EditShare Gives New Meaning to the Term 30 Second Spot for Marshall Street Editors

Speed and Realtime Collaboration Power the trendy SOHO shop

Marshall Street Editors, located in London's hip Soho district, specialises in high-end editing for some of the biggest names in advertising – including top-drawer agencies BBH and DDB as well as production houses like Independent and Stink. Marshall Street's exceptional editing skills can be seen in commercials for products ranging from cars and cameras to shampoos and trainers.

THE CHALLENGE

Co-owners and editors Tim Thornton-Allan and John Mayes found their niche with the ad community. "They like to see the people who are running and driving the company to be the ones who are actually pressing the buttons," says Mayes of his demanding clients. "We're just producing a film," he explains. "But what that film's doing for the clients and the money they're spending on their airtime, it's pretty important to them. They want it right."

After just three years of getting it right, Marshall Street increased to six full time editors, added two freelancers and moved into a larger space. It was a totally fresh start, from suite design to infrastructure and equipment. "When I build an edit suite or design a system, I know what I want because I'm the guy actually using it," says Mayes. "Everything was really changing and I wanted to build an infrastructure where we could hang anything off the back end and have it work," he

explained. "I wanted it to be future-proof and to provide maximum flexibility."

THE SOLUTION

The engineers shifted Marshall Street from the "one suite, one editor" concept to an open environment – in terms of space, use and sharing. They implemented a plan for multiple Avid systems and a Final Cut Pro unit connected over a one Gigabit Ethernet network to a 3TB EditShare server for centralised storage. There's plenty of throughput for multiple simultaneous streams of DV25 used in their offline workflow.

EditShare is a NAS-system of hardware and software that's optimised for video collaboration. The file level sharing capabilities of EditShare allow editors on any connected workstation to capture, access and share in real time from a common pool of media files. EditShare's Project Sharing capabilities for Avid or Final Cut Pro expanded the sharing, allowing multiple editors to work from the exact same Project with instant Read Only access to each other's bins and sequences.

"Having every suite in the building working on one project, or having 10 to 15 projects going at one time

is really fantastic," says Mayes. "You can be truly flexible." In just a few months and with more projects in line, EditShare storage was increased to 8.6TB.

THE WORKFLOW

Assistants handle many processes at Marshall Street, freeing editors for creative work. Once projects are entered into the EditShare, assistants bring them up and move bins around for the editors. Mayes says it's transparent for the editors, "You just walk into the room and there's your project. You never really know EditShare's there. All you know is that your media's where you need it, and you just work and cut."

Short turn-around projects are much easier because you can have three or four systems working together. "You can cut on one machine, track layer on another machine, try music ideas out on another machine, and merge those immediately, Mayes explains." Rushes can be loaded in one machine and the bin is easily transferred. "It's there for whoever needs it, and you're cutting, already editing," he says. "All of that used to be such a pain. It's really transformed our lives. We actually get home at night now."

The six spacious and well-

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EditShare®

appointed edit suites can accommodate three or four editors during busy periods. Typically, the suites double as viewing rooms where clients can comfortably review projects with an editor and be dazzled while he performs edit magic

"We'll shove a section of the rushes downstairs and the assistants will start breaking it down. Or you can finish an edit here and just put it into the share; the assistant can be prepping that and doing copies downstairs while you're working up here. The clients have a very nice experience of being in the room while it's all being worked on," Mayes explains. "Suddenly they walk out with a DVD with their cut on it and they say 'well, how'd you do that?' It's splendid."

THE BENEFITS

Mayes credits the "efficiency, time savings and flexibility" of EditShare for helping Marshall

Street to deliver superior results. "A lot of what we do to satisfy the client is being able to nip into an edit suite, make a change on one project, switch and make a change on another project. Sometimes an editor is working on as many as four or five commercials at the same time."

With customer assets at stake, Mayes appreciates the security provided by EditShare's RAID5 configuration for safe, efficient data protection. Other protections are also in place. "It took a while for editors to 'get their heads around' the idea of centralised media storage," he acknowledged. "And they were fearful about Project Sharing." Experience with EditShare's rules-driven workflow which prevents accidental deletions and overwrites overcame the concerns. "What I like about EditShare is that it's open enough to be creative but there are enough safeguards in there…just enough…to be able to unpick

something or correct it," says Mayes. "You can control what and how things are being shared and there are safety mechanisms."

Marshall Street Editors is already working on content produced in HD and data formats from RED and SONY XD1 cameras; Mayes expects to add an HD edit suite in the near term. "We'll just need to of up our system a bit more, but the backbone's there," he says. "We pretty much succeeded in that. We've been running nonstop for three years now and we're just now starting to look at what else we can actually do. And to be honest, the EditShare's just sat there and worked away for us and is doing a good job."

SPECIFICATIONS

EditShare 5RU with 8.6 TB storage Gigabit Ethernet network
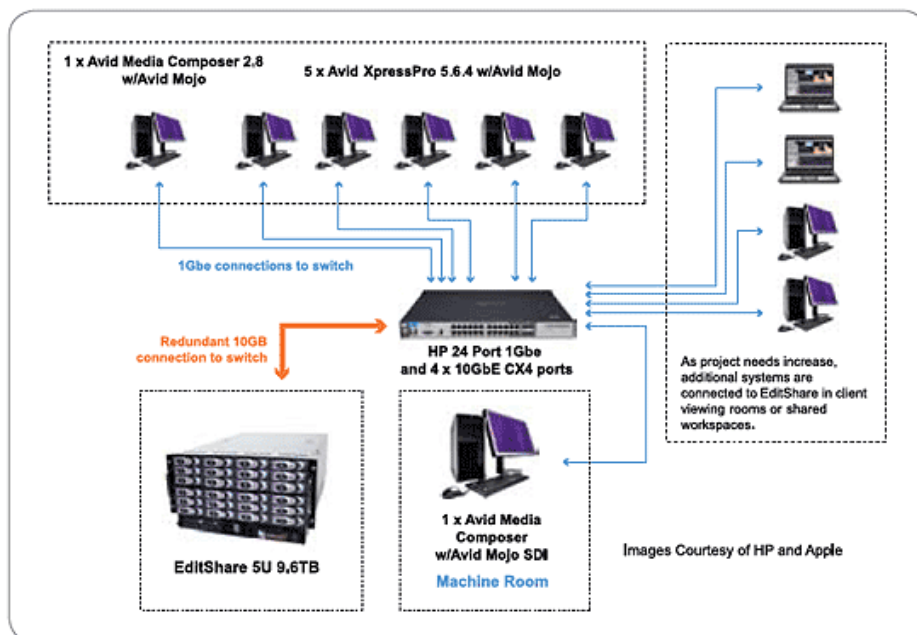
6 Edit/Client Suites:

5 Avid XpressPro 5.6.4 w/ Avid Mojo

1 Avid Media Composer 2.8 w/ Avid Mojo

Machine Room:

1 Avid Media Composer 2.8 wAvid Mojo SDI

Depending on project needs, additional systems are plugged.

Connected to EditShare in client suites, shared workspaces, in open, shared spaces, etc.

Typically, at least the following are online:

1 Final Cut Pro

2 XpressPro laptops

1 Media Composer

Images Courtesy of HP and Apple

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