

Manchester United TV

Manchester United Television prides itself on being one of the world's most innovative sports television channels. Jointly owned by Manchester United, Sky TV and ITV Granada, MUTV is accessible on a conditional access basis to a potential 18 million viewers in 68 countries. MUTV subscribers receive time-shifted home and away matches, up-to-the-minute reports and exclusive interviews recorded at the Old Trafford Training Centre

The Challenge

MUTV needed to bring in-house all the facilities necessary to manage its presentation and transmission directly from the Old Trafford Stadium site, broadcasting from 2 pm each afternoon to 12.30 the following morning. MUTV broadcasts about 90 games each season. Premiership matches are handled by the host broadcasters, Sky Television, Setanta and the BBC, who field up to 18 HD cameras for a major match. A feed is taken from the back of their OB units into the gallery where they add their own live commentary and produce their own show.

The Solution

Controlled directly from a playlist generated by the scheduling manager, Pharos Playtime creates a dynamic presentation with graphics effects without the need for external post-production facilities. Traditional broadcast control systems rely on a simple video event playlist as their timing reference. Playtime uses the Pharos "package" mechanism with any number of independent tracks for each secondary event sequence. Individual tracks are displayed on the Playtime control screen as separate timelines, typically representing main video, backup video, discrete voice-over languages, GPIs, mix/effects, logo and subtitles. This offers a very straightforward way of automatically managing the look and style of the channel and any programme themes without the need for any additional graphics design and character generator.

Business Benefits of Playtime to MUTV

- Gives MUTV complete control over its output in-house.
- Has allowed the identity and interactivity to develop using packages and templates.
- Reduced the need for a separate graphics and post production work.
- Combines automation with the ability to take hands-on control of a story or event during the match, as it happens.
- Reduces the amount of content repetition.
- Direct integration of channel management.
- Any changes to the schedule can be managed at very short notice.
- Expanding the channels output and flexibility, going on air three hours earlier than before.



Studio facility for MUTV at Old Trafford

Colin Renwick – Chief Engineer, MUTV

"Pharos Playtime automation is such good value for money combining some unique and very clever features in a single system. It had exactly the features we were looking for - what we term 'hands-on-automation', a flexible mix of 75% automation and 25% direct involvement."



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Why Pharos?

Over and above the look and feel improvements, Playtime enabled MUTV to develop the channel further by carrying live in-picture text feedback directly from Manchester United supporters. A particularly useful feature of Playtime is its ability to operate if necessary as a studio mixer and router in addition to its main role as a presentation switcher. A high proportion of MUTV's programme output is live so it makes good sense to eliminate any single point of operator error or technical failure in the overall system. The switcher can be used manually or under automated control from Playtime.

Key Functionality of Playtime for MUTV

- High operational versatility for live and non-live presentation.
- Integrated graphics control using packages and templates.
- User-friendly and easy to learn Graphical User Interface.
- Freedom to migrate gradually from tape-based operation to a hybrid of tape and hard-disk server playout.
- Open-ended flexibility means easy future expansion in number of channels.



Pharos Playtime automation in use MUTV

This case study:

PHCS-1001 Pharos Playtime MUTV

Related documents:

PHDS-1001 Playtime

PHDS-1003 Playtime Modules

PHDS-1004 Playtime Overview

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