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## Hot Startup: Adstringo's algorithm is powerful enough to compress file size by 90%

Krithika Krishnamurthy, ET Bureau Mar 6, 2015, 04.11AM IST

**Tags:** [silicon valley](#) | [Sanjay Mehta](#) | [Salesman](#) | [Reliance Capital](#) | [Mohan Chandrasekaran](#) | [Krishnan Venkateswaran](#) | [CTO](#) | [CEO](#)

BENGALURU: In the first few episodes of the HBO-produced series [Silicon Valley](#), a large company guns for a bunch of geeks who have a compression algorithm that could potentially turn the industry on its head.

Closer home in Mumbai is a company that may soon live that scenario. Adstringo's algorithm can reduce the file size of images, audios and videos by about 90% with no noticeable loss.



(The algorithm cut the image...)

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It all started two years ago when [Mohan Chandrasekaran](#), former CTO of [Reliance Capital](#), observed that banks and insurance companies shied from opening branches in rural areas as it was expensive. There was a large market to sell products to, but enterprises had no viable means to do so.

So, he designed an algorithm small enough to sit on a salesman's smart phone but powerful enough to compress files by 90%. With it, enterprises, instead of having to set up outlets in rural areas, could just send their employees to villages, who would capture photographs of documents from potential customers, and compress and upload these to their database.

In other words, 'jugaad' personified. This is in contrast to compression algorithms that exist today. For example, if you are uploading an image on Facebook, 3-4 MB files are transferred over the internet to Facebook servers, which compress the files massively.

"We are nothing like WinZip or WinRar," said [CEO Chandrasekaran](#), alluding to the two popular software available for compression. Even websites that offer to do free compression online do it on their servers, not on a mobile device. Adstringo's compression algorithm stays away from elements that capture one's attention: objects, images and letters. It works on the white background in documents, or the dominant landscape, such as the blue sky in images, heavily compressing the file but allowing the documents and images to remain print-worthy.

"The quality is visually lossless, but technically lossy," said Chandrasekaran, who plans to soon patent his algorithm.

While the company may well be sitting on a goldmine in the consumer market, it is targeting the enterprise segment to capture more users in rural areas: for recording Know-your-customer documents, application forms and more. "I found it unique as the algorithm could work across different file formats. From what I've seen, players have known to compress just one or two formats so far," said angel investor [Sanjay Mehta](#), who invested Rs 5 lakh in the company in 2012. The two-year-old AdStringo's first customer was L&T Finance, which now uses the company's software for a majority of its business.

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"Although we haven't benchmarked it with other solutions in the market, the latest version supports 90% compression, and we're really happy about that," said [Krishnan Venkateswaran](#), CIO of L&T Finance.

Club Mahindra, Johnson & Johnson and Liberty Insurance are also clients. "I've seen Reliance grow from scratch. That gives you the ambition to become the next Ambani," Chandrasekaran said.

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**posixguru** (Chennai)  
12 Mar, 2015 09:33 AM

There are plenty of lossy compression algorithms like this copy cat available in the open source community. This n laymanwoman to say wow india. Indians are best copy cats and this is no exception. If you need something to start LINUX/UNIX/POSIX will serve you to rule.

**Jon** (Vancouver)  
06 Mar, 2015 08:30 AM

I do hope that the founders patent their technology extensively in developed country markets. Publicity should always (especially US patents) have been granted on the technology.