



Pop Media Networks Gains Competitive Edge in Today's Challenging Mediascape with Telestream's Vantage Media Processing

Automated, high-speed transcoding makes this rising entertainment media network more competitive and better positioned for the future

"The need to make this change presented us with an opportunity to move our operation onto a more advanced, powerful transcoding platform...after evaluating all our options, we saw a clear path forward with Telestream Vantage, and began a smooth, successful migration to what is proving to be a more robust, feature-rich transcoding solution."

Patrick Yew, Vice President of Post Production for Pop Media Networks, LLC, in Playa Vista.

To stay competitive and deliver high-value content to viewers anytime, on any device, today's media and entertainment providers must be able to transcode video quickly, and repurpose their media files into the wide array of formats required for broadcast, cable and satellite, video on demand, over-the-top (OTT), and mobile outlets.

That's why, when Pop Media Networks learned that the transcoding technology they had been relying upon had reached end of life, they began looking for a solution that would not only meet their growing needs today, but better position them to handle whatever media distribution challenges they might face tomorrow.

As a relatively new but growing programming service, Pop produces roughly 400 hours of original television content annually, including shows such as: *Schitt's Creek*, *Rock This Boat*, *Sing It On*, *Impact Wrestling* and *Big Brother After Dark*. Pop also aggregates and repackages syndicated TV series—such as *That '70s Show*, *The O.C.*, and *The Ghost Whisperer*. This programming is delivered to over 80 million viewers nationwide via traditional television, cable and satellite services, as well as on-demand streaming of full episodes via poptv.com.

"With the distribution of content across multiple platforms, it's a challenge to keep up with repurposing media into the many formats that need to be created, and to prep high-volume content with commercial breaks and channel branding, while ensuring the highest possible quality viewer experience," said Lawson Adams, Vice President of Engineering for Pop Media Networks, LLC, at the network's Tulsa, Oklahoma facility.



Michael Berg, Patrick Yew, Lawson Adams, Dave Fowers, and Dennis Bress

This program provider also faced the challenge of unifying its Tulsa office with its Playa Vista (Los Angeles) media center—where most of its media processing, quality control (QC) and prep work are done—so that both could interface seamlessly on the same transcoding platform.

Any media that's processed and prepped in Tulsa is transferred over IP to Playa for QC and delivery. And, media that's ready for distribution in Playa is transferred over IP to yet a third location, Encompass Digital Media, in Atlanta, which provides Pop's master control and playout functions.

"The need to make this change presented us with an opportunity to move our operation onto a more advanced, powerful transcoding platform," said Patrick Yew, Vice President of Post Production for Pop Media Networks, in Playa Vista. "After evaluating all our options, we saw a clear path forward with Telestream Vantage, and began a smooth, successful migration to what is proving to be a more robust, feature-rich transcoding solution."

Even though Telestream marketed the legacy technology, the Pop Team did its due diligence to find the best possible replacement, even if it meant switching to a new technology provider. But after extensive research, they decided to stay with Telestream and adopt their latest transcoding offering.

"One factor that compelled us to stay with Telestream is that we've had a very good relationship with the company, including first-hand experience with many of their products and customer support over the years," said Jack Carey, Pop Media Networks' Senior Vice President of Operations. "So it was natural for us to look to them for our on-going and future transcoding needs."

As the leading media processing platform in use by many major media and entertainment networks, Vantage automates the entire workflow, including dynamic decision making of what specific transcoding, if any, needs to be done to each file, and converting those formats to whatever formats, characteristics and technical specifications the unique deliverable or media outlet requires. It also performs quality control analysis and deposits the finished media onto a designated server, among other mission critical tasks as defined by Pop's unique Vantage user settings.

Pop Media Networks worked with IEEI.TV, a Telestream solutions partner located in Newport Beach, California. "As a team, we worked together to design a powerful, scalable, forward-looking roadmap. With the help of Telestream engineers, we configured a solution built on the power of Vantage," said Dennis Bress, CEO and President of IEEI.TV.

"Given the demanding requirements in the rich media space today, and the need to support the formats and workflows of tomorrow, Pop TV can feel comfortable and secure with their purchase and deployment decision," Bress added. "Telestream is a leader in the transcode/encode, automation solutions space, and Vantage is a proven media processing eco-system that is already being used across the industry by other clients with great success."

Vantage goes beyond transcoding to include all types of processing within its unified workflow, including post production. The Tulsa location is now configured with two Vantage/Lightspeed arrays, which are used to prep ads that Playa checks for quality and delivers to their origination facility.

"Without a doubt, we're better positioned to tackle new-age content distribution challenges—such as social media integration and mobile viewing—than we were before..."



Pop Media Network's Los Angeles Playa Vista IP-networked data center, simplified block diagram

The Playa media center, which handles 98% of the network's media load, now has four Vantage Transcode Pro systems, each of which is paired with a Lightspeed server for GPU-accelerated processing. This speed boost has already resulted in a 125% percent increase in throughput, without having to expand the production staff.

There are also four Telestream Post Producer systems. Available as a Vantage option and/or stand-alone system, Post Producer is an integral part of Vantage's modular media processing workflow.

"Since Post Producer can interface seamlessly with Vantage, it's able to extend that workflow to include the automation of many time-consuming, repetitious media prepping and editing tasks," said Bress.

These post production tasks include segmenting the episodes with commercial breaks, dropping commercials into mid-roll breaks, editing and versioning promos, inserting channel-branding elements, stitching episodes together, and other prep work that needs to be done to a very high-volume of shows.

"With Vantage, Lightspeed and Post Producer working together, we expect to realize many operational benefits, including saving time, maximizing resources, increased productivity, and lowering overhead costs," said Yew.

And Adams added, "Without a doubt, we're better positioned to tackle new-age content distribution challenges—such as social media integration and mobile viewing—than we were before. When we factor in the technological changes we might adopt down the road—such as scaling up our infrastructure, bursting to cloud-based processing, and adopting dynamic ad insertion (DAI)—we're confident that Vantage will give us a competitive edge, come what may, well into the future."

To learn more

To get more information about Telestream or products mentioned, call 1-530-470-1300, or visit www.telestream.net