

CASE STUDY - DIGITISATION INFRASTRUCTURE TURNKEY SOLUTION

The European Parliament, a directly elected institution of the European Union since 1979, is one of the world's most powerful legislatures.

The audiovisual unit provides broadcasting on an internal cable television network, and transmission to Europe by Satellite (EBS), the news exchange networks, and to selected television channels. It also provides video streaming to the Web, publication on FTP servers and oversees a media archive kept for the legal and historical record and the use of members of parliament, journalists, and scholars.

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

CHALLENGE: DIGITISE AND CENTRALISE THE CONTENTS ON A DIGITAL ARCHIVE STORAGE SYSTEM

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 digitisation 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 some content was in jeopardy. To prevent any content loss, BCE also needed to digitise more than 12,000 hours of video content, maximising its quality while delivering optimised copies.

“Using the digitisation platform created for the European Parliament, our dedicated team proceeded to the quality check of the video archives and digitised the content without errors in less than six months.” Christian Garit, Head of Broadcast Operations, BCE.

SOLUTION: DIGITAL ARCHIVE LIBRARY CONNECTED TO EXISTING INGEST INFRASTRUCTURE

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

“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.” Philippe Masson, Chief Engineer of the Audiovisual Unit, European Parliament.

Once the infrastructure was created, BCE was able to ensure the system could pass a series of tests and make any necessary corrections. During this phase, BCE also developed a software solution for the interface between the European Parliament existing Flexicart and the new Front Porch digital library.

“The software developed by BCE for the interface between the flexicart and the digital library is powerful and intuitive. Front Porch Digital even decided to resell this software for the future installations with similar configuration.” Jean Marc Gacher, Manager Special Projects, BCE.

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

Moving the platform to Brussels was the



- + Flexible and easy to use system
- + Knowledge transfer
- + Tapeless infrastructure
- + Information share
- + Optimized workflow
- + Metadata search engine

with the digitisation of the video content of the Parliament. But transforming the content in a digital format could not be completely automated as many archives were already altered by time.

BCE had to make all the necessary corrections so that the videos came back to life with maximum quality for future use in productions, shows etc.

“Even with tight schedules, BCE worked in a very effective way and met the deadlines for both infrastructure installation and content digitisation.” Philippe Masson, Chief Engineer of the Audiovisual Unit, European Parliament.

BCE's long experience in video and audio archive digitisation provides a unique expertise in large-scale projects.

second phase. More than just moving the infrastructure from one address to another, BCE had also to create the interconnections between the centralised digital archive, the work stations of the archivists and also 16 external consoles for consultation purpose. Not only has the archivists work improved, but the full archive management workflow has evolved as well.

“In order to install a seamless environment in the European Parliament building, our team created a test platform in BCE's premises. The moved infrastructure was fully tested to ensure an immediate use for the local team.” Gusty Feinen, Manager Special Projects, BCE.

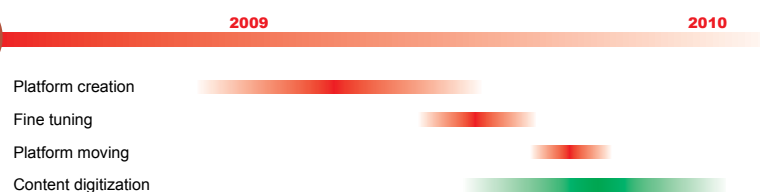
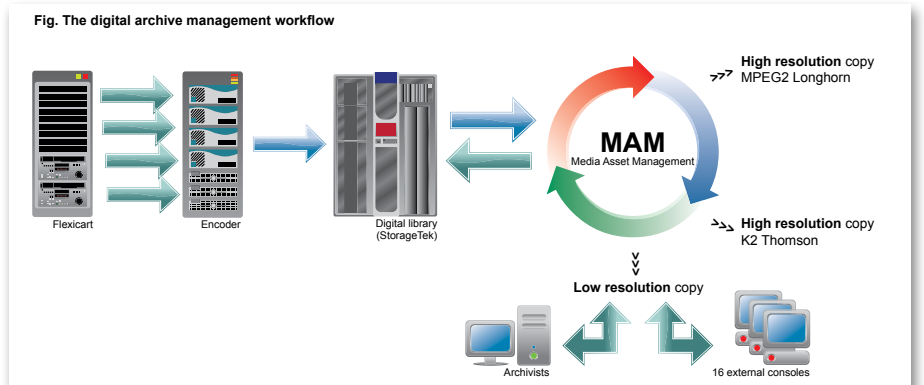
Since the digitisation platform was ready to work, the third phase of the project started

CONCLUSION

The European Parliament digitisation platform and centralised 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 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 future connected production department.



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