Case Study

Live Earth

Webcast Production

Instant Tapeless Technology

Customer >

"Many aspects of this job required some very complicated solutions, operating concurrently, to seamlessly integrate well together. [IP]Director and the new features available working in the Version 4 suite of EVS tools not only met the challenges, they made the processes simple to learn and use."

*Greg **Blanton***
Engineering Specialist,
Bexel Broadcast Services

Live Earth is the brainchild of Kevin Wall, an executive producer of the Live 8 concert series in 2005, and former U.S. Vice President Al Gore. Their idea was to bring together big-name musical acts, actors, artists, and other celebrities who care about global climate change, and to broadcast their message to the world, raising awareness and inspiring change on a global level. Starting in Sydney and ending in New York City, 10 locations across the globe and on all seven continents hosted consecutive concerts that featured major artists and famous speakers such as Madonna, The Police, Cameron Diaz, Shakira, Bon Jovi, Jane Goodall, and organizer Al Gore, all speaking out about climate change.

To ensure worldwide access to all of the footage, online streaming of Live Earth was available at www.liveearth.msn.com the day of the event, and Video On Demand footage was posted on the MSN website afterwards.

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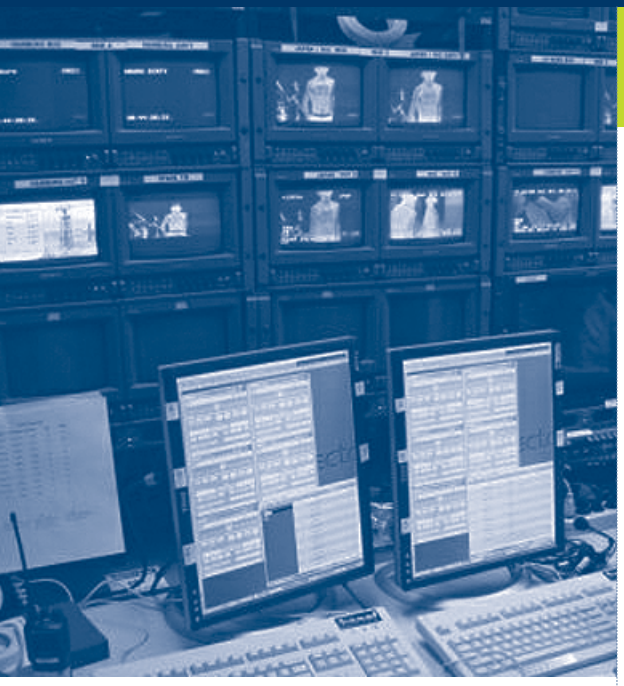

Challenge >

The challenge of the Live Earth event was obvious: how to capture, track, edit, and format 24 hours worth of live footage from 10 locations around the world quickly and efficiently, while simultaneously providing streaming video of all of the events and pre-produced material. A separate tab on the website was dedicated to each of the 10 concert locations, and streaming public service announcements and other information about climate change played before each concert began. Both pre- and post-production needs were intricate and time-sensitive. The resulting workflow needed to be able to:

- **Manage a full online broadcast service, including concerts feed ingest**
- **Manage delay feeds for different time zones**
- **Support pre-produced footage for playback online**
- **Allow for fast and easy post-production, including easy creation of clips for Video On Demand purposes**
- **Convert file formats of all material for seamless movement from source to web server**

XT[2]: *The XT[2] production server delivers a full range of applications for live/studio production, post content management, and playout. The XT[2] server permanently records cameras on RAID-protected hard disks, ensuring no vital shot is missed. All XT[2] channels are reversible, and can be used as inputs or outputs, depending on the production requirements.*

Solution >

Six 6-Channel SD XT[2] servers controlled by 7 [IP]Directors, along with 3 XFiles with MediaXchange, were used to ingest the two feeds from each location, as well as a world feed. Throughout the event, the system was used to record on average 24 feeds with 12 playback channels.

Before each concert, the pre-produced material was broadcast from the XT[2]s through Incited Media's live encoders and to the websites for each of the locations online at www.liveearth.msn.com so that no city's specific tab at the site was ever playing black. This pre-produced material included special content for each city, with Live Earth short films, information about global warming, and tips on how to affect change locally.

All pre-produced content was delivered to the site as DV Quicktime files. Using XFile and Media XChange, the content was easily flipped from DV to IMX and loaded to the EVS servers for creating the custom pre-show loops running for each city.

After completion of each concert at a given location, the XT[2] was used to play a loop of that concert on the location's website until the rights expired, at which point viewers were given the ability to view specific songs, artists, backstage footage, and celebrity interviews on-demand.

To create this on-demand footage, loggers used the [IP]Directors during the show to create clips of each song or speech, from Blue King Brown's first song to Al Gore's closing-night speech. Loggers also grabbed a frame from each clip to use as an icon for the clip's placement on the web.

The EVS XT[2] servers were recording material using the IMX codec. The files without the need for any conversion were sent directly to the Rhozet encoding farm prior to delivery to MSN's web server.

Online hits topped 30 million streams the day of the event - the highest volume for any online event in the history of the worldwide web. At least 8 million people tuned into the Live Earth website to watch the live shows on the day of the event, and millions of others are expected to click on the site for the on-demand footage now that the concert is over.

[IP]Director: *The [IP]Director is an integrated suite of software that provides versatile control of the XT[2] server's audio and video channels. Running on a Windows-based workstation, [IP]Director allows the user to easily ingest, log, manage, search, track, edit, create clips and highlights, browse, and ultimately playout any video or audio content instantly. [IP]Director's new production playlist offers a series of dynamic tools for easier and better control of XT[2] servers, with a brand new user interface. [IP]Director contains all of the functionality required to get the most out of media management within every stage of the production chain.*

XFile[2]: *XFile[2] is the removable hard drive disks storage server from EVS allowing SD and HD media along with its associated metadata to be preserved in an industry-standard MXF file format. XFile[2] delivers up to 1TB of media storage capacity.*

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"We have worked with EVS on similar events in the past with great success, so putting EVS servers at the core of our workflow was an easy decision and we could not have done it any other way."

*Ben **Rollin,***
Partner at Incited Media

"For similar live productions a few years ago, we needed at least 50 tape machines, not to mention a much bigger crew. The process was both difficult and unwieldy. It still impresses me to see the amount of work that can be done by such a relatively small number of servers."

*Craig **Schiller,***
Director of Bexel Broadcast Services

Benefits >

- **The XT[2] server provided reliable and instantaneous ingest of each feed, so that no footage was lost**
- **Delay feeds were easy to manage from time zone to time zone**
- **[IP]Director streamlined the clip-making process and allowed loggers to snag a frame from each clip without any problems**
- **XFile and Media XChange allowed producers to convert files between formats easily and effortlessly**
- **EVS' tapeless technology shortened the list of required machines for this kind of project, making the workflow more manageable than in previous years**
- **Fewer machines meant less required energy, from an electrical standpoint as well as a human standpoint, freeing up time and energy for the involved staff to use on other aspects of the show**
- **Taking tapes out of the workflow and requiring less electricity reduced the amount of waste that the project produced, which helped the engineers stay true to the ideals of the Live Earth broadcast**

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