EndemolShine Iberia

Editshare Captures The Reality Of Big Brother Spain

Gran Hermano (Big Brother Spain) and Gran Hermano VIP, are a phenomenon and an institution in Spain with over 22 seasons created and aired on the nationwide channel, Telecinco. All the Gran Hermano series are produced by Madrid-based Zeppelin TV – an EndemolShine owned company. Big Brother Spain has now just finished its 17th season, making it the longest running Big Brother series across the franchise.

Following the George Orwell all-seeing "1984" concept, Big Brother Spain groups together individuals from all walks of life and isolates them in a fully furnished compound that tracks their every move and every opinion live, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Like most reality shows, there are competitions, villains, drama and weekly eliminations, leaving a big prize for the last contestant still living in the house.

Each Big Brother Spain season is shot over a 90-day period, with weekly shows broadcast over the network and daily videos pushed out online. To capture the action and antics, more than 70 cameras are placed throughout the house, recording contestants 24 hours a day. "This is a massive amount of footage coming in, and all of it has to be logged and curated for daily videos

and, of course, the weekly show itself," comments Zeppelin's Technical Director, Jose Luis Gacal. "The sheer volume combined with the tempo of the daily video packages means we have to have several people viewing and developing the storyline at all times. We have staff working on multiple projects around the clock to sift through content, create a theme and output a must-watch program."

In addition to outputting video packages daily, Zeppelin TV is responsible for ensuring the production is made live via the web. Jose Luis explains, "This type of production schedule requires us to manage different types of programs on a daily basis: the daily videos, the weekly series, the commercials and trailers, and the broadcasts on the web. It's a very fluid process that requires a proven workflow platform that allows media sharing and collaboration. In addition to the dynamic infrastructure to cope with all of these requirements, we need technical partners that understand our business, who can respond rapidly and efficiently to our needs. In this respect, Aicox as well as Techex have provided flexibility and peace of mind."

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To serve their needs, Zeppelin had first developed a custom media platform in house. However, over time the custom platform required an enormous amount of resources to maintain. While the platform was augmented to the Zeppelin workflow, the cost to maintain and keep up with emerging technologies outweighed benefits. In 2014, the team started searching for a replacement that would offer the features and function to support the fast turn-around production and workflow with a brand name developer they could trust. In 2016 they finally found it in an EditShare turnkey solution supplied by Aicox Solutions and Techex Iberia.

To help corral the mountain of content and support their unique creative workflow, Aicox Solutions and Techex Iberica implemented a complete solution with centralized storage, integrated production asset management and multi-channel ingest workflow from EditShare – all within a 10Gb Arista network certified by EditShare. "EditShare is a known entity to the EndemolShine group and had extensive experience with productions like Big Brother. This gave us the confidence that they could deliver the capabilities we need backed by a strong commitment to this industry," explains Jose Luis.

The core of the new super-efficient set up features six to eight Avid edit suites, four producer and four logger/coordinator stations as well as other browse stations. The system allows Zeppelin to add further stations during the production if required. All workstations are connected to a to a 384 TB EditShare XStream EFS high-availability storage (two metadata controllers) with Flow production asset management, seamlessly integrated with two Geevs ingest servers with four SD/HD ingest channels. "Every camera, edit station and production laptop is connected to EditShare. It's the very first touchpoint for just about everyone that is involved in creating the Big Brother video packages and live stream," adds Jose Luis. EditShare serves as the main content repository for the team, providing advanced production and media sharing capabilities for staff across the four productions.

Important content details such as metadata along with customized tagging information is captured and logged with Flow logger onto the EditShare XStream EFS storage server. This ensures staff working on any one of the four video productions has real-time, shared access to all content stored on a central storage platform in a highly searchable format via Flow search tools.
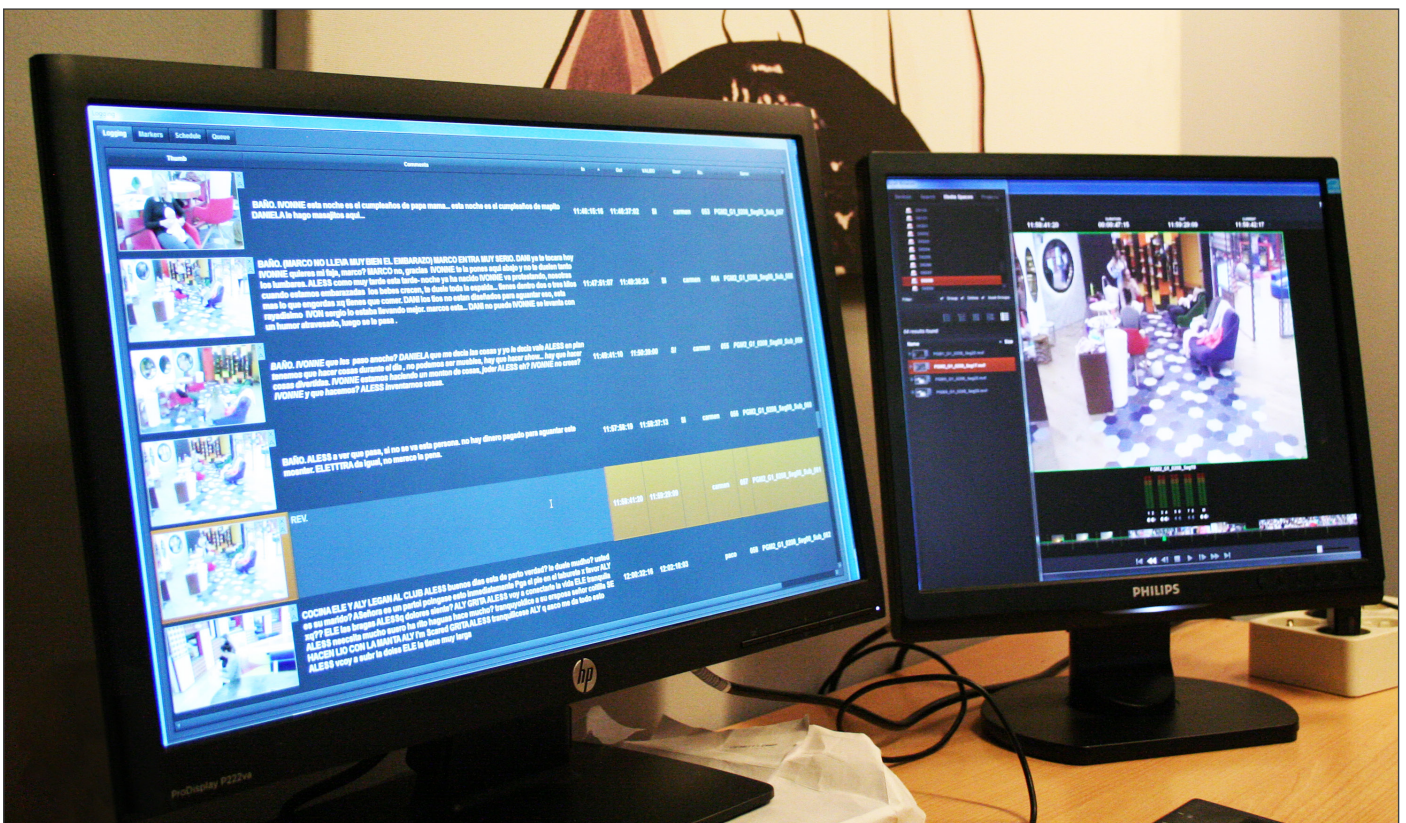
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Thanks in large part to the EditShare XStream EFS advanced project sharing capabilities, Zeppelin's Avid editors can simultaneously work on show development and collaborate on storylines. Built-in rules ensure no work is overwritten or accidently deleted when sharing across workgroups, Jose Luis explains "Our editors typically work in groups on multiple productions. So anywhere from three to six editors will collaborate on story development. For this type of creative process, the project sharing function of the EditShare shared storage is critical for evolving the plot and cross sharing media. It's a great, friction-free environment for sharing content and ideas from ingest to delivery".

The inclusion of Flow production asset management gives the Zeppelin team a control layer for managing the mass amount of media beyond the edit station. Producers and coordinators can log into the central storage, search and retrieve media, storyboard show concepts and share show ideas with edit staff. "Flow alleviates a few pain points for us," comments Jose Luis. "Its logging capabilities, specifically the templates, help us standardize indexing of footage, which make it much, much easier and faster for our show producers and editors to organize and work with the content they need."

Zeppelin TV loggers work 24/7 on the incoming media and, thanks to Flow templates, quickly flag relevant video segments for story development. Show producers use Flow to access and notate what logged video is valid. Coordinators then use Flow's fast production tools to assemble proxy-based sequences for Avid editors to finalize, saving an enormous amount of time in the edit room. "Flow was also incredibly useful for show producers and coordinators to search and curate content for the various Big Brother video packages. We no longer have to sit with the editor to review the footage – everyone can just log in and browse, mark content they want as part of the storyline and share with the editors. It's very convenient and efficient."

The Zeppelin team will soon use Flow Automation to reimport sequences into the archive, eliminating the need for transcoding and manual new file creation. The process will further enhance the production's overall productivity.

Equally important as the content management capabilities EditShare brought to the table, was the reliability of its solution. "When you are working in reality TV, there is no second take. It's a 24-hour production schedule and a no-fail operation. We have to capture every moment, period," states Jose Luis.

Based on a distributed, parallel and fault-tolerant file system, XStream EFS is designed to manage large volumes of media, ultra-high data rates, and the complexities of intense media environments, leveraging key technologies like SwiftRead to mitigate resource contention, ensuring smooth productions and 100% uptime for Zeppelin. This reliability was proven during a key expansion of the system from three nodes to six, doubling the capacity of the storage platform during intense production with zero downtime. The reliability of the EditShare workflow and platform has ensured that Zeppelin has never missed a production deadline or reality moment.

For more information on Big Brother Spain and Zeppelin Productions, please visit www.zeppelintv.com.

EditShare Gear List

- EditShare XStream EFS High Availability (2x metadata controllers)
    » 64TB x 6 nodes (RAID 6, 4TB disks) Expanded from 3 nodes during production without any downtime
    » 384TB Raw capacity (approx 268TB real storage)
    » File System redundancy is XOR4
- 2 x Arista 52 port 10Gbit switches in redundant configuration
- 2 x Flow MAM and Database in redundant configuration
- 1 x Flow worker node with Flow Automation software
- 2 x Geevs 4 channel ingest server

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