



CASE STUDY

RTBF makes waves with new visual radio studio

Project wins gold medal in the New Technologies category and silver medal in the Media & Entertainment category at the Online Video Awards 2016.

Client: RTBF

Location: France

In total, there are nine AW-HE120 cameras in the studio, that are controlled by a AW-RP120 remote operation panel, as well as 36 TH-47LFV5W screens that form four 3x3 video walls.

“The idea was to build a visual radio studio entirely guided and operated by the radio broadcasters,” explains Olivier Waty, Technological Developments Manager for the RTBF.

“The number of technicians had to be reduced to be as efficient as possible and the equipment had to be easy to operate, while still offering a clear picture of the televised broadcasts. At the same time, it had to be possible to easily integrate all types of content, animated or not, audio and visual, coming from different sources.”

The best image quality

The most important requirement for the RTBF for the choice of camera concerned the quality of the images. “We compared multiple manufacturers and Panasonic clearly came out as the best. The seven members of my team all agreed immediately,” says Olivier Waty.

The choice of screens for the video walls also met the same high quality standards. “We selected the Full HD screens by Panasonic because, just like the cameras, we were very impressed with the image quality. The screens display the studio decor, so a perfect picture and flawless transition are absolutely required. Also, the edges of the screens are very thin, which improves the rendering of an image on the video walls.”

Only three people to manage everything

The second requirement was that the system was easy to use and needed only minimal training. Only three people work in the control room, so they have to multitask: every technician does the work of several people in a traditional studio.

The audio technician handles everything to do with the audio for a broadcast, the visual technician (in charge of mixing) manages the nine cameras as well as some other available video sources available in Media 1 studio. He also sends the images in the air, selects the plans, goes from one camera to another, prepares the picture-in-picture, and many other tasks.

All these tasks are possible thanks to the the touchscreen control panel. The interface, which can be fully customized, has been carefully constructed by RTBF in collaboration with Panasonic.

Most of the camera controls are pre-set, and can be used by tapping the touch screen panel, e.g. the camera selection, zooming in and out, dragging and dropping content, etc.

The visual technician can also take manual control of the cameras thanks to the very intuitive AW-RP120 controller. The third person is the producer of the broadcast. He can send all kinds of external sources to the person in charge of mixing – for example, a video clip on YouTube – in order for it to be broadcast. On top of that, he commands the video walls and the images that are shown on it, he takes care of subtitling, the RSS feeds, the use of jingles and the studio lighting, which consists entirely of LED lamps.

“The automation of the system helps us in every way,” explains Olivier Waty. “For example, when the audio technician uses a jingle, the system recognises it immediately and sends the corresponding images to the director or shows them automatically on the video walls. The system learns on its own as well, it is just like having a fourth man on the team.”



Video walls

The set is a triangular, central control panel for the radio hosts and their guests, surrounded by four 3x3 full HD video walls that show images of the decor. Two of those walls are mounted on a rail so that it's possible to form one massive wall of 6x3 screens.

The eight Panasonic HE120 cameras are spread out around the set, so that they can capture every angle in the studio. A ninth camera is installed in the control room to film the call centre and to improve the level of interactivity within the programme. Additionally, there are two connections provided in the set, where shoulder cameras can be plugged in when there is a specific requirement.

“Panasonic has adapted the cameras specifically to the studio’s desires: per our request, they have installed a larger tally and they have installed a better cooling system so that the cameras are less noisy. They have done a remarkable job. And thanks to the operator interface for the cameras, we were able to develop software that answers to our needs perfectly. We are very happy about this collaboration,” added Olivier Waty.