

Digital Broadcast Servers Speed HD

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MEMPHIS—WMC-TV is part of the Raycom Media station group, and when other three Raycom stations in Mississippi needed to make an “immediate” transition of their master control to HD, we were happy to share our experience

USER REPORT

and embarked on a one-week “installathon” to complete the job.

We automated our own master control in 2006 with Digital Broadcast’s MediaFire video server system with embedded automation playing a big part. At that time, we’d transitioned to digital, but were broadcasting in SD. When we decided to go HD, we found it extremely cost effective to upgrade our Digital Broadcast video servers for high-definition.

CLONING A SUCCESS

Raycom management asked me to replicate the WMC-TV operation at the Mississippi stations. Working with personnel at Digital Broadcast, we configured the server systems at all three of the stations, as all had requirements similar to ours, including fully redundant HD video server payout, and the ability to record HD and SD. They also needed the full Digital Broadcast MediaPitch and Pathfire interfaces.

Our Hattiesburg, Miss. station was already using Digital Broadcast servers for SD payout and was able to take advantage of Digital’s third-year “at-cost” server upgrade, making the HD transition very cost effective.

The timeframe for getting all of these conversions accomplished was extremely short. Once the system designs were finalized, servers were ordered and delivered. Drawings and instructions were provided so that station personnel could rack the equipment and run cables as necessary to speed things along.

Then the real “fun” began. In the course of a week, I visited the stations in Hattiesburg, Biloxi, and Jackson with a Digital Broadcast engineer to install and commission the servers and train personnel.

The Hattiesburg station was up and running in HD in two days. The Biloxi station decided to run the Digital Broadcast server system in parallel with their existing system for a couple of days, and then switched over. Our Jackson operation accomplished the switchover in about a week. Digital Broadcast later returned to all three stations to finalize training and answer questions.

A WIN-WIN SITUATION ALL ROUND

Even though all of this was accomplished on an extremely tight schedule, there have been very few issues since the Digital Broadcast equipment went on line. The servers are very user friendly, and operators got the hang of things almost immediately. The file-based workflow also provides a lot of efficiencies. For example, the PitchBlue and DG FastChannel interfaces have relieved operators of many of the chores that previously consumed their time and attention.

The value we received from this project was phenomenal. The expedited fulfillment and installation, the streamlining of station workflow, and the reliability of the servers has all been excellent. Based on this experience, when the Raycom station in Lubbock, Texas decided it was time for a speedy HD makeover, we once again the Digital Broadcast.



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