

NEWS
IN BRIEF**Trimedia in Bremen**

Solutions for Media's (S4M) Video Production Management System (VPMS) will play a central role for German public broadcaster Radio Bremen. In cooperation with BFE (general contractor) and d'accord, S4M has arranged for a trimedia workflow in Radio Bremen's new broadcasting centre – TV, radio and internet are covered similarly. S4M's VPMS covers complete video handling, i.e. ingest (controlling of the recording process of video signals), browsing (viewing video material on the desktop), rough cut as well as the complete video material management (of both the LoRes storage for preview material and the HiRes storage for high resolution broadcast video material). Content for TV, radio and internet is available at the same time and exchange among the three types of media is possible as well.

www.s4m.de

WDR gains Insight

Westdeutscher Rundfunk, Germany's largest broadcaster covering an area with a population of 18 million people, has placed a new order with Net Insight to upgrade six major cities with Nimbra network products. The upgrade enables new and expanded media services. Net Insight's switch will further facilitate the transport of mission-critical TV contribution and distribution streams, bursty IP traffic and telephony with full Quality of Service in a cost effective way. "We are pleased to continue the expansion of the WDR network that has been fully operational during the last two years", said Fredrik Trägårdh, CEO of Net Insight. "This new order shows that our solution continues to be the best fit with customer requirements".

www.netinsight.net

DI production in Clips

Reinhard Wagner looks inside TeleFactory's DI workflow and talks to MD Jens Theo Müller and Head of Post Production Gunter Puszkars

DI process

Founded in 1988 as a production company, in 1993 TeleFactory moved into 'Medienstadt' in Potsdam, Germany, and then relocated to the fx.Center Babelsberg in 2004. TeleFactory offers enhanced high definition services for film and post production such as VFX, grading, colour correction, compositing, etc — and partners with PostFactory in Berlin and emotion-Factory in Bremen.

For HD OBs it partners with Outside Broadcast from Brussels (Belgium) and TV Skyline from Mainz. TeleFactory offers in-house pre- and post-production, DI mastering, HD on location with HDCam film-style cameras or HD Super Speedcam Slomos, and the creation of new entertainment formats, documentaries and TV programmes.

TeleFactory is based around a central machine room on the fourth floor of the fx.Center with AV router, VTRs from Panasonic (D-5), Sony (Digital Betacam) and BTS (DCR-500) and other peripherals. It uses Discreet Inferno/Flame/Flint, Avid Adrenaline/Symphony Nitris HD/Media Composer, Autodesk Maya and other tools for editing, compositing, grading, VFX and colour correction. Audio mixing and editing is undertaken with Digidesign ProTools, Augan systems, Audio Cube and SSL Axiom console with 7.1 monitoring. Film restoration and pre-mastering are performed with a full-featured Archangel system from Snell & Wilcox and a Digital Vision DVNR 4x4, which is used most of the time for tape-to-tape colour correction. An in-house cinema supports 35mm and HD projection and it can also be used for final grading.

Back in 2001 HD production involved a Final Cut Pro solution with a Targa CineWaveHD card



Puszkars (L) and Müller: "What customers expect from us is production flexibility and highest quality"

and 8-bit processing. This was difficult and had limitations, with gamma unacceptable at 1.4. In 2004 TeleFactory invested in uncompressed HD film production with a Clipster V1.0 because — at that time — it was the only solution to provide full bandwidth 16-Bit RGB 4:4:4 and YUV 4:2:2 processing up to 2k resolution.

TeleFactory moved forward into Digital Intermediate and recently upgraded the Clipster to a fully-equipped version with colour correction module. The Clipster software together with dedicated realtime multi-format hardware is housed in a 5RU flight case to provide flexibility and easy transportation when needed. The system provides 16 audio tracks, realtime zooming and panning with key-framing, primary (16-Bit integer) and secondary colour correction via a JL-Cooper panel, rotation, de-interlacing, time-stretching, file exchange from timeline to Combustion 4.0, and 1.6TB dual-stream internal HD storage with more than 620MBps throughput.

Mastering workflows

In general DI production starts with project coaching and in-depth consultation with customer, direc-

tor, cameraman, editor and production people to set up the system. Clipster provides various operator-selectable output formats. Some deliverables need to be in dedicated native resolution (eg CD/DVD production), which can be achieved with effects, cuts, and VFX (used within the clip: film, event or video).

Adobe After Effects and Autodesk Combustion are integrated tools on the Clipster workstation, so the operator can switch between them using Clipster as frame buffer to control and monitor the effect tool output.

"We use Clipster not only for DI production and dedicated mastering workflows but also for presentations on events where timeline-controlled playout of HD material is requested", explains Gunter Puszkars, head of Post production and VFX supervisor. "For example, during a press conference Audi presented their news of a new car model as breakfast news with a classic anchor man, and we used Clipster with its multi-layered presentation (text, video and graphics) as master to control the EVS servers on the TV Skyline OB truck. The snapshot programming and timeline of the Kahuna vision mixer on the truck itself triggered both the Clipster and the EVS servers.

"Another project required onsite edit conforms and rendering, which could be performed because the DVS is easy to move and flexible enough to work in almost every environment". Ten effect clients are interconnected over Gigabit Ethernet and a managed switch for QOS reasons with Clipster, share common file data and random access files on the internal 1.6TB storage.

Performance ratio

Operators at TeleFactory are trained artists and system administrators with fundamental knowledge of network and system performance, and they do not need external support to increase performance and solve minor problems while working. "Generally a Clipster job is a workgroup operation, where colour correction is performed on the system, effects work is done on a client machine and re-rendered onto the Clipster storage when finished.

"The system has a very good price/performance ratio compared with other solutions, eg, from Autodesk," continues Puszkars. "A Flame job is different, where the state-of-the-art artist creates while the customer is absent and a network is needed for support while working."

Also Clipster offers a flexible end-to-end workflow while grading or colour matching with independent results where Kodak works with proprietary hardware and software to emulate a specific film stock. At TeleFactory operators always work on Clipster and Combustion with the raw material — without any LUTs. This provides easy matching and they can decide within the final process to change or not to change the final look of the Digital Intermediate or printout.

TeleFactory Managing Director Jens Theo Müller (right) said they chose Clipster because the DVS people "speak German and because we have been actively involved within the development process. They understand the production workflow and have transformed it perfectly into the software, and they provide quick and professional support whenever it is needed.

"Solutions such as iQ from Quantel are more expensive and cover a broader range of applications, which we do not need. In a competitive market we have to make sure to get the best return on investment and highest quality combined with production flexibility," says Müller.