

VIDEO

Shaun the Sheep leaps into Rimage DiscFlow™



Customer

Aardman Animation

Challenge

Automate and streamline production workflow directly from Apple Mac computers

Solution

- Rimage Professional Series
- DiscFlow Mac Client

Aardman Animations produces animated feature films, broadcast programming and television commercials for a worldwide audience. Aardman's famous characters include Wallace & Gromit and Shaun the Sheep.

During its production process, Aardman burns nearly all of its video content to DVD. These DVDs are used to obtain internal approval and provide reference videos for in-house departments. DVDs are also sent out to distribution houses, broadcast companies, commercial clients and agencies, product designers and festivals, and used as general screener discs.

The Challenge

Prior to purchasing their first Rimage 2000i disc publishing system in 2006, Aardman used a 1-to-3 stand-alone 'Power-Tower' with a separate inkjet printer for the disc labels. This was a very slow, two-stage process that required manual loading, and the print quality was not as high as they would have liked.

The introduction of the Rimage 2000i was a major improvement that enabled Aardman to automate the loading, burning and printing of discs. However, Aardman's main commercials and broadcast facility is Mac-based with seven Final Cut Pro Mac Pro™ and G5 systems running from 80TB of shared storage. They use DVD Studio Pro™ to author most of the internal discs and screener DVDs, and Toast™ for any 'quick' DVD authoring with simple menus.

Because the 2000i used Rimage's PC-based client QuickDisc™, Aardman needed to produce a master disc from the Mac-based applications before they could benefit from the automation of the 2000i publishing system.

The Solution

In 2008, Paul Reeves, one of Aardman's Technical Engineers, visited IBC in Amsterdam and saw Rimage's new native Mac client DiscFlow™. He realized immediately that by utilizing DiscFlow's WatchFolders, it was possible to control and automate the entire production workflow from the Mac computers, from editing and authoring right through to recording and printing. Paul also

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Paul Reeves, Technical Engineer, Aardman Animation

saw Rimage's Everest® thermal retransfer print technology, which produced higher print quality than Aardman was able to achieve from their inkjet system.

A move to new premises took priority over the next 12 months, and it was not until August 2009 that Aardman finally purchased a Rimage Professional Series system with an Everest 600 printer and DiscFlow2 Mac client.

From DVD Studio Pro and Toast, Aardman can now save out the IMG files to WatchFolders on the shared storage, and Adobe Photoshop™ is used to make the custom disc labels from a template PSD file with multiple layers. They just switch on the selected layer based on disc content and edit the text layer. The PSD file is then saved out as a PDF file and imported into DiscFlow with the IMG file. Streaming up to 4.4GB across a gigabit LAN is very fast, and the Rimage system accepts and prioritises the jobs.

Aardman also has a very large collection of pre-burnt DVDs which are used by other departments for external clients that have been pre-approved. DiscFlow's 'Copy Disc' feature allows them to very quickly produce multiple labeled copies from their one in-house master. As time passes, they are copying more and more disc images onto the shared storage, to skip the initial imaging stage.

The Results

Aardman now has DiscFlow installed on seven networked machines, meaning there is never a job on hold for very long, and at least one machine will always be encoding or streaming to the Rimage publisher during the day.

Management of the Rimage system is made very convenient with WebRSM. All the Mac clients have the Rimage management page set as a home page tab, and this enables all the Editors to quickly see the media count on the system plus the status of their jobs, as well as anyone else's job.

- DiscFlow is installed on seven networked Mac computers
- At least one machine will always be encoding or streaming to the Rimage publisher during the day
- The ability to publish from multiple client machines offers a higher degree of efficiency
- All the Mac clients have Rimage WebRSM set as a home page tab, enabling Editors to quickly see job and system status
- The Professional Series and DiscFlow provide Aardman with much faster disc publishing, great label quality and improved reliability
- To ensure disc quality and simplify purchasing of consumables, Aardman uses Rimage DVD Media Kits

“Once production has started, the Rimage has a great system of preparing the label transfer whilst finishing the disc burn, and thus once the first disc is placed in the output bin, it feels like it is almost a constant stream of disc output from the system”.

Paul Reeves, Technical Engineer, Aardman Animation

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