



# A World Leading Ad Agency Chooses Episode Engine for Automating Multi-Format Encoding

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The Lab is a state-of-the-art television and digital production company formed inside the UK’s largest advertising agency, AMV BBDO. AMV BBDO is part of the BBDO network which is the world’s third largest global advertising agency network. Clients include such well-known brands as BBC, Pepsi, Volvo, GE, Campbell, The Economist and Pfizer, to name a few.

AMV BBDO created the in-house production facility to provide greater speed, flexibility and control in meeting the diverse and creative needs of their clients. The Lab runs almost exclusively on off-the-shelf Apple hardware and storage systems. Creative desktop applications, mainly Adobe Creative Suite and Apple Final Cut Studio, were selected, and workflows were built around these technologies to create a cost-effective, ultra-modern, tapeless facility.

## The Challenge

“As a new facility facing the grueling demands of our clients’ encoding needs, we had to find a way to increase our transcoding throughput,” said Jim Mellor, Technical Director at The Lab. “Following our philosophy of avoiding costly proprietary hardware meant that we were forced into using desktop encoding products, such as Cleaner and Compressor on the Mac and ProCoder on a PC – however, these solutions were limiting.”

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## The Solution

The Lab abandoned their standalone desktop encoding products. Using Episode Engine, they built a server with watched folders and encoding presets on a share of the SAN – which is accessible across their departments by all 20 workstations. The implementation happened in an afternoon following a lengthy trial period with the software and replacement of the encoding settings for the many different formats they need. Final installation occurred in October 2007.

## The Workflow

The Lab now runs Episode Engine with Flash on an Apple Xserve and Episode client software on every Mac workstation. Episode Engine provides fast, high-performance encoding to a wide range of SD and HD video and audio file formats. Episode client applications provide direct integration with Apple’s Compressor 3, expanding Final Cut encoding capabilities to the extensive array of formats and encoding settings in Episode.

According to Mellor, “Episode’s sleek interface and complete integration with the Mac OS and Apple Final Cut Studio is unparalleled in any third party software.”

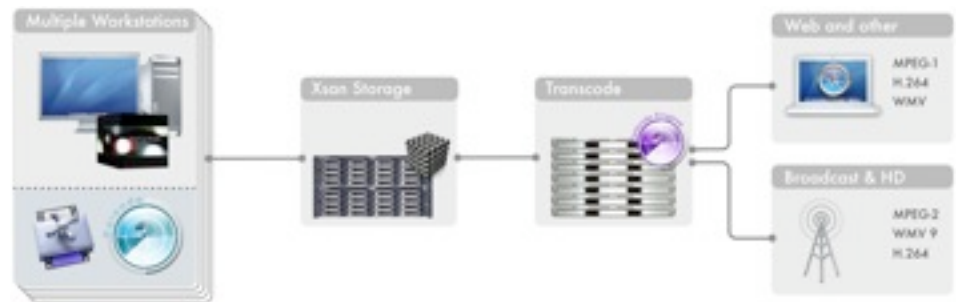
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Since The Lab’s workstations are all Macs, they also have Telestream’s Flip4Mac WMV plug-in installed which allows them to playback Windows Media in QuickTime.

Episode Engine encodes to a variety of broadcast formats which allows The Lab to fully automate the delivery of digital assets from the editor’s workstation to the broadcaster. On average about 50 encodes are performed each day for approvals – primarily commercials and some short films.

QuickTime 10-bit uncompressed PAL is used as their master format and QuickTime DV PAL for offline material. MPEG-1 and QuickTime H.264 are commonly used for delivery, and Windows Media when compatibility is key. For broadcast, MPEG-2 4:2:2 I-Frame PAL is used for TV delivery, and WM9 and AVI H.264 for the new crop of HD digital formats.



## The Results

“The batch operations and automation offered by Episode’s server-based watched-folder solution save us hours of time preparing batches on local software installed on each workstation. It also allows us to quickly generate profiles centrally for our various output formats and control synchronized deployment and network access to them by everyone,” reports Mellor.

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