



Weigel Broadcasting Co. Picks Pipeline to Cost-effectively Mass Digitize Tape Archives

“We looked at other digitization products that ran into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. There is no other product out there that can match Pipeline’s price point for high-quality, cost-effective mass digitization of our four channels of video. Pipeline is a very fluid, universal box that can be used for any application or workflow.”
- Kyle Walker, Director of Engineering/Operations

Weigel Broadcasting Co. is a family-owned company that takes great pride in its independence and ability to provide entertainment television for people of all ages. Weigel Broadcasting Co. and affiliates companies are comprised of ten stations in Chicago, Milwaukee, WI and South Bend, IN. Its flagship station, WCIU, The U is one of the last remaining locally owned, programmed and operated independent television stations in a major US market.

In January of 2005, Weigel Broadcasting launched a classic television station WWME, Me-TV (www.METVchicago.com). Then, in April of 2008 the television station group launched a second classic TV station: WMEU, Me-Too. The two classic TV stations air more than 100 show titles from the 1960s, 70s and 80s. Additionally, some of the classic programs run on Weigel stations in Milwaukee and in South Bend.

The Challenge

With approximately 28,000 television episodes existing on tape, Weigel Broadcasting Co. needed to find a way for one person to efficiently mass digitize their extensive tape library. They needed to make the episodes available for all Weigel stations.



The Workflow Solution

Video Capture: Pipeline Quad, a network based multichannel video capture system from Telestream, encodes content from four digital Betacam VTRs.

Transcoding & Delivery: Working in tandem with Telestream's FlipFactory Pro workflow automation software, Pipeline encodes its SDI input directly into FlipFactory which transcodes the content into the station's Harris broadcast server format in real time. FlipFactory then notifies the analysis and archive systems to begin the next steps.

Analysis: QuiC Analyzer from Harris analysis the video and audio to assure quality.

Archive: Content is sent to Weigel's SGL archive system, with its 50 terabytes of storage, making it available to the Weigel stations in all three cities.

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The Result

The new workflow allows the station's operator to simply load up four tapes and initiate the archive process. Each of Pipeline's four channels control a VTR and encodes the SDI input. FlipFactory automatically flips (transcodes) the incoming media into the Harris server format in real time, sends it to the QuiC Analyzer, and then off to the SGL archive. Approximately 75 half-hour episodes are archived 24 hours a day Monday through Friday and 8 hours a day on Saturday and Sunday.

Any Weigel station is able to access virtually any show from the 60s, 70s and 80s. To achieve optimum efficiency the station chose to run these episodes off a centralized master control server in Chicago, feeding the content over fiber to each station's remote transmitter.

According to Kyle Walker, Director of Engineering/Operations at WCIU, The U, "We looked at other digitization products that ran into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. There is no other product out there that can match Pipeline Quad's price point [\$9,950] for high-quality, cost-effective mass digitization of four channels of video. Pipeline is a very fluid, universal box that can be used for any application or workflow."

Walker also notes that this is a relatively new market – which opens up huge opportunities because "everyone has rooms of content sitting on tape."