AJA sends clear signal to Gray TV

Many things to many people: AJA Video Systems FS1

by Carolyn Giardina

AJA Video Systems multiformat FS1 frame synchronisers are in use at the 36 network member stations owned by Atlanta-headquartered broadcast company Gray Television. The FS1 is a universal HD and SD, audio and video frame synchroniser and converter supporting virtually any input or output format.

Gray Television has already purchased more than 130 FS1 converters for its stations, and several more are on order via local AJA reseller Professional Video Supply.

"AJA tools fill in the gaps for us," said Jim Ocon, Gray Televisions VP of technology. "The FS1 is extremely versatile and is able to be many things to many people. Our station engineers have put it to myriad usesas a r outer, to handle cross-conversions and as a frame synchroniser, just to name a few.

"From where I'm sitting, my favourite feature of the FS1 is the fact that its a low-cost converter," Ocon continued. "It's possible to spend thousands on conversions, so when you can find something that handles multiple jobs on the fly without having to make time-consuming reconfigurations, you definitely stick with it."
7.F11

Exhibitor Q&A

Richard Scott, vice president, EMEA operations, Harris Broadcast Communications

Has IBC come at a good time for the electronic media industry? Why?
We see signs that investments in several key categories are continuing despite the financial traumas of the last year or so. Broadcasters are coming to IBC09 seeking more than point products. IBC offers a platform to help broadcasters understand how end-to-end broadcast solutions can help them save money and make money, and which suppliers are best-suited to partner with them for the long term.

What do you think are the key developments in, or threats to, your market sector at the current time?
The market is seeking manufacturers that provide the right answers for multiplatform delivery in areas such as IPTV, DVB-T and mobile TV, and applications such as digital signage. These emerging business models present new opportunities for the broadcast customer to provide more content in a multi-distributed way and, most importantly, to develop new revenue streams from existing assets.

Why should delegates visit your stand at IBC?
Harris is using IBC09 to not only demonstrate our commitment to the industry, but also to showcase our world-class integrated broadcast solutions. Customers will see that Harris is very well-positioned – continuing to invest in our business internationally and offering an unrivalled portfolio of solutions from media and workflow to transmission and networking to broadcast infrastructure and branding.
7.G20/7.G23

Mediaedge adds H.264

by David Fox

The latest version of Grass Valley's Mediaedge digital signage and on-demand content delivery platform now has support for H.264 MPEG-4 compression, which will enable it to store and distribute more HD content from a single server. The system's set-top player also has an HDMI output, which will allow it to work with many more HD displays.

Mediaedge4 is claimed to make content 'easier to locate, schedule, and playout for a variety of VoD and point-of-presence display applications – all while leveraging the cost advantages of a standard IT infrastructure'. The new Mediaedge4 set-top box decodes H.264 plus MPEG-2 content from existing Mediaedge3 systems, although the move to H.264 will allow users to lower data rates by about 30%.

"With the latest version of Mediaedge, users can make better use of their network distribution pipeline and the hard disk space on the server," said Jeff Rosica, senior VP of Grass Valley. "It will help a variety of applications get the most value for their investment and launch new services quickly and cost-effectively."
1.D11

Flexibility: key to new markets

Chris Wright, manager of Telestream's Central and Eastern Europe business, discusses how a flexible infrastructure can unlock new market opportunities

Every business year presents its own unique challenges but this year the industry faces a collection of what seem to be conflicting messages. The economic downturn has many asking where costs can be cut, operating expenses lowered, and budgets reduced. But at the same time there is evidence that certain market segments are on the rise. Content consumption continues to increase and demand is high. IPTV, UGC and social-driven networking is expanding the reach of audio and video beyond the traditional realm of broadcast and cable.

There is a natural urge for caution and hesitation to invest just at a time when the equivalent of a bargain fire sale for entry into new market segments is underway. How much does it cost to produce user-generated content? Does a tweet on Twitter create demand or consume company resources? Just like the stock market, our industry shows evidence of success in buying low and selling high. How?

Technology and creative resources can be efficiently merged. When they are, you can become a player in these new and growing markets for a fraction of the cost it took to become a broadcaster. Wise investments can be made today to open the door for huge economies of scale where value can be added to both new and existing media assets.

If the adage 'all politics is local' is true, then there is much to be said about the value of localised or personalised media content. Technology exists on the floor of this year's IBC to add value to what you already have. There is an opportunity every time an asset is accessed, copied, moved, or even converted. At the point where value is added, revenue opportunities have just been generated.

Planning infrastructure to be flexible enough to meet these new production challenges means going beyond the idea of 'just enough to do the job' or processing a static list of formats and codecs. In the past, it was easy enough to just buy two VTRs when you needed one as a backup. But in the digital age of file-based workflows, the requirement to plan for flexibility and future change in the market is the equivalent of buying all the versions of tape formats which have ever existed all at once. The key to be able to service diverse markets like broadcast, the internet and the unknown 'market X' of the future will be to have an intelligent and flexible infrastructure in place. Or, to put it another way, 'everything in and anything out.'

Exhibitor Opinion

Chris Wright: 'Technology exists to add value to what you already have'

The challenge for us all, manufacturer and customer alike, is the speed at which this change is happening. Entire broadcast facilities are being planned and taken online sometimes in just weeks when it used to take months or even years. Technical developments are needed yesterday when the ink on the drawing is not yet dry. Yes, the digital age is upon us. Files are here to stay. It should come as no surprise that things are moving faster. Now more than ever, making informed, intelligent decisions to get high returns on investment is the key to successfully entering the new markets while consistently earning money in your existing ones.
7.C19