

CASE STUDY

Digitization infrastructure turnkey solution for the European Parliament

Engineering

Late 2008, the European Parliament selected BCE for the complete installation of its digitizing infrastructure and for the digitization of video content with quality check and corrections to ensure the best quality.

While the European Parliament assumed its present form in 1979, its roots stretch back to 1952. The archive it has amassed chronicles a significant part of European and world history. At the time the project was initiated, some of the archive was already stored in digital format on a Sony data tape system.

Most of the content however is still stored on Digital Betacam videotapes and some on Betacam SP videotapes. This lack of consistency created difficulties with access and retrieval.

BCE's challenge was to implement in less than one year a complete digitization platform with a Front Porch Digital archive system directly connected to the existing ingest platform of the European Parliament.

Because videotape has a limited shelf-life, preservation of content was in jeopardy.

To prevent any content loss, BCE also needed to digitize more than 12,000 hours of video content, maximizing its

quality while delivering optimized copies.

The complete project was delivered in less than 12 months. Its fulfilment was divided in three distinct phases.

"Even with tight schedules, BCE worked in a very effective way and met the deadlines for both infrastructure installation and content digitization"

Philippe Masson | Chief Engineer of the Audiovisual Unit | European Parliament

The first step of the project was the creation of the European Parliament digitization platform in BCE premises. This came as a fine tuning phase in order to create a seamless environment, optimize the workflow and ensure its successful integration in the building.

Once the infrastructure was created, BCE was able to make the system pass series of tests and make all the necessary corrections. During this phase, BCE also developed a software solution for the interface between the European

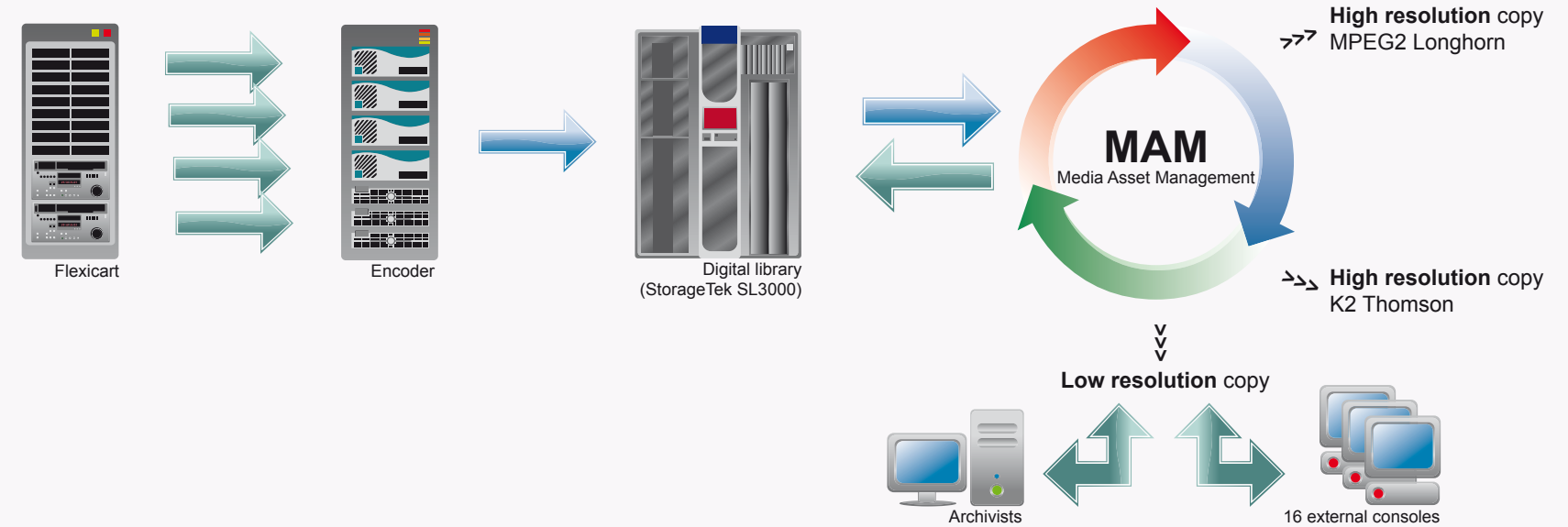
Parliament's existing Flexicart and the new Front Porch Digital library.

The platform can automatically digitize the contents and can store up to 18,000 hours of content, the archive can also easily be upgraded to 90,000 hours.



"Using the digitization platform created for the European Parliament, our dedicated team proceeded to the quality check of the video archives and made the complete error free content digitization in less than 6 months."

Christian Garit | Head of Broadcast Operations | BCE



"The relationships with the team of engineers in charge of the project were excellent. As for other projects we had with BCE, including the replacement of four editing rooms for the European Parliament in Strasbourg, they showed an outstanding professionalism and a high availability." adds Philippe Masson.

The moving of the platform to Brussels was the second phase. More than just moving the infrastructure from one address to another, BCE had also to create the interconnections between the centralized digital archive, the working stations of the archivists and also 16 external consoles for consultation purpose.

"Thanks to the new infrastructure the archivists' time schedule is optimized and their work is more precise with the efficient content indexation."

Frédéric Tadino | Audiovisual archivist | European Parliament

More than just improving their work it is the full archive management workflow that has evolved.

The next step of this project will be the connection of the production department to their centralized archiving system; from a technical point of view it would be the final step to finish with tapes and on the content part it would give the production team the opportunity to easily find archived contents and integrate them in films, series and other features.

As soon as the digitization platform was ready to work, the third phase of the project started with the digitization of the video content of the European Parliament.

But transforming the content in digital format was not completely automated as many archives were already altered by time. BCE had to make a lot of corrections so that the videos got back to life with a maximised quality for future use in productions, shows etc...

"BCE has been an excellent partner for digitization. Both departments finished the work respecting the deadlines on a very high quality level" concludes Stéphane Rigaud, Head of the engineering department of the Audiovisual Unit, European Parliament.

The European Parliament digitization platform and centralized digital library is the first step in its tapeless global switch. The result is a powerful system accelerating the workflow of the entity and giving the archivists a complete and easy to use tool for their daily work.

"The next step will be the evolution of our documentary tool with the tapeless workflow and the digitization of our audio archives by BCE."

Frédéric Tadino | Audiovisual archivist | European Parliament

The European Parliament may now drop the tape and focus on the re-use of its archives in new films. Thanks to the metadata, the users of the platform have better search results, opening a world of content to the production department connected in a near future. ■

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