

BUYERS BRIEFS

The MA-4110 from Matco is a storage server device designed for large volumes of material. It can be configured to store up to 520 hours and can be equipped with Gigabit Ethernet or Fibre Channel interfaces. The basic system is supplied in a single three RU chassis, with either five or eight media drives. Additional units may be added to increase storage capacity.

The unit is powered by RAID controller technology and allows the failure of one drive without affecting normal operations. Rebuilding of the failed drive is transparent. Reliability is further enhanced with redundant power supplies and cooling fans.

For more information contact Matco at 800-348-1843 or visit www.matco-video.com.

Nodal Master from Netia Inc. is a software system for control of processing and routing equipment within a nodal suite. The system

provides users with a single interface for controlling all equipment within a given area and allows them to make switches from any source to any target device.

It allows users to trigger switching via computer mouse control and provides adjustment and control of both audio and video equipment.

For more information contact Netia Inc. at 888-207-2480 or visit www.netia.net.

Compass from Newpoint Technologies Inc. is a complete software package for management of all types of broadcast and other networks. It supports up to 100,000 devices.

The system allows users to tailor alarms and event management via filtering, suppression, correlation, historical logging, trending and other tools. It comes with a library of device drivers and also lets users create custom drivers. Optional fea-

tures can be added, including a spectrum analyzer interface.

For more information contact Newpoint Technologies Inc. at 603-898-1110 or visit www.newpointtech.com.

The playKast from On-Air Systems is a complete and fully functional television play-out system for both single and multichannel operations. It provides continuous 24/7 play-out and has a multiformat play-out server. The system supports MPEG-2, DV, DVCPRO and DVCPRO 50 files and can control external VTRs. GPI triggers are available for local ad insertion. It can support up to eight mono audio channels. It's designed for broadcast and nonbroadcast applications, including information kiosks at transportation terminals, point of sale video displays, corporate training and in-house information channels.

For more information contact On-Air Systems at 44-845-0942-612, or visit www.on-air-systems.com.

iCR from Snell & Wilcox is an automated content mastering and repurposing workstation that allows users to produce high-quality digital masters and then to repurpose the content on multiple platforms.

The iCR workstation delivers superior image quality and greatly reduces time required to repurpose content for different media platforms. It eliminates separate encoding and transcoding. Multiple transcodings start as soon as the master encoding process begins. It also provides automated quality control, alerting operators to errors and offering an educated opinion as to whether segments being processed meets quality standards.

For more information, contact Snell & Wilcox at 818-556-2616 or visit www.snellwilcox.com.

USER REPORT

Miranda Powers MusiquePlus Graphics

by Mario Cusson

Head of Play-Out Operations
MusiquePlus

MONTREAL

MusiquePlus is the world's first French-language 24-hour music television station, with primary channels MusiquePlus and Musimax available to 2.3 million cable households across Canada.

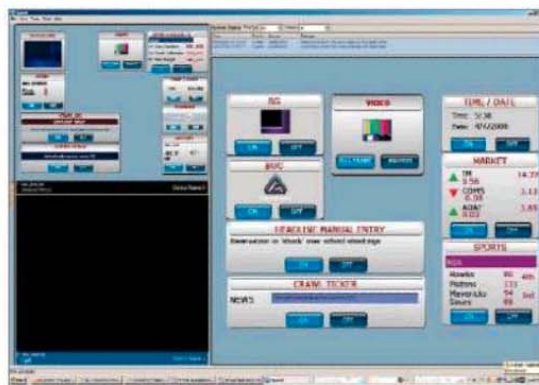
MusiquePlus is broadcast live eight hours per day and is targeted at 12-to-25-year-olds. The service encourages constant interaction with its audience, striving to reflect the preferences of the young and stylish viewers.

Music in general has become one of the most competitive segments of television today. We attribute this to the fact that our youthful viewers are both technically and media aware, with a wider range of music options than ever before. This makes it all the more difficult to retain their attention.

NEEDED TO RETHINK GRAPHICS

We felt it essential to take a closer look at our channel branding and revitalize it somewhat, although we were very conscious of balancing the costs of implementing a new graphics system into our existing operations.

It was important that we selected a manufacturer that could integrate with



The Miranda Xmedia Suite user display

our station's existing traffic system, as well as with our Floral automation.

We also needed to keep it in line with our plans to offer interactive services via cell phone by 2007. What's more, we needed a system that wouldn't take new skill sets to operate, but would provide MusiquePlus and Musimax with a consistent and easily identifiable look.

We reviewed a number of systems—some were too complex, others too expensive. Most didn't support HD and SD in the same box or possess the level of integration and simplicity that Miranda's Vertigo XG and Xmedia package would give our operators.

The Vertigo XG can play out 2D and 3D graphics and animations, mul-

multiple DVEs on video clips and it also supports both HD and SD resolutions.

We also use Miranda's MOS compliant Xmedia Server—a centralized asset management server that allows our operators access to any content from any of our three worksta-

tions as well as automating file conversions.

XMEDIA TO THE RESCUE

With music being the main content to air, there is a requirement to play different tracks every few minutes, and to frequently update our on-air graphics such as song titles and album information. This is typically done at the beginning and ending of music video clips. This used to be a major task when those graphics had to be uploaded manually. Fortunately, Miranda's template-based approach to such changes has made things much more manageable.

Xmedia Suite's automated creation tools allow rapid preparation of cus-

tomized smart templates with built-in links to our music library. This allows the graphics to be automatically updated, based on the playlist and inserted on-air with a minimum amount of human intervention, giving our operators less to think about and no chance of mixing up song titles or making spelling mistakes.

With the new Miranda system, we have a wide range of new capabilities in rich graphics creation, rendering, and playback—from multiple crawls and tickers to full-screen graphics with 3D transitions. The on-air graphics can be easily controlled from user-definable soft control panels, which provide a friendly and highly responsive control surface. Automatic squeezebacks at the end of a show allow us to display program credits and contribute to manpower savings. This high level of graphics automation hasn't meant sacrificing flexibility. It's very easy to make last minute changes with user-definable soft control panels too.

Mario Cusson has been at MusiquePlus for one and a half years, and is responsible for production, on-air operations and engineering. Previously, he worked in engineering at Group TVA. He may be contacted at mcusson@musiqueplus.com.

For additional information, contact Miranda Technologies Inc. at 973-683-0800 or visit www.miranda.com.