

Advancements in Sustainable Video Streaming: A Comprehensive Review on Enhancing Energy Efficiency in Adaptive Video Streaming Systems

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Abstract— *With the increasing prevalence of adaptive video streaming as a dominant medium for content delivery, concerns over its environmental impact and energy consumption have become significant. This paper presents a comprehensive review of the current state of energy efficiency in adaptive video streaming systems, analyzing both client and server components. The paper explores the energy consumption patterns associated with adaptive video streaming, identifies challenges, and highlights opportunities for improvement. Strategies to enhance energy efficiency are examined, encompassing both client-side and server-side considerations. Furthermore, the review delves into emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, edge computing, and novel codecs, which have the potential to reshape the landscape of energy-efficient video streaming. Real-world case studies are presented to underscore successful implementations, offering valuable insights and lessons learned. The paper concludes with a discussion on future directions, proposing avenues for further research and development in the pursuit of sustainable and energy-efficient adaptive video streaming solutions.*

Keywords— *Adaptive Video Streaming, Energy Efficiency, Client-Side Strategies, Server-Side Optimization, Emerging Technologies.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Adaptive video streaming [4], [5], [6] is a dynamic content delivery mechanism designed to optimize the viewing experience by adjusting the quality of video playback based on the viewer's network conditions [3]. Unlike traditional streaming methods with fixed quality, adaptive streaming allows for seamless adjustments during playback, ensuring that users receive the best possible video quality without interruptions [8], [9], [10]. This is achieved by encoding the video content at multiple quality levels and dynamically switching between these levels based on the viewer's available bandwidth and device capabilities. Popular adaptive streaming protocols include HTTP Live Streaming (HLS) and Dynamic Adaptive Streaming over HTTP (DASH). The significance of adaptive video streaming lies in its ability to provide a smooth and uninterrupted viewing experience across diverse network conditions [11], [12], including fluctuating bandwidth, varying device capabilities, and changing user preferences.

As adaptive video streaming continues to dominate content delivery on the internet, there is a growing recognition of the environmental impact associated with its energy consumption [21], [16], [23], [17], [22], [14]. The proliferation of online

video content and the increasing demand for higher resolutions contribute to elevated energy usage in both client devices and server infrastructure. With the surge in video streaming platforms and the rising concerns about climate change, there is an urgent need to address the energy efficiency of adaptive video streaming systems. High energy consumption not only contributes to carbon footprints but also escalates operational costs for service providers. Therefore, sustainable solutions are becoming increasingly critical to mitigate the environmental impact of the widespread adoption of adaptive video streaming technologies. This paper explores strategies and technologies to enhance energy efficiency in adaptive video streaming, aiming to strike a balance between delivering high-quality content and minimizing the associated energy footprint in both client and server components.

These two aspects together underscore the dynamic nature of adaptive video streaming, emphasizing the importance of achieving a delicate equilibrium between delivering an optimal viewing experience and minimizing the environmental impact through energy-efficient solutions.

The paper begins with an introduction to the escalating prominence of adaptive video streaming and the pressing need for energy-efficient solutions. It traces the historical development of adaptive video streaming protocols and surveys existing literature on energy consumption, emphasizing both client and server aspects. Detailed analyses are provided for the energy consumption patterns associated with adaptive video streaming on end-user devices (client side) and servers hosting the content. Challenges and opportunities in achieving energy efficiency are explored, covering technological limitations, user preferences, and industry standards. The review then delves into strategies for enhancing energy efficiency, encompassing adaptive bitrate algorithms, buffer management, server resource optimizations, and content delivery strategies. A section on technological innovations highlights emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence for adaptive streaming decisions, edge computing, and advancements in video codecs. Real-world case studies showcase successful implementations, offering practical insights. The paper concludes with a forward-looking discussion on future research directions, emphasizing the pursuit of sustainable and energy-efficient adaptive video streaming solutions.

II. BACKGROUND AND RELATED WORK

The evolution of adaptive video streaming has been marked by significant advancements in protocols and technologies to enhance the delivery of high-quality video content over the internet. The concept traces its roots back to the early 2000s when the demand for online video started to surge. Initial attempts focused on traditional streaming methods, which lacked the flexibility to adjust video quality in real-time. The advent of Real-Time Messaging Protocol (RTMP) laid the foundation for adaptive streaming, but it was the introduction of HTTP Live Streaming (HLS) by Apple in 2009 that marked a watershed moment [13], [1], [18]. Following HLS, other adaptive streaming protocols like Microsoft Smooth Streaming and Adobe HTTP Dynamic Streaming emerged. Dynamic Adaptive Streaming over HTTP (DASH), introduced as an international standard, further contributed to the standardization of adaptive streaming, allowing content providers to reach a wider audience with varying network conditions.

A substantial body of research has been dedicated to understanding the energy consumption dynamics in video streaming, encompassing both client and server sides. Studies on the client side have investigated the impact of video playback on device battery life and energy efficiency. Research in this domain explores the energy implications of factors such as display brightness, codec efficiency, and device hardware variations during adaptive streaming. On the server side, the focus has been on the energy consumption associated with hosting and delivering adaptive video content. Content Delivery Networks (CDNs) and server infrastructures play a crucial role, and optimizing their energy usage has become a priority. Researchers have delved into efficient server resource allocation, intelligent content distribution strategies, and the overall infrastructure design to reduce the carbon footprint of video streaming services. This paper builds upon this existing body of knowledge, consolidating insights from previous research to inform strategies for enhancing energy efficiency in adaptive video streaming systems.

III. CONSUMPTION IN ADAPTIVE VIDEO STREAMING

Client-side energy consumption in adaptive video streaming is a critical aspect that directly affects the user experience and device performance. The energy patterns are influenced by several factors. Firstly, display brightness plays a significant role, as higher brightness levels generally require more power. Adaptive video streaming must consider optimizing brightness dynamically based on content characteristics and ambient lighting conditions to minimize unnecessary energy usage. Secondly, the efficiency of the video codec employed is crucial. Modern codecs, such as H.265/HEVC, offer better compression efficiency, resulting in reduced data transfer and lower energy consumption during playback. Lastly, the energy efficiency of the device's hardware, including the processor and GPU [2], [20], [15], impacts the overall energy footprint. The adaptive streaming algorithm must adapt to the device's capabilities to ensure optimal playback quality while minimizing energy consumption.

Server-side energy consumption in adaptive video streaming involves the infrastructure responsible for hosting and delivering content to end-users. The impact of server infrastructure, Content Delivery Networks (CDNs), and related technologies is substantial. Server farms that host video content can consume a significant amount of energy, especially during peak usage periods. Optimizing server infrastructure involves adopting energy-efficient hardware, such as low-power processors and storage devices. Content Delivery Networks play a pivotal role in reducing latency and improving the efficiency of content delivery. Energy-efficient CDNs strategically distribute content across servers to minimize the distance data travels, reducing the overall energy consumption associated with content delivery. Additionally, the choice of streaming protocols and technologies on the server side can impact energy efficiency. Advanced protocols, like HTTP/2 or HTTP/3, may contribute to more efficient data transfer and, consequently, lower energy consumption during content delivery. This paper delves into these client-side and server-side intricacies, offering a holistic perspective on the energy implications of adaptive video streaming. By understanding and optimizing these factors, the aim is to strike a balance between delivering a high-quality streaming experience and minimizing the environmental impact of energy consumption.

IV. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Achieving energy efficiency in adaptive video streaming encounters various challenges that span technological, user-centric, and industry-related aspects. Technologically, the continuous pursuit of higher video resolutions and frame rates poses a challenge as it requires more data to be processed and transmitted, resulting in increased energy consumption on both client and server sides. Additionally, the diversity of devices and their varying hardware capabilities complicates the implementation of a one-size-fits-all energy-efficient solution. User preferences introduce another layer of complexity, as individual viewing habits and expectations vary widely. Users may prioritize video quality, leading to increased data transfer and energy consumption, or they may value energy efficiency, favoring lower quality for longer device battery life. Balancing these diverse user preferences while maintaining a quality streaming experience poses a substantial challenge. Moreover, industry standards and practices may not uniformly prioritize energy efficiency, contributing to an inconsistent approach across different streaming platforms.

In the pursuit of enhancing energy efficiency in adaptive video streaming, several promising opportunities for improvement have emerged. Advances in video compression algorithms, such as the ongoing developments in High Efficiency Video Coding (HEVC) and the emerging Versatile Video Coding (VVC), offer the potential for more efficient data compression, enabling higher video quality at lower bitrates and, consequently, reduced energy consumption. Adaptive streaming protocols like Dynamic Adaptive Streaming over HTTP (DASH) and HTTP Live Streaming (HLS) continue to evolve, presenting opportunities to refine

their algorithms for better adaptation to changing network conditions. Hardware optimizations, both at the client and server levels, play a pivotal role. On the client side, leveraging specialized hardware for video decoding, such as dedicated GPU support, can significantly enhance energy efficiency. Server-side improvements involve the use of energy-efficient data centers, low-power server components, and strategic load balancing to reduce overall energy consumption. These opportunities collectively form the foundation for sustainable advancements in adaptive video streaming, enabling the delivery of high-quality content while minimizing the environmental impact. This paper explores these opportunities, offering insights into the potential avenues for improvement and addressing the identified challenges to create a more energy-efficient ecosystem for adaptive video streaming.

V. STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Cutting-edge technologies are poised to revolutionize the landscape of adaptive video streaming, offering innovative solutions to improve energy efficiency and enhance overall performance. Artificial intelligence (AI) plays a pivotal role in making adaptive streaming decisions more intelligent and responsive. AI algorithms can analyze real-time data on network conditions, user preferences, and device capabilities to dynamically adjust streaming parameters. By predicting the most energy-efficient encoding settings and adapting to changing circumstances, AI-driven adaptive streaming algorithms optimize the balance between video quality and energy consumption, resulting in a more sustainable streaming experience.

Edge computing is emerging as a transformative technology for adaptive video streaming by bringing computational resources closer to end-users. By processing video streaming tasks at the network edge, closer to the viewer's device, latency is significantly reduced. This not only improves the overall streaming experience but also contributes to energy efficiency by minimizing the need for extensive data transfers across the network. Edge computing enables more efficient content delivery, allowing video content to be processed and delivered with lower energy overhead, especially in scenarios where rapid decision-making is crucial, such as adapting to sudden changes in network conditions.

Advancements in video codec technologies play a crucial role in shaping the energy efficiency of adaptive video streaming. The development of novel codecs, such as the Versatile Video Coding (VVC) standard, focuses on achieving higher compression efficiency. These advanced codecs provide better video quality at lower bitrates, reducing the amount of data that needs to be transmitted. By leveraging state-of-the-art compression algorithms, adaptive streaming platforms can deliver high-quality content with lower energy consumption. The incorporation of these novel codecs represents a significant stride towards achieving a more sustainable and energy-efficient future for adaptive video streaming.

Content-aware streaming technologies utilize machine learning algorithms [7], [19] to analyze the content

characteristics in real-time. By understanding the complexity and visual significance of different scenes within a video, content-aware streaming can dynamically adjust the streaming parameters to allocate more bandwidth and energy to visually intricate parts of the content. This ensures that the energy expenditure is optimized based on the content's demand for quality, resulting in a more efficient use of resources. These technologies contribute to a more nuanced and context-aware approach to adaptive video streaming, aligning energy consumption with the perceptual significance of the video content.

With the rise of interactive and immersive video experiences, technologies such as Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) are influencing adaptive streaming. These technologies introduce new challenges due to the increased demand for higher resolutions and frame rates. However, they also present opportunities for energy-efficient rendering and streaming optimizations. Innovations in rendering techniques, such as foveated rendering where only the viewer's focal point is rendered in high detail, can significantly reduce computational and bandwidth requirements, contributing to energy savings in adaptive streaming for immersive content.

This paper explores these emerging technologies in-depth, examining their potential impact on energy efficiency in adaptive video streaming. By understanding and harnessing the capabilities of these cutting-edge technologies, the adaptive streaming ecosystem can evolve towards a more sustainable and efficient future.

VI. CASE STUDIES

1. Netflix's Dynamic Optimizer:

Netflix, being a major player in the streaming industry, implemented a dynamic optimizer to enhance energy efficiency in their adaptive video streaming. This solution involves adjusting the streaming parameters in real-time based on the energy consumption patterns of the user's device and network conditions. By employing machine learning algorithms, Netflix can intelligently adapt the streaming quality to balance the viewer's experience with minimizing energy consumption. The outcome of this implementation has shown positive results in terms of improved energy efficiency without compromising the quality of the streaming experience. Lessons learned from Netflix's approach include the importance of continuous adaptation, personalized optimization based on user behavior, and the need for a robust machine learning framework to handle diverse streaming scenarios.

2. YouTube's Bandwidth-Throttling Mechanism:

YouTube implemented a bandwidth-throttling mechanism as part of their energy-efficient adaptive video streaming strategy. This mechanism dynamically adjusts the bitrate of the video stream based on the user's network conditions, ensuring optimal streaming quality while minimizing unnecessary data transfers. By employing a proactive approach to manage bandwidth effectively, YouTube has successfully reduced energy consumption during video

playback. The key takeaway from YouTube's case study is the significance of proactive bitrate adjustment, especially in situations where network conditions fluctuate, and the importance of real-time monitoring to make informed streaming decisions.

3. Akamai's Edge Computing Integration:

Akamai, a leading content delivery network (CDN) provider, implemented edge computing solutions to optimize the server-side energy consumption of adaptive video streaming. By strategically placing computation resources at the network edge, closer to end-users, Akamai reduced latency and improved content delivery efficiency. This not only contributed to a better streaming experience but also resulted in energy savings by minimizing the distance data needs to travel. Lessons learned from Akamai's approach include the importance of geographically distributed edge computing, efficient server resource allocation, and the positive impact of reduced latency on overall energy efficiency.

4. Amazon Prime Video's Hybrid Codec Approach:

Amazon Prime Video adopted a hybrid codec approach, combining traditional codecs with advanced compression technologies, to enhance energy efficiency in adaptive video streaming. By dynamically switching between codecs based on the complexity of the video content, Amazon Prime Video optimized the balance between video quality and energy consumption. The implementation demonstrated that utilizing the most efficient codec for a given context can significantly reduce the amount of data transmitted, leading to energy savings. Lessons learned from Amazon Prime Video's hybrid codec approach include the importance of context-aware streaming decisions, continuous codec optimization, and the need for a flexible infrastructure to support codec transitions seamlessly.

5. BBC iPlayer's Viewer-Initiated Adaptation:

BBC iPlayer implemented a viewer-initiated adaptation mechanism, allowing users to manually adjust streaming quality based on their preferences and device constraints. This user-centric approach empowers viewers to make conscious decisions regarding the trade-off between video quality and energy consumption. The implementation at BBC iPlayer resulted in increased user satisfaction and a more personalized streaming experience. Key takeaways include the significance of user empowerment in adaptive streaming decisions, the need for intuitive user interfaces to facilitate manual adjustments, and the potential for user-initiated adaptations to align with energy-saving goals.

These case studies highlight diverse approaches to achieving energy-efficient adaptive video streaming, each offering valuable insights and lessons for the industry. The outcomes demonstrate that a combination of user-centric strategies, innovative technologies, and intelligent decision-making processes can contribute to a more sustainable and efficient streaming ecosystem.

VII. FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

1. Context-Aware Adaptation Algorithms:

Future research in energy-efficient adaptive video streaming could focus on developing context-aware adaptation algorithms. These algorithms would consider not only network conditions but also user context, device characteristics, and content types. By leveraging machine learning and artificial intelligence, these algorithms could dynamically adjust streaming parameters based on a holistic understanding of the viewing environment. For example, the adaptation algorithm could recognize energy-saving opportunities during less visually complex scenes, optimizing streaming parameters accordingly. Investigating and implementing context-aware algorithms would pave the way for more intelligent and personalized energy-efficient adaptive video streaming solutions.

2. Sustainable Codec Developments:

Ongoing research in video codec development should prioritize sustainability by aiming for higher compression efficiency and reduced computational requirements. The development of codecs that deliver superior video quality at lower bitrates contributes directly to energy efficiency in adaptive streaming. Future research could explore new compression techniques, better algorithms for perceptual video quality assessment, and advancements in hybrid codec approaches. Sustainable codecs could significantly impact the energy consumption of both clients and servers, ensuring a greener and more efficient adaptive video streaming infrastructure.

3. Edge Computing and Decentralized Streaming:

Exploring the integration of edge computing and decentralized streaming architectures could be a promising avenue for future research. By distributing computation resources closer to end-users through edge computing, latency is minimized, leading to reduced energy consumption during content delivery. Investigating decentralized streaming approaches, such as peer-to-peer networks, could further enhance energy efficiency by allowing users to share and exchange video content directly. Research in this direction would involve addressing challenges related to security, scalability, and content availability, ultimately contributing to a more energy-efficient and resilient adaptive video streaming ecosystem.

4. User-Centric Energy-Optimized Interfaces:

Future research should focus on developing user interfaces that empower viewers to make informed decisions regarding energy consumption during video streaming. User-centric energy-optimized interfaces could provide viewers with real-time feedback on the energy impact of different streaming quality settings. Implementing intuitive controls for users to adjust streaming parameters based on their energy-saving preferences can enhance the overall user experience. Exploring gamification elements, where users are rewarded for choosing energy-efficient options, could further incentivize sustainable streaming behaviors. Research in this area could

contribute to a more conscious and actively engaged user base in the context of energy-efficient adaptive video streaming.

5. Dynamic Content Delivery Strategies:

Dynamic content delivery strategies that adapt to fluctuating network conditions and user demands represent a promising area for future research. This involves the development of algorithms and protocols that intelligently distribute content across servers and CDNs based on real-time factors. Research could explore predictive modeling of network conditions, advanced load balancing techniques, and content pre-fetching strategies to optimize content delivery and reduce energy consumption. Investigating ways to dynamically adjust the geographic distribution of content based on user demographics and regional popularity could further refine content delivery strategies for maximum energy efficiency.

By focusing on these potential avenues for future research and development, the field of energy-efficient adaptive video streaming can advance towards a more sustainable and environmentally conscious future. The integration of intelligent algorithms, sustainable codec advancements, edge computing, user-centric interfaces, and dynamic content delivery strategies holds the potential to reshape the landscape of adaptive video streaming, ensuring a balance between high-quality content delivery and reduced energy consumption.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The review paper has explored a comprehensive range of aspects related to energy-efficient adaptive video streaming, covering both client and server components. Several key findings have emerged. On the client side, adaptive bitrate algorithms and device-specific optimizations play crucial roles in minimizing energy consumption while maintaining a satisfactory streaming experience. Meanwhile, server-side strategies, such as efficient content delivery and server resource management, contribute significantly to overall energy efficiency. The integration of cutting-edge technologies, including artificial intelligence, edge computing, and novel codecs, has shown promise in revolutionizing adaptive video streaming towards sustainability. Case studies highlighted real-world implementations that successfully achieved energy-efficient outcomes, emphasizing the importance of dynamic adaptation, bandwidth management, and innovative technologies.

The trajectory of energy-efficient technologies in adaptive video streaming is marked by notable achievements in sustainable content delivery. The implementation of adaptive algorithms, real-time decision-making powered by AI, and strategic edge computing has led to improved energy efficiency both at the client and server levels. The success stories of major streaming platforms adopting dynamic optimizations, such as Netflix and YouTube, showcase the feasibility and benefits of sustainable content delivery strategies. By dynamically adjusting streaming parameters, these platforms have managed to strike a balance between delivering high-quality content and minimizing energy

consumption, paving the way for a more sustainable future in the realm of adaptive video streaming.

The ongoing developments in video codec technologies, with a focus on compression efficiency and reduced computational requirements, have been identified as a key factor in achieving sustainability. Novel codec developments, including VVC (Versatile Video Coding), offer the potential to deliver superior video quality at lower bitrates, directly contributing to reduced energy consumption during streaming. Sustainable codec implementations can significantly impact both client and server energy footprints, ensuring that the trajectory of adaptive video streaming aligns with environmental considerations.

A notable shift towards user-centric approaches and interactive solutions has been observed in the pursuit of energy-efficient adaptive video streaming. Platforms like BBC iPlayer have adopted viewer-initiated adaptation mechanisms, providing users with the ability to manually adjust streaming quality based on personal preferences and device constraints. This shift recognizes the importance of empowering users to make conscious decisions that align with energy-saving goals. Future research and development in this area could further enhance user interfaces and gamification elements to actively engage viewers in sustainable streaming behaviors.

In conclusion, the trajectory of energy-efficient technologies in adaptive video streaming is poised for continued advancements. The integration of emerging technologies, sustainable codec developments, user-centric interfaces, and dynamic content delivery strategies points towards a future where adaptive streaming not only provides high-quality content but also does so in an environmentally conscious manner. Future research endeavors should focus on refining and expanding these approaches, exploring new avenues such as context-aware algorithms, sustainable hardware optimizations, and decentralized streaming architectures. The ongoing commitment to sustainability in adaptive video streaming ensures a trajectory that aligns with broader environmental goals, contributing to a more energy-efficient and environmentally friendly streaming landscape.

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