

Recurly Case Study



**How Recurly's
Flexible Platform**
Supports JW Player's
Revenue Growth



Overview

If you've ever watched a video online, there's a very high probability that it was streamed using JW Player. The platform, which originally started as an open-source project, has developed into the world's largest network-independent video platform, powering 20 billion videos via two billion unique devices each month. That represents 900 million hours of video—or approximately 5% of all videos streamed online.

Based in New York since 2008, JW Player is a SaaS (software as a service) company which provides media professionals with powerful and flexible technology to deliver video, grow their audience, and monetize with ads. JW Player is used by online publishers and broadcasters in 193 countries, and the player supports streaming on desktop, mobile, and OTT devices. Since 2013, JW Player has used the Recurl subscription management platform to monetize its SaaS business.

Growth Leads to Complexity

Like all successful companies, JW Player continues to evolve. As JW Player targeted larger businesses, the company expanded and refined its offerings, developing more subscription plans tailored to the needs of their growing subscriber base. Subscribers responded enthusiastically to new pricing models, resulting in more frequent upgrades and plan revisions. Billing revisions and prorated refunds required increased scrutiny to confirm that payments were being applied to the right plan. Recurl had the flexibility to easily accommodate the new options and the increased complexity in JW Player's subscription business, which was key to supporting their expansion.



Details

Using Recurl Since: 2008

Benefits of Recurl

- Integration with Salesforce streamlines customer data
- Dunning and tools to improve payment success help minimize customer churn
- Webhooks automate and improve collections process
- Flexible, responsive platform and culture of innovation



Salesforce Integration Resolves Data-Access Issues

As JW Player’s business grew, so did their challenges around data visibility and access.

JW Player has three major—and separate—sources of data: CRM data in Salesforce, billing data in Recurly, and customer entitlement data in an internal database. These three data siloes led to persistent issues around transparency and ready access to comprehensive information. Without a 360-degree view of each customer, it was difficult to provide high levels of customer service or to optimize the sales process.

Jin Sha, SVP of Strategy & Operations, was responsible for the effort to streamline customer data, an effort made much easier through Recurly’s integration with Salesforce, which Sha notes, “has been incredibly helpful for us.” With this integration, the JW Player sales team has visibility into both the customer’s contract with JW Player and the status of their recurring payments, so they are better prepared to suggest useful upgrades or plan enhancements to each customer.

Monitoring and Reducing Churn

The company’s rapid growth presented other challenges too, such as monitoring and reducing customer churn. According to CFO Andrew Eisele, “churn is, naturally, one of our most critical metrics because our business’ growth is dependent on acquiring new customers. But the larger we get, retention and the growth of our existing customer base are equally important. So, best-in-class dunning and an effective means to ensure successful payments on every invoice are critical capabilities. And to be scalable, we need to do all this in a



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Andrew Eisele
CFO



low-touch way. Recurl is an invaluable tool for us in these efforts, providing key information and tools to our sales team. This enables them to solve customers' problems and ultimately increase our subscriber base."

Sha and his Operations team are also highly focused on reducing customer churn, and he notes that "Recurl makes it easy to measure and track customer payments and whether there are indicators of potential future churn based on payment patterns."

Automating the Collections Process

Another churn reduction strategy for JW Player was to optimize the upgrade and billing management flow within the customer dashboard. Paul Dumoulin, the lead Software Developer in charge of this initiative remarks that, "now, through our dashboard, customers can view and download their invoices, upgrade, see their billing plan, and make other changes, all on their own. This is a significant benefit and something we couldn't do with our previous provider. It's also given us the ability to manage more products in the last couple of years because we're spending much less time on billing issues than we did previously."

The JW Player team also invested in optimizing their delinquent payment workflow within the dashboard. With this workflow, when a customer logs into to the JW Player dashboard, the system can tell if they have an overdue invoice, and if they do, they're prompted to go to their billing page to make a payment.

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Paul Dumoulin
Software Developer



Allison Stone, Director of Product, Publisher Experiences, describes how this feature helps them: “Using Recurly webhooks, we were able to bring more automation to our collections process, which was a huge operations win for us. And not only did this streamline upgrades and help us gain a foothold with self-service customers, it drastically eased the burden on our internal teams, too.”

Benefits of Recurly’s API and Multiple Webhooks

The delinquent payment workflow was a custom user interface that JW Player built using Recurly’s multiple webhook functionality. Stone and Dumoulin both had praise for how Recurly manages their webhooks and how they’ve structured their API keys, which they note are well documented and enable them to easily build whatever they need. “Once we set up our API keys and webhooks, we’ve rarely had to tinker with them again. And if we do need to make a change, it’s a simple process,” notes Dumoulin.

Clarity and Ease of Use

Before coming to Recurly, JW Player worked with another subscription management platform, and Dumoulin was struck by how different Recurly is from their previous provider. “Even basic things were missing. For example, they didn’t offer two-factor authentication. They would just expire our passwords after a few months, and we couldn’t reset them ourselves which was hugely inconvenient. It was a little unnerving as a developer to see that they couldn’t get these basic things right.”



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Allison Stone

Director of Product,
Publisher Experiences



“The difference between Recurly and our previous provider is just night and day, in terms of ease of use and the level of clarity and responsiveness we get from Recurly,” states Dumoulin.

The feeling is shared. Notes Sha, “Recurly is a much more flexible platform. It’s much more responsive to the real-time needs of its customers. There’s a culture of innovation at Recurly that just simply wasn’t present with our previous provider.” And Eisele says, “with Recurly, the tool works, it’s got the flexibility we need, it’s responsive and intuitive, and it keeps moving forward.”

Culture of Support and Innovation

And Recurly demonstrates value beyond its technology. JW Player appreciates the breadth of Recurly’s expertise and customer commitment, which was evident when migrating from their former subscription billing product to the Recurly platform.

In managing the migration, Sha worked closely with the Recurly team who were “extremely thoughtful and helpful throughout the migration process. They really think through issues, are sympathetic, and at the end of the day, just try to solve the problem. Their attitude has always been that whatever the issue is, they’ve probably seen it before and can help us figure it out. They’re very proactive and able to think outside the box, which is something that I genuinely appreciate. The team’s enthusiasm is really indicative of how customer care is a key tenet of the Recurly philosophy.”

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Jin Sha
SVP of Strategy &
Operations



Eisele agrees. “From the CEO right down the line, whenever we’ve had any problem or didn’t understand something, everybody on the team proactively engages with us to make sure that we’re getting the most we can out of the product and out of the team. And by getting the most out of Recurly, we’re able to continually evolve and serve the ever-changing needs of our customers. It’s a win-win.”

About JW Player

JW Player is the world’s largest network-independent video platform. Founded in 2008 as the first open source video player, today JW Player’s customers span the globe across 193 countries, and range from Fortune 500 companies to video-centric small businesses. The company’s flagship product, JW Player, is used to stream 20 billion videos per month across all devices — mobile, desktop and OTT. In addition to the player, the company’s services include advertising, analytics, data services, video hosting and streaming.



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Andrew Eisele
CFO

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Recurly

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Recurly.com
+1.844.732.8759 sales@recurly.com

