



## INTELLIGENT MEDIA

### THE PANEL



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Broadcast TECH editor  
and panel chair



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# A collaborative way forward

As post facilities face diverse demands, industry experts discuss how working with rivals is key to keeping pace, and what the future landscape will look like. **George Bevir** reports

**B**roadcast gathered a panel of experts from Avid, Adobe, Spectra Logic and Dock 10 to discuss the demands being placed on content creators and the facilities that support them, and how manufacturers are attempting to respond to their needs by creating collaborative systems.

#### What are the demands placed on today's broadcast and post facilities and what impact do they have on the development of technology?

**Paul Clennell** Our clients are diverse and range from sport to drama through to studio productions with live transmission needs. We have seen a divergence in the workflows and a real difference in the requirements and demands of these clients using what is essentially one centralised platform. They are looking for flexibility in the way they work, and security in how their assets are kept and delivered from MediaCityUK, either to distribution partners or their preferred post-production house. They also want to do more things for less money, so they want less commitment and shorter-term commitment for services.

**Niels Stevens** There is a constantly moving target of new delivery formats, camera codecs and so on.

We stand and fall on our integration with our partners simply because we are focused on one piece of the puzzle.

**Craig Bungay** Every customer we see is being a lot smarter and more creative, looking at simplicity in their workflow, non-proprietary formats, and at reducing risk and cost.

**PC** In terms of workflows, sport producers want very fast turnaround while documentary producers want flexible ways of working and the ability to collaborate over wide geography, and potentially internationally. On *Dragons'*

#### 'There is a constantly moving target of new delivery formats. We stand and fall on our integration with our partners'

Niels Stevens, Adobe

*Den*, for example, we will pop up half a dozen post-production suites for the duration of the edit and when they are done, those rooms will be repurposed until the next production comes along, which means there is constant peaking and troughing.

**Kevin Usher** One of the things we have been evolving over the past few years is our Avid Everywhere strategy, which is about bringing together not

only all of Avid's products and solutions, but also integrating our technology with other partners. Many of these things are constantly changing, as Paul said, so flexibility and scalability are important.

In the context of Avid's Media Central platform, the ability to add, reduce or dynamically scale systems is core, all the way through to the design and architecture of our new storage system Nexis, which is positioned as a replacement for Isis. Nexis is an entirely new design based on software-defined storage. The intelligence has been built into the file system so that the storage hardware is a commercial, off-the-shelf solution and not Avid proprietary hardware. The file system we are building will allow us, over time, to build in all kinds of capabilities and storage services to expand the capabilities needed in these versatile production environments.

**PC** At Dock 10, we have tiered storage and lots of Isis, 2500, 5500 and 7500. We have Spectra Logic storage and they are all siloed buckets that are managed by Interplay PAM with an overarching MAM [media asset management] system as well, which traffics that media back and forth. The capacity is defined by the number of boxes we have bought, and if there is no demand in one area then we still have overheads and that obviously carries cost. Nexis allows Dock 10 the ability to flex the size of those buckets, so if we need greater online storage in one particular month or week, we can increase it.

It's Dock 10's aim to take services beyond the MediaCityUK campus and Nexis supports that very well because we can put storage nodes in targeted production and post locations to support remote events, and customers can share the media back at MediaCityUK.

#### How and why did Avid arrive at the point of working with other vendors such as Adobe and Spectra Logic?

**KU** Adobe and Avid historically competed on certain points, certainly from an editorial perspective, but over the past few years, customers have really driven the choice of tools they use. As we roll out the Media Central platform, we need to make sure that it accommodates any creative tool that customers need to use – whether that is Premiere Pro, Media Composer or the ability to integrate with all kinds of server-based architecture and systems.

**NS** Historically, Premiere always functioned as an island, but it became clear that collaboration was a fundamental requirement. To address that, we built in panel architecture focused on HTML 5-based integration. The focus was on making creative tools as strong as possible in terms of format capabilities, tools and workflow, but to leave other parts of the ecosystem – such as professional services, MAM and storage – to those who do it well.

Enough of our user base have said that Premiere would be perfect if only it was possible to share clips and sequences with Interplay, and that is essentially where we are headed now: the ability to plug in Premiere Pro from a user operations perspective so they get total visibility of Avid Everywhere from inside the panel. That panel was developed by Avid, and that is the beginning



Avid sales director Tom Evetts gives the opening address



Kevin Usher



Niels Stevens



Craig Bungay



Panel chair George Bevir



Audience member asks a question



Panellists discuss the issues at the breakfast briefing



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of a very tight alliance between the two companies.

**KU** That integration is actively in development now and we are anticipating product availability, probably around IBC. We can compete in some areas of the market, but in others work closely together. Interplay is the next thing we are working on and it won't just be a single point release – there is a full roadmap behind this.

In terms of Spectra Logic, Avid doesn't make archive systems and has no intention to move into that space. We want to work with companies that specialise in these areas and provide solutions to archiving needs. Where we bring strength is through integration with Interplay Production or Interplay MAM, where we can look after the content management and movement between online systems, nearline and archive. So tighter collaboration and integration with archiving systems is crucial.

The relationship we have with Spectra gives our customers greater reach in terms of how they deploy storage systems, regarding managing nearline and archive-based content, especially for large organisations.

**CB** The way that data moves up and down to a storage archive would usually be managed by middleware, which can be costly and complex.

**Left to right: Avid's Mark Bainbridge; Dock 10's Paul Clennell**

We have a way of integrating intelligent storage with media applications, such as Avid Interplay PAM, which eliminates the need for middleware by having transparency between applications straight to the storage platform, whether that is tape or disc.

Middleware applications can be proprietary, which people can be cautious of, especially when they are looking at 'never delete' or long-term archive... if you look at the way files are typically transferred today, you would have a network with middle-

### **'We will see much more adoption of cloud-based solutions for individual contributors wherever they are located**

Kevin Usher, Avid

ware sat on the network with a multiple sub disc system. Production would then move files up and down, but as we all know, files are getting bigger and the last thing any organisation needs is a clogged network environment. With the integration of our intelligent storage with Interplay PAM, Spectra Logic BlackPearl provides a single interface to tape and disc. Then we can manage the

data seamlessly in the background without any further impact on a customer's network.

### **How will facilities' workflows look in 10 years' time?**

**KU** We will see much more adoption of cloud-based solutions for individual contributors wherever they are located, the flexibility of being able to access content from anywhere at potentially any resolution, and more cloud adoption in terms of where content is stored.

**CB** The cloud is where everyone is looking, and even hardware manufacturers are now implementing it as part of their platform. We know it is perfect for sharing and file distribution, but we also know it is not the most cost-effective for huge archive storage.

**NS** The biggest variables that we are at the mercy of are upstream bandwidth and the size of files, so we need to see what happens there. Equally, we have to split the concept of project collaboration and media collaboration. Whoever can come up with the most intelligent solution for dynamic proxy creation and relinking with the cloud thrown into the mix will do well. Also, it is possible to see how a facility might be entirely virtualised, but how much do people want to be in the same space as each other and bounce ideas off each other?