



Thistle Communications K2 Dyno makes replays and highlights easy in New England



CUSTOMER

Thistle Communications, Pelham, New Hampshire

CHALLENGE

To convert an existing mobile production truck from SD to HD, including a reliable, intuitive replay system for live sports productions

SOLUTION

The Grass Valley K2 Dyno Replay System with K2 Summit server that enables Thistle Communications to provide high-definition live sports productions with its high-definition “senior” mobile production truck

BENEFITS

A proven server platform that offers the flexibility and versatility to perform multiple tasks simultaneously during live sporting events, with the added benefit of also functioning as a reliable playback server

Background

With more than 75 years of combined experience in major market and network television news, sports and corporate production, Thistle Communications knows a thing or two about the business. The New England-based company offers a host of broadcast and related services including television production, system design, satellite transmission, lighting design/grip, installations, equipment rentals and event staging — for a variety of broadcast and event production projects.

With two high-definition production trucks in its fleet — a junior HD uplink unit and a senior HD production unit — live sports productions are also an important part of Thistle's growing business. "We have a buoyant client roster in the sports market, including the New England Patriots, Boston Red Sox, and NFL Network," said David Reynolds, Partner and Director of Operations at Thistle Communications.

When Thistle set out to build its 30-foot senior truck seven years ago, the challenge was to fill the gap for a small footprint, broadcast quality SD platform. "Our goal was to build a compact truck with superior technology that didn't constrain our clients' budgets. We knew a small truck was the answer, but we had to make sure the technology we chose didn't compromise on quality simply because of the truck's size," Reynolds explained.

Solution

Fast forward to 2012, when Thistle decided to upgrade that truck to full HD. "As our clients' expectations grew, we knew the days of tape playback and recording were over and that we had to provide an HD, file-based solution. In converting our senior mobile unit, we applied the same principles as when we first built it — to offer a compact footprint that takes a cost-effective approach in delivering world-class video productions. So the goal was essentially the same, but the challenge this time around was in getting all the HD gear right," he said.

Thistle's senior HD production truck houses a rich mix of HD technology, including a K2 Dyno Replay System with a K2 Summit media server from Grass Valley, a Belden Brand — which filled the company's need for a dependable and fast-acting replay system for live sports productions.

Designed for file-based live production, the powerful and efficient K2 Dyno Replay System consists of the K2 Dyno Replay Controller that utilizes a K2 Summit or K2 Solo media server platform. The K2 Dyno delivers a simple touchscreen interface and tools for clip, playlist, and highlight reel creation, as well as integrated metadata tagging. The K2 Dyno is so easy to learn that operators, even those at the novice level, need little training with it.

"In looking for a replay system, we wanted a proven server platform, not just a PC with playback software. We demoed the K2 Dyno at NAB 2012 and were immediately impressed with how easy it was to operate and all of the great features it offered. We use the K2 Dyno for a variety of different tasks — including ingest, editing, clip store and replay—which makes it a great value for us and for our clients," said Reynolds.

Benefits

Reynolds said cueing replays and creating highlight packages has never been easier with the K2 Dyno. He can also reconfigure its software and hardware capabilities or scale it up for increased capacity, channels and guaranteed bandwidth.

He explained that the K2 Dyno's ergonomic design is easy to learn and fast to operate; specifically, the way the controller interacts between the external VGA screen, the color touchscreen on the controller, the color changing keys and the way the mouse and keypad also support this interoperability. "Dyno gives us the flexibility to build playlists and organize clips and bins beforehand or during live replay. Building a 'melt' after a game is quick and easy. With the K2 Dyno, there's no time wasted."

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David Reynolds, Partner and Director of Operations at Thistle Communications



CASE STUDY THISTLE COMMUNICATIONS

Another aspect that drew Reynolds to the K2 Dyno is its ability to perform as more than a playback server. “We have clients asking for playback show opens, presentation videos for their corporate events and monitor loop videos — all of which the K2 Dyno manages with ease. Additionally, the ability record up to 16 hours of 1080i on two channels in a session is a real plus. It’s gotten our clients out of a bind more than once,” Reynolds said.

He commented, “A few months ago, we were halfway through a fundraising event when our tape operator realized that a standalone program record hard drive screen was flashing red. As it turned out, the first half of the show had not been recorded. We were using the K2 Dyno to play back show elements and luckily, we happened to be re-

ording the program with the K2 Dyno as well. So we swapped out the bad drive and began feeding the first half of the show we had recorded back onto the hard drive. While we were dubbing the first half of the event on one channel, the K2 Dyno was playing back presentation clips for the second half on the other channel while still recording the show. At the end of the event we were able to deliver a hard drive with a complete show, making our client very happy. We’ve used K2 Dyno to record every show since, and we can’t imagine life without it.”

For more information about Thistle Communications, please visit their website or follow them on Facebook:

www.thistlecommunications.net
[Facebook.com/thistlecomm](https://www.facebook.com/thistlecomm)



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