Motionlink Making easy work of all media formats and resolutions in a collaborative post environment

CASE STUDY

CUSTOMER

Motionlink, Australia
www.motionlink.com.au
Motionlink is one of Australia's premier digital media specialists. They pride themselves on being the first in the market with new technologies. This allows their clients to access the latest digital deliverables, from disc to video-on-demand.

CHALLENGES

Being able to ingest any tape or file format and output to clients' requirements.

SOLUTION

Sixteen networked EDIUS seats on a SAN network.

BENEFITS

No other video editing system can handle the variety of file formats they receive.
True real-time editing.
Multiple HD streams over a single 1 Gb network connection.

Background

Over the past 15 years, Australia's Motionlink, based in Sydney, has established a name and reputation that has seen it grow to be a leader in the production of digital deliverables. One of their claims to fame is the requirement that they be able to ingest any tape or file format and output it to their client's requirements.

Motionlink's services include:

• Digital cinema (DCP) mastering (2D & 3D)

• VOD platform delivery, including iTunes

• Blu-ray authoring and mastering (2D & 3D)

• DVD authoring and mastering

• Video and audio editing and restoration

• Video compression – from any format to any format

• Complete on-site QC

Although they work with some short-form material — trailers, EPKs, ads and music clips — the vast majority of their work is long-form features and TV series. In an average month, they will handle up to 50 titles, ingesting and rendering well over 100 hours of material — mostly in HD — with additional files required for downconversions and multiple deliveries.

The source materials Motionlink receives varies widely, from traditional tape formats such as HDCAM and Digital Betacam requiring capture, to a bewildering array of digital files including image sequences, QuickTime MOVs, MXFs, MPEGs and AVIs. Source quality is by no means guaranteed, with Motionlink's team being required to repair and patch numerous errors in the file content to meet the standards required.

With a team of specialists working simultaneously on different aspects of production — audio, video, graphic design, QC and mastering — in a fully networked environment, Motionlink required a stable NLE that worked reliably as a capture, editing and QC tool for multiple operators across a network.

The solution needed to be able to handle all media formats and resolutions they required and render reliably to formats that would easily integrate with their other audio and encoding workstations.

Solution

Motionlink first found EDIUS from Grass Valley, a Belden Brand, in 2004 when looking for a multimedia editing solution that could really handle any media formats they could throw at it.

"After looking at all the other systems on the market, EDIUS was the only solution that could meet our needs," said Grant Salinger, Managing Director, Motionlink. "As our work is less about traditional editing

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Grant Salinger, Managing Director, Motionlink
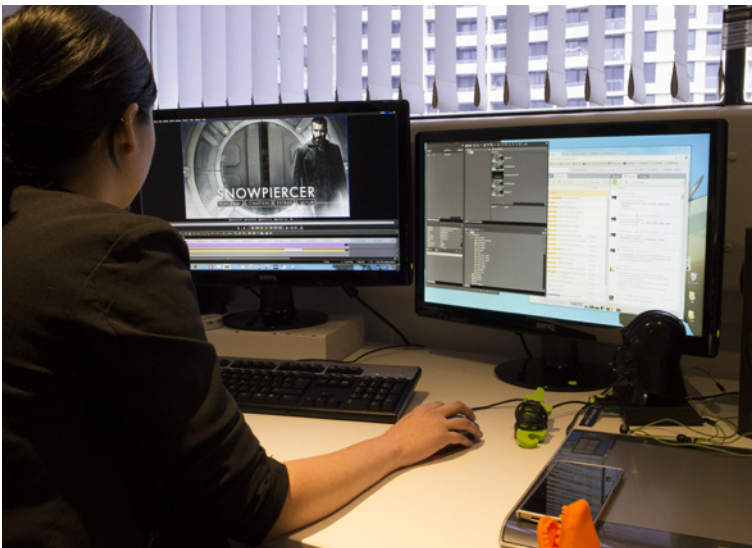
"True real-time editing at its best. We can still edit five streams of HD with effects on our old HP XW8400 that's connected to our SAN."

Grant Salinger, Managing Director, Motionlink

and more about mastering, we use EDIUS primarily as a media preparation tool than as a video editing system, but its flexibility is such that we can use it to meet almost any challenges that come up on a particular project."

The staff at Motionlink can be working on multiple HD streams simultaneously on standard Ethernet connections across capture, editing and QC workstations. EDIUS even gives them the ability to open "read-only" projects on different workstations when they need to evaluate issues with different monitors or staff.

"Another great aspect of working in EDIUS is the HQX codec," said Salinger. "With the amount of content going through production and the multiple renders required to meet the numerous output formats, this codec gives us great quality without placing impossible demands on RAID storage or network bandwidth. It also plugs reliably and efficiently into our third-party encoding software with none of the inconsistencies one encounters with other codecs."

Motionlink has 16 EDIUS seats, split between six seats of EDIUS Pro 7 and 10 seats of EDIUS Pro 6.5. They primarily run on HP Workstations: Two XW8400s used for capture (using Grass Valley Storm 3G Elite), with the rest being a mix of HP Z600 and Z800 Workstations with 8 to 48 GB of RAM, and 5500 and 5600 series Intel Xeon CPUs (most have dual CPUs). All workstations are equipped with two 21- to 24-inch monitors.

Benefits

"EDIUS can import and play back elementary DVD streams (MPEG-2 and AC3) which is invaluable for us in production, especially during QC," said Salinger. "This is just one of the many benefits we draw from EDIUS being able to combine numerous file types on the same timeline."

Other benefits of EDIUS enjoyed by Salinger and the rest of the Motionlink staff include quick and simple rendering and the burn-to-disc features for promotional and classification screeners. "Most titles require digital and/or disc-based screeners on a fast turn-around for our clients to submit for classification or to promote the feature," added Salinger. "The speed with which EDIUS renders from HD down to an email-friendly digital file or DVD is a real benefit."

The agnostic workspace of EDIUS is unique and essential for Motionlink's workflow. With the wide variety of output resolutions and standards they master — including D-Cinema Scope at 2048x858, all flavors of HD/SD broadcast, and bespoke digital file resolutions for handheld devices and video walls — it's great to be able to customize a project and easily prep all the material for whatever output is required.

"We can work with multiple HD streams over a single 1 Gb network connection."

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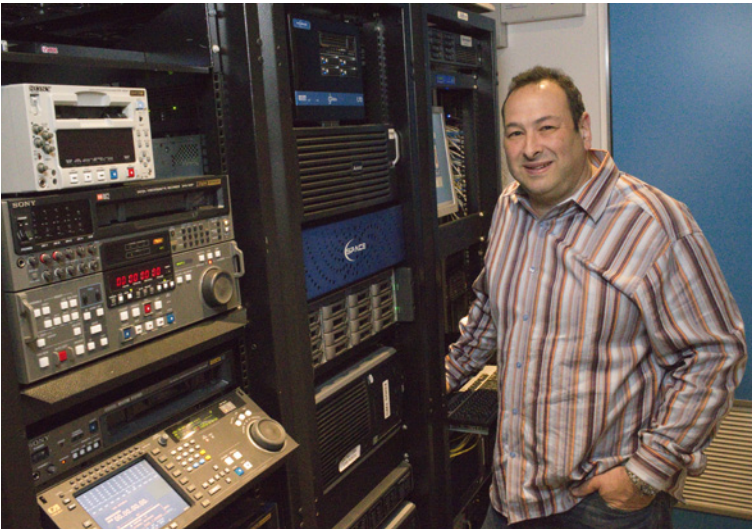
"Every time I show EDIUS to other editors they are blown away with its speed and flexibility."

Grant Salinger, Managing Director, Motionlink