



Movie production services move faster

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Ken Spickler
Director, Production Network Operations
Technicolor

A high-speed BT media network powers global business processes for Technicolor

Client

Technicolor forms the heart of the Thomson services division. Its product portfolio includes end-to-end digital cinema distribution, channel origination and broadcast playout, out-of-home advertising, and electronic content delivery services. The company operates around the world and has main facilities in the US, Canada, Singapore, India, and the UK.

The Technicolor business model requires the efficient and cost effective movement of content files globally; and the size of those files is increasing inexorably. Ken Spickler, Director of Production Network Operations at Technicolor, explains: “To support the business going forward we needed to unify the network onto a single IP-based platform and significantly increase the bandwidth at each of our sites.”

Challenge

Having evolved both organically and through acquisition, the company used a legacy infrastructure to interconnect its key global production sites. Although largely sourced from one service provider the network comprised different platforms and technologies and was not fully managed end-to-end.

That new network needed to be flexible and scalable, and able to prioritise traffic on an application basis. Technicolor was also seeking to reduce overall cost of ownership, with greater predictability of spend. Ken Spickler adds: “We decided to outsource day-to-day network operations, so that we could concentrate on what we do best. We needed to find a trustworthy network vendor for this mission critical role; one that understood our business and could provide the global resources we needed.”

The BT differentiators

- BT’s knowledge, experience, and credentials in supporting the global media and broadcast industry
- A fully scalable and available high bandwidth network with global reach, supporting real time broadcast capability
- Attractive commercial terms that allow fully predictable expenditure
- Flexible and collaborative approach towards network migration and management

A BT Media and Broadcast case study

Technicolor

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Solution

Through its specialist Media and Broadcast division, BT proposed a solution based on the Global Media Network (GMN). An IP-based MPLS platform, the BT GMN is designed to carry video, audio, voice, and data over a single converged infrastructure. To assure optimum performance, it is enhanced by innovative software and incorporates sophisticated traffic engineering technology. Together with bandwidth reservation capabilities, the GMN securely separates traffic and assures the most effective use of available bandwidth at all times.

The GMN network supports a wide range of bandwidth choices up to 10Gbps, offering significantly lower latency than satellite-based transmissions. BT fully manages the service end-to-end and offers five-nines availability, backed by a performance guarantee scheme.

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The new network extends to all thirteen of the Technicolor key production sites, reaching places such as Los Angeles, Denver, New York, Toronto, London, Singapore, and Bangalore. It supports high-speed data transfer and FTP services, as well as general WAN, LAN, and VoIP traffic for both Technicolor and its Thomson parent company.

“As part of the deal, BT took over the management of our existing infrastructure and delivered the transition without impacting our business,” says Ken Spickler. “BT even posted a manager at our offices in Burbank, which we really appreciated. It took around eight months to fully complete the transition and it all went very smoothly.”

Value

Technicolor now exclusively uses the BT GMN to support its global production processes, allowing the worldwide transfer of production and post-production content. It has allowed the replacement of local legacy workflows with a streamlined, geographically agnostic global model. This has allowed Technicolor to achieve significant productivity increases and operational cost savings through rationalisation of its worldwide assets and resources.

“The new BT network is around twice as fast as our legacy network,” observes Ken Spickler, “and it’s saving us money too. Costs are around 20 per cent lower compared to previously.” The fully managed service has eliminated the network operations burden as expected, allowing Technicolor to focus on core content services.

With the deployment complete Technicolor is now able to pursue a number of new market opportunities. For example, the network is enabling business growth throughout Asia Pacific and the Indian sub-continent, while the advanced bandwidth reservation capabilities supports playout of real time broadcast video. This allows Technicolor to address business opportunities that were previously unreachable due to the limitations of its legacy network.

Another advantage of the bandwidth reservation capability is that it is helping Technicolor to leverage synergies; such as allowing corporate IT services to share the same infrastructure to serve selected sites. This means that Technicolor and Thomson have been able to cease network services from other suppliers to reduce group IT expenditure. Ken Spickler concludes: “BT has powerfully demonstrated its credentials in the media market. Working together has been truly beneficial to our business.”

Offices worldwide

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Core BT services

- Global Media Network from BT Media and Broadcast

