



PROJECT: CNN

LOCATION: Washington D.C. / L.A.

GOAL: Create a New-Media Newsroom in HD/SD with a global presence

SOLUTION: Building4Media's FORK Production Suite provides a cutting edge, metadata driven, modular approach for broadcast media operations, production and layout

Founded in 1980 as the first 24-hour, all-news channel, CNN is now a highly successful leader in the news and information world. With cable channels including CNN (Cable News Network), CNN International and Headline News, along with the CNN.com online component, CNN offers programming in more than 212 countries and territories worldwide and is seen in over 100 million U.S. households. CNN recently completed a multi-year transition from tape-based, analog operations to 100% digital, non-linear and high-definition production, which included an installation of Building4Media's FORK Production Suite.

As media operations manager for CNN's Washington D.C. News Bureau, Warren Arenstein played a key role in the design and implementation of a server-based, tapeless FORK solution. Arenstein has a career spanning more than 25 years in the broadcasting industry. As an editor/producer he's held several high-level positions including chief editor for CBS Moscow and senior editor and producer for National Geographic. Arenstein recently went from working at CNN to working at Building4Media as VP of Business Development.

THE EVOLUTION OF CNN

"When I first arrived at CNN Washington in 2004, they were almost a completely tape-based production center," Arenstein recalls. "The mandate was to convert all the daily production news edit rooms to non-linear systems with shared storage. The bureau chief and myself had a preference towards Apple's Final Cut Pro for editing but that left a gap in the workflow for automatically ingesting all the incoming feeds. We were introduced to FORK and it turned out it could do a lot of what we were looking for."



CNN Washington DC Bureau



Warren Arenstein - VP of Business Development - Building4Media

CASE STUDY

Arenstein observed that a lot of different providers also wanted to offer a solution to CNN, but the challenge was finding one willing to adapt their product to the company's stringent specifications and critical timetables. "Early on in the relationship, CNN realized Building4Media was capable of developing and implementing a lot of functionality specifically for CNN, which made the decision much easier," says Arenstein. "As an example, CNN's interaction with the team at Building4Media led to the creation of FORK's Live Assist module for newsroom playout automation. Another appealing aspect of FORK was that it's QuickTime-based, which meant a scalable, open architecture allowing for additional development and functionality as production needs evolved."

SYSTEM OVERVIEW

The current installation at CNN includes approximately 60 FORK production clients and 18 Final Cut Pro edit stations sharing content on a 60 Terabyte SAN shared storage network. 8 Media Coordinator ingest stations in the Media Operations area are responsible for scheduling all ingests and playing out content to other bureaus and affiliates. The system handles 18 XDCAM HD ingest streams and 16 playout streams.

DAILY WORKFLOW

Asked about a typical day of work at the D.C. bureau with FORK, Arenstein offers the following description. "It starts with the network morning news shows set to automatically record as recurring events using FORK Scheduled Clip Ingest," he says. "As the day goes on, the Media Coordinators add events to be ingested as the news situation warrants; they also log content and add keyframe markers. As the editors start getting busy around noon, they find all the content they need ready in the shared storage. They browse and search with FORK Content Navigator and send footage from FORK to FCP for craft editing. Completed edits are then sent back to FORK for playout through Live Assist to the monitor wall in The Situation Room as well as right out to air."

UNIQUE WORKFLOW

CNN's delivery requirements also included the need to interface with existing footage archives. "Building4Media integrated the D.C. FORK system with the Atlanta archive via an XML scripting mechanism," says Arenstein. "That integration allowed operators to deliver content to the archive and also to request content back from the archive digitally. Over the course of working with Building4Media, CNN really appreciated their ability to scale, develop, and modify FORK to meet ongoing requirements as the workflows evolved."



CNN Express was equipped with FORK Production Suite for the 2008 Presidential election coverage as well as the YouTube Debates



YouTube Debate



The Situation Room



CNN's Washington D.C. bureau: Media operators running FORK Production and Live Assist Playout

What Separates Building4Media From The Others

Building4Media's tight focus on a scalable solution for the specifics of newsroom operations and central media storage was critical to its success with CNN, according to Arenstein.

"It was better for CNN to find companies that can provide solutions for installations that have specific requirements as opposed to always going for a network-wide solution from the beginning", he says. "Some providers tried to promise an all-encompassing solution for CNN and later realized that the R&D and investment necessary to deliver on the timeline that the network requires is something they can't accomplish."

With Building4Media, CNN discovered many advantages, beginning with the cost savings and later by realizing how much more storage, editing capabilities and functionality were possible using FORK."

FORK SOFTWARE MODULES



INGEST



EDITOR



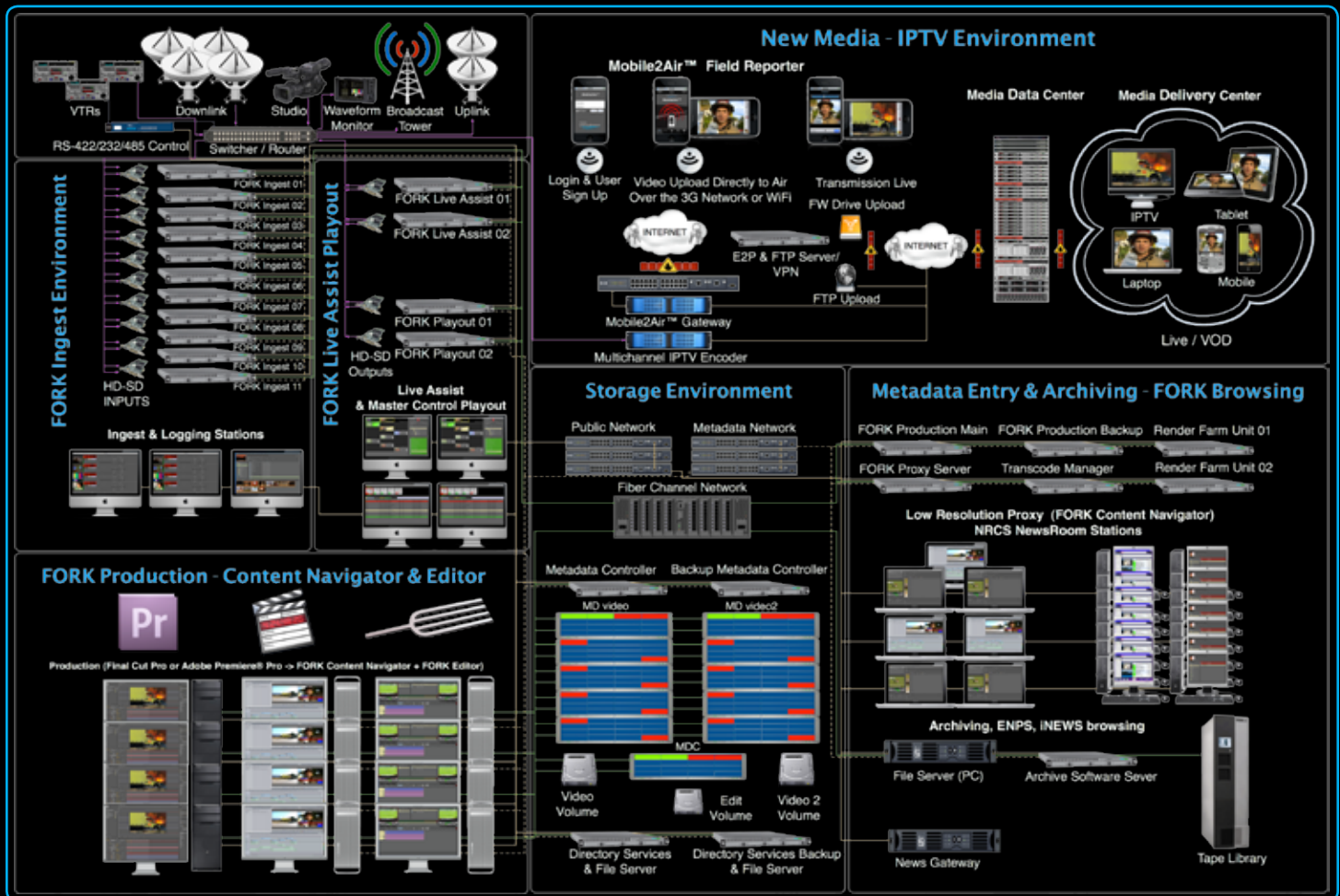
CONTENT NAVIGATOR



LIVE ASSIST



TYPICAL WORKFLOW SOLUTION



About Us

Building4Media, a Primestream company, is a leader in the design and implementation of broadcast automation solutions that feature the FORK suite of software products. FORK Production™, FORK Playout™ and Mobile2Air™ deliver an end-to-end production platform that includes digital acquisition of live and file-based content, media asset management, editing, archiving, streaming, and pushing content to multiple screens and devices. The Primestream platform is currently providing news, sports, entertainment educational and emergency broadcast services to clients in more than 40 countries and over 300 on-air channels, including media giants such as CBS Sports, CNN, NYSE, NASCAR, NFL, CNBC, Liverpool Soccer Club, Reuters, L.A. Dodgers, Star News India, SunTV, RTL and MountainWest Sports Network at the Comcast Media Center.

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