

SKAI News, Sony and SONAPS



SONY

'SONAPS is the heart of our newsroom. We chose Sony because it offered the strongest references in news, studio and archive build and deployment. Sony worked with us as partners throughout the implementation, listening to our needs and providing answers straightaway.'

Nick Millas, general manager of technical operations, SKAI TV



SKAI News, Sony and SONAPS: staying ahead of the competition with a world-class tapeless news environment.

SKAI News is the largest independent provider of television news in Greece. The Athens-based broadcaster was re-launched in April 2006 with the objective of offering the fastest, most comprehensive quality news service available to Greek viewers.

Background

The debut of the free-to-air terrestrial channel marked the re-emergence of the SKAI brand after it disappeared from Greek airwaves during the 1990s. The station's re-launch also afforded the opportunity for SKAI TV to create a totally new production infrastructure.

Unhindered by legacy technology platforms, SKAI TV had the opportunity to design its newsroom and playout operations from scratch. This enabled the broadcaster to leverage the workflow benefits of tapeless production to deliver a more compelling, higher quality on-air product than its established competitors.

Customer challenge

While planning the re-launch of its flagship news service, SKAI TV management teams realised quickly that technology would play a central role in enabling the station to outpace the competition and get to air faster with better-looking pictures.

Aside from the need to produce high quality, accurate news reports with increased operational efficiency, SKAI also required a production infrastructure that would allow a cost effective migration path to High Definition working. An additional prerequisite was an infrastructure that could smoothly accommodate other new technologies as they became available in the marketplace.

Most importantly, SKAI management demanded a solution that would deliver concrete financial returns over the next decade and beyond in the face of a rapidly-evolving technology landscape.



The Sony Solution

SKAI TV engaged Sony Professional Services (Sony PS) to design and project manage the turnkey solution spanning the creation of entirely new studios, production and transmission facilities.

At the heart of the system proposed by Sony is SONAPS. Based on industry standard IT components, this powerful, fully managed production environment has been engineered by Sony to meet the demanding needs of national and regional broadcasters. Alongside SONAPS, SKAI TV has invested in Sony XDCAM Professional Disc camcorders and decks alongside systems from other third party vendors including AP's ENPS front-line news environment, IBIS Payout Server and content archive from Blue Order.

All phases of the news production process — from planning, scripting and acquisition to editing, playout and archive — are streamlined within

a single, seamless workflow. Shots captured in the field using Sony XDCAM camcorders are ingested as video files to the main SONAPS server alongside news feeds from satellite, lines and other sources. Content and associated metadata is made available immediately to journalists who can browse clips and create finished stories ready for transmission.

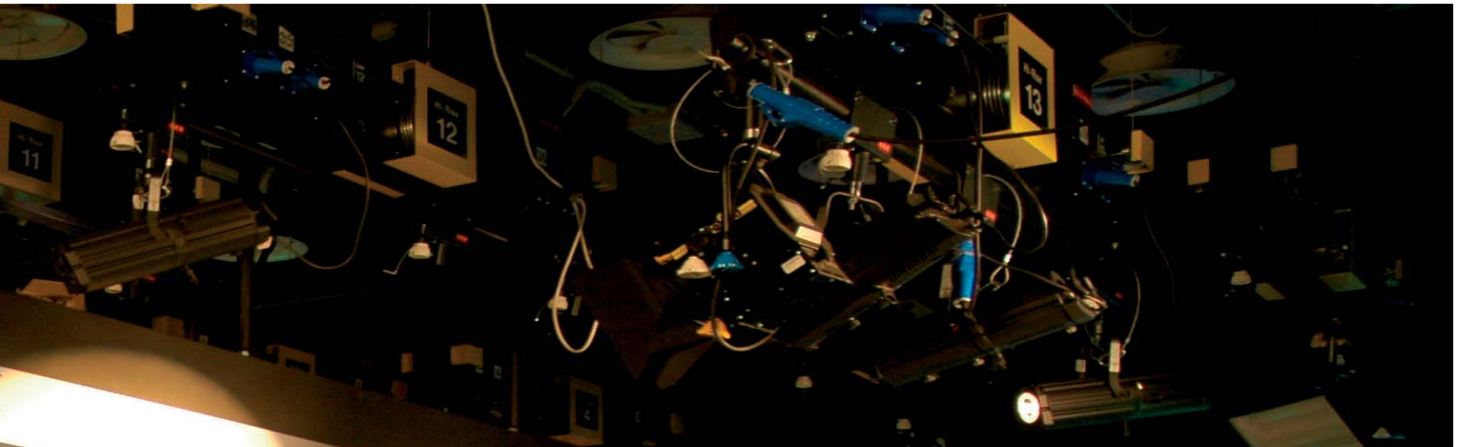
Customer Benefits

By implementing SONAPS at the hub of its news production capability, SKAI has been able to dramatically improve the speed, quality and efficiency of its news operations. In a pressured environment where time is at a premium, the turnkey solution proposed and delivered by Sony allows journalists and production teams to prepare stories for air within minutes or even less.

Crucially, it is the successful integration of solutions and systems from Sony as well as other vendors that delivers tangible workflow benefits for SKAI.

News teams at the station describe the system as being 'quick, easy to use and as simple as you can get', as well as being more flexible than tape-based solutions. SKAI TV will be also able to expand the capabilities of the system to meet the future challenges of a rapidly-changing broadcast landscape.





The implementation

Working closely with Sony, SKAI TV has successfully exploited the rapid convergence between IT platforms and broadcast AV production to create a world-class tapeless news facility.

With SONAPS at the heart of SKAI's news operations, every phase of the production process is interlinked in a single, seamless workflow. As SKAI TV general manager of technical operations Nick Millas confirms, the Sony-delivered solution also unites all SKAI's newsgathering assets — including studios, cameras, crews and OB vehicles — in a continuously on-line environment.

In the newsroom, producers can oversee as many as 35 separate stories that are being worked on simultaneously by journalists. This provides clear visibility of the day's

schedule and allows faster, more effective decision making with enhanced creative possibilities — all of which would be impossible in a traditional tape-based environment.

Sony Professional Services managed all aspects of the installation, spanning all hardware and systems alongside a significant proportion of partner product. As attested by SKAI technical and operational teams, the solution's tangible workflow benefits stem from tight integration between SONAPS and the broadcaster's news computer and asset management systems.

Alongside the main news system based on SONAPS, Sony has also built an entire HD-ready studio that will allow SKAI TV to embrace High Definition working in the future.

Products:

- XDCAM PDW-530P camcorders for acquisition
- SONAPS News Production System
- Blue Order Media Asset Management
- News Production Studio based on Sony equipment throughout
- Transmission system based on IBS Automation and Omneon video server
- Solution Design and Delivery by Sony Professional Services
- Training provided by Sony Training Services



SONY CASE STUDY

COMPANY: Skai News

COUNTRY: Greece

DATE: 2006



Sony - the market leader

Key to the success of this ambitious project was a close partnership between Sony and SKAI's management, technical and operational teams at every phase of the project.

From initial analysis of requirements to system architecture and implementation, Sony coordinated every aspect of the project, drawing on internal and external resources as necessary to ensure smooth delivery to agreed timescales. Sony PS teams also worked closely alongside SKAI TV staff to ensure a smooth commissioning and operational handover of the new system.

SKAI TV management teams cited Sony's responsiveness and flexibility as being critical to successful delivery of the project.



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