WestCom
Production

AUTOMATED HD WORKFLOW
FOR WESTCOM

The background

WestCom Media Group was founded in 1991, and comprises three innovative and successful media businesses. WestCom Medien uses its own TV broadcast licence to transmit North Rhine-Westphalia's edition of regional news programme '17.30 SAT.1'. WestCom Information, meanwhile, has an editorial team that produces magazine pieces and reports for major German private and semi-autonomous public broadcasters. Finally, WestCom Broadcast Services is a modern, full-service technology provider, serving TV channels and enterprises.

WestCom is headquartered in Dortmund, Germany. It also has an office in Düsseldorf, primarily responsible for producing reports from the state parliament of North Rhine-Westphalia.

The challenge

WestCom is committed to producing high-quality, leading-edge editorial content – from reports on current issues, to the development of new formats and creation of made-to-order productions.

Since moving into new offices, WestCom Medien's editorial team has taken steps to modernise its technology workflows, making them truly HD-ready.
The goal is to enable the editorial team to create reports for North Rhine-Westphalia's SAT.1 regional news programme, in a way that is easier, more flexible, automated and fast – with guaranteed reliability and minimum downtime.
The entire system needs to be geared towards editorial work, as the editors also fulfil the role of VJs. They

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About MoovIT

MoovIT provides video and IT solutions for broadcasters and organisations of all shapes and sizes.
The company, headquartered in the Schanzenviertel district of Cologne, specialises in the development and support of workflows for all aspects of post-production, news and archiving at the interface between video and IT. MoovIT leverages particular expertise in the field of technical solutions for sports reporting. In addition, the company develops web-to-video solutions, localisations, remote editing systems and video hosting products used by organisations across a highly diverse range of industries.
MoovIT's customers include broadcasters, production companies, sport event organizers, agencies, and enterprises from a wide range of backgrounds.
In short, MoovIT is the perfect partner for worldwide support, managed services, software, hardware and integration solutions that accelerate and streamline processes – what we call WORKFLOW IN THE FLOW.

WORKFLOW IM FLOW

manage and edit the reports – from ingest through to playout. Camera crews, cutters and administrators do not contribute actively to this process, instead playing a supporting role for special tasks or to answer questions.

However, it may take multiple editors to complete a single report – which is why it is vital that all team members can communicate and collaborate seamlessly.

The solution

The new workflow needed to combine the latest technical standards (HD) and enhanced processes (a fully redundant storage system based on a network infrastructure) with existing client devices.

The central element of the solution is EditShare EFS, a fully redundant, exceptionally reliable storage system based on two controllers and four storage nodes. EFS boasts 128 terabytes of storage, and features 10-gigabit Ethernet connections.

The new network infrastructure greatly increases the ease and flexibility with which WestCom can integrate its 40 existing Apple clients. The scalable system offers plenty of scope for expansion, including the potential to add new editing desks from diverse vendors. What's more, WestCom professionals can continue to use the existing editorial system.

EFS incorporates Flow software elements that fulfil the requirements of a state-of-the-art MAM platform. Moreover, to ensure seamless interaction between the EditShare storage nodes and Adobe Premiere editing software, MoovIT's developers have created "Helmut", a standardised tool that has been integrated into WestCom's work-flow. "Helmut" enables easy, agile project management. The tool automatically assigns identification numbers to each project, and results in a clear, logical folder structure that helps the team to create, locate and assign projects. Furthermore, "Helmut" manages the personal settings of each Adobe Premiere user – ensuring that the program interface and settings deliver exactly what each employee requires.

MoovIT's software experts have also developed panels for Adobe Premiere that automatically manage the ingest of XDCAM files and the export of data for distribution. Despite the step up to HD quality, media files can now be readied for playout (in all formats) or posted online faster than ever before. The transfer of data to other parts of the infrastructure, such as the editorial system or data archive, has been significantly accelerated, too.

The new workflow allows the editorial team to focus fully on their core tasks, as the key technical processes run automatically in the background.

The implementation

From day one, the MoovIT team was on hand to provide advice and assistance as WestCom made changes to its technical and editorial processes. The scope of service included technical planning, pro-duct consultancy, software development and support at every stage of the project. In particular, the team focused on ways to optimise editorial processes for the switch to HD. The redundant, high-performance work-flow delivers the outstanding reliability that WestCom needs – enabling multiple editors to collaborate and communicate seamlessly and simultaneously. MoovIT tailored its solution to work with WestCom's existing technology – encompassing the edit suites, plus the editorial and archiving system.

The first phase of the workflow upgrade project – focusing on the production of North Rhine-Westphalia's SAT.1 regional news programme – took place at WestCom Medien's Dortmund site. Additional phases are currently at the planning stage.

The benefits

The HD workflow is technically complex, but a host of easy-to-use elements allow WestCom's editorial team to fulfil the role of VJs, capable of producing the entire broadcast.

The redundant, high-performance system offers exceptional flexibility and high availability.
Super-fast processes enable editors to work on new items for broadcast, even while a live program is on air – resulting in 'just in time' broadcasting.

MoovIT's software has greatly simplified workflows – cutting the number of errors by 50 per cent. Moreover, streamlined ad-ministrative processes allow WestCom to quickly trace and eliminate potential sour-ces of error. This represents a significant improvement.

Although WestCom has only employed Apple devices to date, it would be easy to integrate clients from alternative manu-facturers – an important consideration for the future.

The upgraded (office) network infra-structure – which previously relied on Fibre Channel technology – simplifies collabo-ration inside the office, and also enables the team to work more efficiently with external partners.

The system is highly scalable, offering ample potential for expansion and modifications.

In addition, WestCom has significantly low-ered its electricity costs.