



Video Production & Presentation Technologies

Thoughts & Perspectives

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Welcome 2007! Whereas 2006 was a busy year - I enjoyed the pleasure of working on a number of projects with Enliten - 2007 promises to be even more exciting, especially due to the abundance of new production and presentation technologies that will be available.....things that are very near and dear to all of us.

For many of our enterprise clients, 2006 was a year that legacy technologies reached the end of their life. You know... the video production equipment and delivery systems that WERE "state-of-the-art" when implemented too many years ago. We conducted a number of *risk assessments* of existing infrastructure and systems, and helped our clients establish integration and upgrade plans. On occasion, this included detailed business and technology roadmaps.

We helped/guided clients through Request for Proposals (RFPs) and vendor selection processes for new technologies, systems, and support services. The projects were of all sizes, from a handful of audio/video components to large scale video system build-outs.

As you know when budget time comes around, it's not as simple as "out with the old and in with the new." Ultimately, our involvement helped several clients maximize their capital investment by a) implementing new technology where appropriate and needed and b) maintaining the legacy technology that still has functionality and life to squeeze out of it.

From my perspective, 2007 will find each of us wrestling with three questions:

- How will I get it there?
- What will I store it on?
- What will I watch it on?

While many of us started in the age of bringing the audience to the message, we are now bringing the message to the audience. As we stress to our enterprise clients, the trend and the challenge is getting information to the targeted audience anytime, anywhere, and on any viewing device that meets their business needs.

While content remains king, it still needs to be delivered to the targeted party(ies) for display on the viewing device of their choice. As a result, we are helping clients future-proof their production and display systems. In some cases, this includes HDTV. For most corporate communicators, HDTV is not required for delivering internal communications. However, when the C-level and sales/marketing executives ask to see

the new advertising campaign, which has been produced in HD (to be aired in HD), the display systems must be ready to answer the call. For instance, 720p appears to be in the late fall/early winter of its existence to be replaced with the 1080p standard. Simply put, it's important select the right solutions... ones that your budget will allow and that you can live with for the foreseeable future. This is a good example of where reading the spec sheet has gained new meaning, higher value.

As someone who works in the broadcast as well as the enterprise space, I can assure you that producing network programming is just a bit more complicated than previous years. While we shoot everything in HD, regardless of the targeted audience, some shows require 3X4 framing. In order to accommodate the television stations, which still transmit in standard definition (yes, there are some), we are sensitive to producing/distributing in letterbox or 3x4 "pan and scan" as well. This is an old term that many of you may be familiar with...which is seeing a resurgence due to the formatting options. These will become considerations for all of us as HD works its way into the enterprise space.

We are working with organizations that are transferring material for archival purposes and are finding themselves doing it to two formats at once. As technologies change and new innovative formats become available, the selection for archiving will always be a challenge. What systems and/or approaches are most cost effective? Which ones will be easiest to maintain and manage? Which ones are likely to be functional for an extended period?

And keep in mind that most anything you produce is likely to find its way to the Internet at some point. Due to the various encoding and bandwidth considerations for webcasting and streaming applications, keep plants off the sets and other busy, bandwidth-sucking items out of the background.

Display, in general, is going two directions at once: smaller, when mobility matters, and larger, when quality is a must. We are all familiar with "Flat is where it's at!" Flat screens are dominant in the display arena: however, in the production sector, the high end (HD) CRT's will hold their value a bit longer until the latency issues in flat screen technologies get to an acceptable point. None-the-less, for those looking for a bargain, the CRT's can now be found at the end of the aisle next to the buggy whips and rotary telephones!

What about storage? I can't speak for everyone, but I currently have 40x the storage on my keychain than I had on my first computer! Storage devices for archiving, video-on-demand, and the ever-popular mobile viewing applications are amazing. They keep improving, and capabilities keep increasing as the applications grow and require more space. This technology age really is exciting. Just think of the iPod...it is a phenomenal device, which meets the interests and demands of a wide range of users – both consumer and business. An assortment of attachments, systems, lifestyles, and work habits are modified to get greater use out of this "mini-utility". Airlines are adding iPod connections in each seat so that you can view your content on the seatback screen! Manufacturers of home theater receivers are building in "enhancers" for making all that compressed audio on your player sound better! Content providers are developing information for the small screen! As enterprise communicators, we have to consider and

be sensitive to how we produce relevant content and deliver it to the appropriate viewing device(s) of all sizes, numbers, and locations.

So mark down the hot topics for 2007 that we are already involved with, strategizing and addressing on behalf of our clients:

- Production techniques, particularly relating to cross-platform strategies
- The continuing integration of the IT and video worlds
- Continuing improvement and multi-purposing of display technologies
- Archiving content currently stored on legacy formats

With regards to “content is king” as it relates to delivery solutions and display options.....

Just to share with you: while I’ve been writing this article (on my laptop), my wife has been watching the *Grey’s Anatomy* episode that she TIVO’d two nights ago, and the younger kids are playing handheld video games and/or doing homework on their computers (to e-mail to teachers). Meanwhile, my oldest daughter multi-tasks by setting a world speed record for text messaging friends on her cell phone while watching television, paging through MySpace.com, and navigating through her various on-line messaging services! These are skills that would qualify her, and most any teenager, to be an air traffic controller.

For those who have allowed me the pleasure of working with you in 2006... thanks for the opportunity.

My best for a happy, healthy and prosperous 2007!