

USER REPORT

Hallmark Goes Tapeless with Telestream

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LOS ANGELES

In late 2001, Hallmark Channel management presented my department with an exciting challenge. Instead of playing back content from a facility across town here in Los Angeles, we were moving playback to Denver.

Delivery of commercials and promos were now subject to a FedEx timetable. Sometimes a spot absolutely positively has to be there in a few hours, and Fedex is limited to overnight. My Denver counterparts introduced me to Telestream's ClipMail Pro and the problem was solved. ClipMail Pro is an MPEG encoding and delivery appliance, providing both speed and convenience. It encodes from a wide range of video/audio tape formats, digitizing and converting media into MPEG-2 or MPEG-1 files. Digital media parcels are easily assembled for fast, efficient delivery over the Internet to a receiving appliance in Denver.

Over time, ClipMail Pro's value has grown. We use the system to encode long-form titles at low-res and send them to our closed captioning vendor's ftp server. This is usually a last-minute process that requires rapid turnaround.

ClipMail Pro is also used as the input/output device for our digital asset management system. This primarily consists of promotional elements produced outside of Hallmark, since content produced in-house is ingested directly as digital files from the edit bays via Telestream's FlipFactory. The ClipMail also converts requested compilations of digital files

from the digital asset management back to baseband video and lays the material off to the required videotape format. We can even specify how many seconds of black will be laid between spots.

My next goal was to remove tape from the process altogether. On the commercial side, advertisers were all moving to digital delivery services. On the promo side, we were cutting promos in digital form. As long as all these assets were already digital, I wanted a tool that could manage and transcode the media and track all associated metadata through every step of our processes.

TELESTREAM SOLUTION

Again, we turned to Telestream for a workflow automation solution that combined ClipMail Pro and FlipFactory TrafficManager to provide the managed digital delivery solution we needed. Now, our TrafficManager system monitors Media DVX, DG Systems, Vyvx and FastChannel servers for incoming commercials and our Avid Unity storage for promos exported from our Avid bays. Media is analyzed, proxies are generated for review, metadata is managed and people are notified. And it's all automatic.

Some ads still come on tape and that's not a problem. We just use our ClipMail Pro to encode and send them right in to the same



Mark Stolnitz operates Telestream products at Hallmark Channel's Los Angeles facility.

TrafficManager factory that handles the digitally delivered spots.

TrafficManager provides a localization point for receiving, identifying and managing distribution of media within Hallmark Channel. Commercials are automatically logged, a proxy generated and content moved to our air server for playout. We have achieved a nearly tapeless post production operation for promos by feeding our digital asset management system in the same way it feeds our on-air servers.

From ingest to on-air, Telestream provides the complete end-to-end tapeless solution that we needed.

Mark Stolnitz joined the Odyssey Network in 1999. Two years later Odyssey became the Hallmark Channel. He is now vice president of facility operations and may be contacted at markstolnitz@hallmarkchannel.com.

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