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ATG DANMON UK

Building a High-Definition Master Control Room for The Associated Press

ATG Danmon is one of the world's most successful providers of high-end reliable and easy-to-operate integrated systems for broadcasters and programme makers.

Active in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East, ATG Danmon is part of the Dan Technologies Group which operates from offices in the United Kingdom, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, the United Arab Emirates and Vietnam.



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To meet the increasing demand for high-definition content, AP has embarked on a multi-million dollar upgrade of its global newsgathering infrastructure. A key element in the transition was the construction of a new high-definition master control room (MCR) at AP's London premises. The MCR is the international hub of AP's global video operation, serving client broadcasters on a round-the-clock basis every day of the year.

ATG Danmon was chosen as systems integrator on the basis of its successful track record in designing and installing comparable systems for major broadcasters in many countries. After appropriate approvals had been obtained for the Grade 2 listed building, work commenced on the structural conversion of a former floor studio into the new MCR.

An important requirement was the need to control existing SD services alongside the new expanding HD activity as well as dealing with any necessary conversions between the two.

located in a single operational desk in front of a 10.5 metres wide by 3 metres high panoramic 'monitor-scape' running almost the entire width of the MCR. A second desk occupying the centre of the room forms the shift supervisor's position plus the fifth position which is intended to accommodate an extra operator when required

A central element of the new installation was a 3G-SDI routing matrix which performs a wide range of source and destination assignment tasks. Multiviewers were also installed and configured to drive the monitor-scape, allowing each of its 47 inch displays to be operated as a multi-monitor grid with independent channel selection for each subsidiary display.

The system is closely linked to AP'S automation and asset management system for recording incoming content to the video server. It also links to AP's news production system which is used by editorial staff in the second-floor newsroom.

Four of the five operational positions are

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All of the six MCR positions are identically equipped to coordinate and capture incoming content and check signal quality prior to recording. Control of AP's satellite network is available at these workstations. Transmission is coordinated from the rightmost of the four front desks including direct output to live AP Television News and ad hoc feeds.

A lot of design effort went into the working environment especially the 'monitor-scape' which is arranged so that the MCR team can view a selection of continuous incoming feeds for technical or content reasons. To ensure efficient transition to the new HD MCR from the existing SD control room, all SD systems as well as the new systems were controllable from the new facility. All that was then necessary was to transfer the operating staff.

The MCR was completed on schedule and forms a model for AP's news hubs in Washington and New York.



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