rollout of advanced video capabilities but also crucial backend optimizations and CDN enhancements. These improvements were key to managing the increased traffic, ensuring faster load times, and delivering superior video quality, thereby enriching the overall user experience.

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From Content Creation to Seamless Delivery: Leveraging BytePlus CDN

Central to the transformation was the implementation of BytePlus CDN, which acted as the delivery backbone for the platform's new, rich content. This powerful network infrastructure ensured that video content was delivered with reduced latency, enabling a seamless user experience that kept pace with the quick clicks of culinary enthusiasts.

Stable hit ratio exceeding

95%

Exceptional Efficiency

BytePlus CDN boasts a general and stable hit ratio exceeding 95%, significantly reducing the load on OpenRice's origin servers. By serving user requests directly from the edge, the system efficiently handles data, ensuring that the backbone of OpenRice's digital infrastructure is both robust and reliable.

Peak download speeds reached

119 Mbps

Rapid Content Delivery

With BytePlus CDN, OpenRice's content loading speeds saw dramatic improvements. Monitored peak download speeds reached up to 119 MBps, ensuring that users could access high-quality video content swiftly, maintaining high levels of user engagement and satisfaction.

Cutting down average response time to just

20 ms

Ultra-Low Latency

Cutting down the average response time to just 20 milliseconds, BytePlus CDN allowed for an almost instantaneous interaction with the platform, making browsing through culinary options as quick as flipping through a menu. This ultra-low latency is essential for an optimal user experience, allowing diners to engage with content seamlessly without any perceptible delay.

Hit ratio for static resource caching reached

93%

Efficient static resource caching

Our CDN boasts an impressive hit ratio for static resource caching, reaching up to 93% in some cases. By serving a majority of user requests from edge servers, OpenRice can significantly reduce the load on their origin servers. This not only saves on infrastructure costs but also allows OpenRice to serve more users with fewer resources.

Estimated requests over 30 days were

50 mil

Impressive request handling

Over a 30-day billing period, BytePlus CDN successfully handled approximately 50 million requests for OpenRice. This demonstrates our ability to manage substantial traffic volumes reliably and efficiently.

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Enhancing Video Performance for Optimal User Experience with BytePlus VOD

OpenRice, in collaboration with BytePlus, has embarked on a journey to refine its video delivery and playback capabilities. These enhancements aim to elevate the user experience, ensuring smooth and engaging interactions on the platform. Here are key improvements and recommendations:

Streamlining Video Playback:

1. Optimized Feed Stream:

- **Enhanced Viewing:** Videos now play automatically when fully visible on the screen, providing a seamless browsing experience. For users with lower-end devices, videos are represented with GIFs to maintain performance without compromising engagement.
- **Consistent Playback Status:** Ensuring that the video playback status on the feed aligns with the actual state to avoid confusion and enhance reliability.

2. Improved Player Controls:

- **Seamless Mute Functionality:** Videos will now mute as intended, starting in silent mode when opened in mute, ensuring a consistent user experience.
- **Flicker-Free Navigation:** Addressing screen flicker issues during video navigation to ensure smooth and enjoyable interactions.

3. Faster Video Start-Up:

- **Enhanced Load Times:** Optimizing video start times to reduce delays, making content more immediately accessible and keeping users engaged.

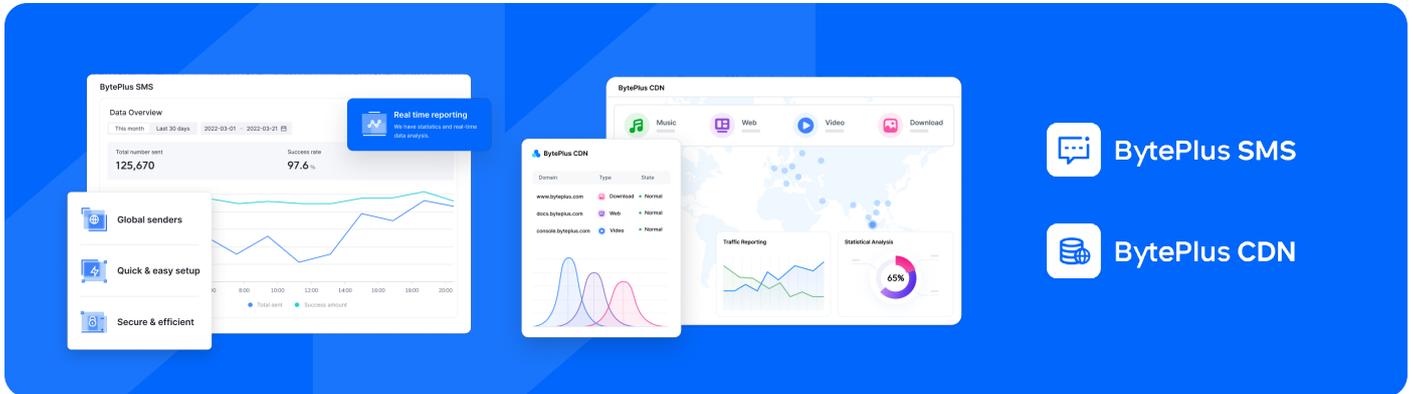## Efficient Transcoding and Resource Utilization:

1. Targeted Transcoding Outputs:

- **Resource Efficiency:** By setting specific conditions for video quality, we avoid unnecessary high-resolution outputs that do not enhance user experience but waste resources. This ensures optimal use of transcoding and distribution capabilities.

2. Balanced Resolution for Cropped Streams:

- **Smart Resolution Adjustment:** For devices like the iPhone 11, reducing the resolution of cropped streams to 240p ensures that user experience remains high while conserving resources. This strategic adjustment minimizes perceptible quality loss while enhancing overall efficiency.

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Improving the Customer Journey with Cost-Effective SMS Solutions

BytePlus has enhanced OpenRice's financial strategy by offering cost reductions in essential services such as SMS and CDN. These savings are particularly beneficial for OpenRice, given its reliance on SMS for timely customer communications. Whether confirming reservations, sending reminders, or promoting special offers, SMS plays a crucial role in ensuring effective and immediate interaction with users. This integration demonstrates BytePlus's commitment to delivering not just technological solutions but also cost-effective strategies that are precisely aligned with OpenRice's operational needs. This approach not only strengthens the economic aspect of their digital transformation but also underscores BytePlus's dedication to providing comprehensive, value-driven services.

Sustaining Market Leadership Through Innovation

The journey of OpenRice with BytePlus exemplifies how traditional businesses can successfully navigate the shift to digital dominance. By adopting a strategic approach to content delivery and leveraging cutting-edge technology, OpenRice has not only maintained its leadership position but has also set new standards in digital customer engagement. The continued partnership with BytePlus is poised to drive further innovation and success, proving that adapting to consumer trends with technology is crucial for staying ahead in the competitive digital marketplace.