

# Sit-up Channels

Britain's fastest growing television retailer, sit-up channels comprises bid tv, price-drop tv and speed auction tv, all of which are accessible in over 17 million UK homes and on the web. Launched with sit-up channels in October 2000, bid tv was the world's first live auction channel. Sit-up channels have a collective customer base of over 3 million people and are watched each month by over 5 million viewers.

## The Challenge

Sit-up channels needed an efficient automation system to form the core of its operation. The freedom to work live was essential to the auction-based programme format. Pharos listened carefully to sit-up's requirements, responding flexibly and receptively. Each channel has a three-camera studio with real rather than virtual sets.

Bid tv has a semi-circular set with, from left to right, sell-area, gavel, and sell-area with a background cyc. We recently installed a further two rear projectors in bid tv, bringing the total in there to three. This dramatically increases the impact of the 'sell' and was part of a re-design of the whole bid set. The on-screen graphics get live data from our auction system, a central element to our live channels. Everything goes through the vision desk so there is no separate transmission function. The transmission controller carries out MCR functions. Signals leave the building as base-band 10-bit SDI.

## The Solution

Pharos Playtime playout automation was recognised as being more versatile, more open and more scalable than other systems. It uses standard Dell servers rather than heavily-modified PCs.

Six Pharos workstations were installed, with playlists, offline scheduling, databases, hardware panels and Pharos Control Platform interfaces. Traditional broadcast automation systems rely on a playlist of video events as their main timing reference. Pharos Playtime uses a package with independent tracks for each event sequence. Each track is displayed on the control screen as a separate timeline, typically representing main video, backup video, discrete voiceover languages, GPUs, mixer effects, logo and subtitles. These result is that our schedulers can create relatively complex presentation effects which would otherwise require achieved extensive post-production facilities. We will also shortly be implementing Playtime automation on Screenshop.

Two Pharos Playtime servers, primary and a rarely-needed backup, are in use at sit-up channels. They incorporate two playlists, offline scheduling playlists, six workstations, a resilient database, hardware panels and PCPs.

## Business Benefits of Playtime to Sit-up

- Increased staff efficiency.
- Low cost of ownership.
- Full automation with the option of live over-ride
- Open and expandable system



Sit up tv Studio Facility

## David Upton – Chief Engineer, Sit-up

"With Pharos Playtime sit-up has succeeded in combining the benefits of automation with the flexibility of a fast-moving live programme."

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## Why Pharos?

The Pharos team worked closely with sit-up channels to accommodate its precise real-time requirements. Operational and engineering training with the system was straightforward. The channels have grown massively in recent years and the opportunities for expansion are considerable. With Pharos Playtime sit-up has succeeded in combining the benefits of automation with the flexibility of a fast-moving live programme.

## Key Functionality of playtime for sit-up

- File-based play-to-air.
- Package-based playlist handling.
- Robust main and backup server configuration.
- Full management reporting

## Sit-up studio gallery featuring Pharos playtime



## This case study

PHCS-1003.02 Sit-up channels

### Related documents:

PHDS-1001 Pharos Playtime

PHDS-1003 Pharos Playtime Modules

PHDS-1004 Pharos Playtime Overview

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