

# Station to Station

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Videolink assists TV3 and TW1 onto the air and internet

## Swiss and Austrian Profiles

by Reinhard Wagner

System house Videolink AG represents several manufacturers of broadcast equipment in Austria and the German-speaking part of Switzerland. One of its turnkey projects has been an installation at TV3, a new broadcasting station based in Schlieren near Zurich, for the German language part of Switzerland. Dipl Ing Max Mannhart, TV3's technical director, designed the playout area and newsroom, which was installed and completed by Videolink.



Max Mannhart: "Playout without any human control"

"Our decision in favour of GVG equipment and especially the M-2100 playout console was made with regard of the ease of integration with the GVG 7000 router, two Profile PDR-400 (DVCPRO-25 standard) servers, and a Lighting stillstore and Deko CG from Pinnacle," says Mannhart. "The concept is based on a conventional permanent parallel playout from the two Profile servers.

"In general, all clips are transferred from tape onto the Profile servers and then transmitted on air," Mannhart explains. "The playout process control is an integral part of the GVG Tool Box software in conjunction with Media and List Manager. The fact that we are able to program our broadcasting schedule very early enables us to perform and complete the playout process without any human control. Only during live event programmes is an engineer present in the playout centre."

The 24-hour playout at TV3 requires an engineer between 9:00am and midnight. From 1:00 to 6:00 in the morning, transmission of pre-recorded ads (promo-loop) takes place, which does not need any assistance. If there is no need to switch and control a live event, the transmission process automation runs for at least seven hours through Profile in conjunction with the control program.

"We also use the GVG EditStar/Newstar newsroom linked to three PDR-400's. Early on we experienced some German language problems, caused by Windows NT OS," says Mannhart. "After updating to the US-Version of MS Win NT 4.0 the system has run perfectly. Every TV3 journalist likes the newsroom system and its editing abilities and newsroom features."

Although the new channel can only be transmitted and received via cable (coverage is greater than 80%), it is widely accepted. Since September 1999 TV3 resides at BR3 in the cable networks of Cablecom and the MediaStar-Net division of Swisscom, and can be received without additional charges.

### **WATCHING THE WEATHER**

The requirements for planning and design of new studios at TW1 (the digital channel of ORF) in Austria's Pfarrwerfen were different. From the base in Pfarrwerfen, the Austrian weather channel transmits weather updates as well as tourism, recreation and sports reports. The ability to drive two independent studios from common control software was devised by Hans Hlebanya in co-operation with Videolink.

In the main weather studio at Pfarrwerfen, one playout engineer is on duty. From this location, TW1 broadcasts 24-hours a day, with programme playout from two PDR200 Profile servers. Christoph Steinbacher says, "The centrepiece of our new playout concept is the automation PC that controls the studio in Vienna as well as the playout in Pfarrwerfen with the same control software (a Feratel product). All machines, mainframes, CD-players and servers are controlled by the automation PC. Two channels of the PDR204 are used for playout in Pfarrwerfen. The two remaining channels are either for backup or for recording purposes."

The requirements at the TW1 studio in Vienna, where all announcements are produced, are different, because this installation runs without any technical personnel. An SGI O2 graphic computer is used for creation of charts, logos, and animated clips, which are recorded and broadcast from a PDR100. The presenter can make announcements by using a locally fixed, mounted camera.

**"Our transmission and broadcasting concept is unique in Europe and has run without any problems since we started transmitting"**

On-air times for camera and microphone, as well as the playout and recording of the Profile server, are controlled by the automation computer. Both studios run control software in parallel mode synchronised by DCF 77. The control program activates the mixer crosspoints as required, and switches the signal from both studios -- either Pfarrwerfen or Vienna -- into the transmission path.

To make and execute changes in the time schedule, the computer in Vienna can be accessed via a permanent 2-wire connection from Pfarrwerfen. Steinbacher says, "The SqueezeBack effect of the GVG M-2100 has been in use at TW1, for our Tourism Today programme, since January 2000. We fade a live or even taped background signal with information charts from the specific region that the report covers. Our transmission and broadcasting concept is unique in Europe and has run without any problems since we started."

Unscrambled and unencoded reception of TW1 is via Astra digital satellite 1G (with digital set-top box) over the cable network in Austria -- and, since March, via the internet at [www.tw1.at](http://www.tw1.at). To secure internet presence, the A/V signal is permanently transmitted to the provider where the signal is treated for use on the web.

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