



RTL chooses Quantel again for
HD news production



Luxembourg's national broadcaster, RTL Télé Luxembourg, has upgraded its Quantel Enterprise sQ news production system to produce content in HD, broadcast simultaneously in HD and SD and seamlessly integrate its file-based workflow.

Above: One of RTL's craft editors working in high definition on sQ Edit Plus

Front page: On set for one of the segments of RTL's 'de Journal' news broadcast.

A smooth transition

Back in the mid-nineties, RTL was the first European broadcaster to choose a Quantel server-based news production system. In 2006, when the broadcaster went fully digital, it installed a new generation Quantel Enterprise sQ server-based production system. The system was built in conjunction with partners SGT, who supplied the automation system, and BCE, the main integrator. The same team has chosen Quantel once again to enter the age of full-HD production and broadcasting. RTL is upgrading its existing Enterprise sQ system to the latest V5 software and adding a number of extra sQ Cut and sQ Edit applications to expand its operations onto the journalists' desktops.

"Our existing Enterprise sQ system has served us well since 2006," says Jean Lampach, BCE Chief Technology & Development Officer. "The upgrade retains all the system's speed and agility and allows us to work in HD and SD simultaneously. We have also gained workflow integration with Final Cut Pro editors and the latest file-based media. The whole upgrade process went very smoothly, handled with Quantel's usual professionalism and efficiency."

"As we always do, we had a thorough look at everything available in the market," adds Jacques van Luijk, RTL Production Manager, "and we chose Quantel for the third time on the basis of quality and trust. We have absolute confidence in the reliability and robustness of the technology, but above all, we have built up a trusting relationship over the years with Quantel and we know they'll be there to back us whenever needed."

A step change in editing

When asked about the main technical criteria in RTL's choice, Jacques van Luijk says, "The advances in workflow and in particular editing software really tipped the scales for us. First, Quantel now offers multilayer timeline editing, which is really a step change. V5 also allows us to seamlessly integrate our Final Cut Pro machines into the workflow, enabling direct access to the server for both editing and publishing. For ingest, V5 allows us to feed HD images from Sony XDCAM optical disks directly into the server at twice real-time speed."

To fully harness the editing power of the Enterprise sQ, RTL has now acquired 15 sQ Cut and seven sQ Edit licences for use by its 30 journalists. "With this array of journalist editing systems, we are introducing a step change in how journalists work. Our goal is to get all the journalists up to speed so that their pre-edited material on sQ Cut requires at most 30 minutes of craft editing before it's ready to go on air. And we now have more and more journalists, especially the younger ones, working directly on sQ Edit and producing ready-to-air material. Quantel has been incredibly helpful in providing us with top notch trainers," says Jacques van Luijk

The RTL system also includes sQ View licences which provide journalists with a simple and efficient tool to browse and select images from all sources. V5 on Enterprise sQ allows all desktop computers to migrate to Microsoft Windows 7, thus facilitating integration.



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Above: Jacques van Luijk
Top left: Ingest suite
Bottom Left: Batch ingest with sQ Load
Below: Playlist gallery

Jacques van Luijk,
RTL Production Manager



Seamless integration and future-proofing

For automation, RTL once again made the choice of its incumbent supplier, SGT, which provided its new VEDA database system that allows ingest and playout in all formats and efficient media management. "SGT, which like Quantel, knows the inner workings of our channel," says Jacques van Luijk, "allows us to seamlessly manage content on our Quantel and Omneon servers; the latter put out our advertising content and our station ID material."

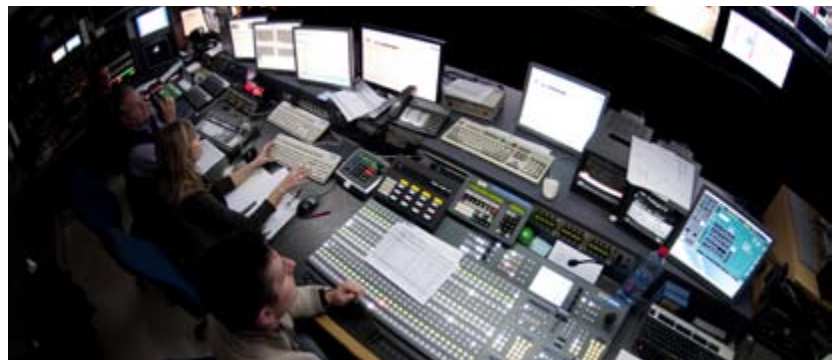
Beyond HD, the new setup enables RTL to pursue its development into new media, including adaptive streaming output for mobile and telephony receivers. "We've had incredible uptake from iPhone and iPad, with over 200,000 iPhone and Android RTL apps installed in Luxembourg, which is huge for such a small country. With the Quantel system at the core of our operations, we can easily migrate our output beyond traditional television and move into online and mobile broadcasting, making the system future-proof for us," van Luijk concludes.

Back to the future

In 2006, here's what Jacques van Luijk had to say about his Quantel investment:

"What really made the difference overall was that Quantel and SGT proposed a state-of-the-art system, which enabled us to move into the 21st century, but which also allowed us to keep the components in our system that have worked well for us for many years. To my mind, that's what future-proofing is all about. If every 10 years, when you have to update your system and you can do so without starting from scratch, then I think that 10 years from now, we may just be working with Quantel again."

...and indeed they have!



RTL Key facts

- RTL was Europe's first broadcaster to choose a Quantel server-based news production system and has opted for Quantel again, for the third time in 16 years
- RTL will now produce all its content, both studio-based and edited, in HD and will broadcast simultaneously in HD and SD
- Most RTL journalists pre-edit all their material on sQ Cut so that, at most, craft editors need to spend 30 minutes on finishing; most young journalists are now working on sQ edit, providing ready-to-air material directly
- RTL is developing a host of online and mobile services, with over 200,000 RTL apps on iPhone and Android in a country of 500,000 inhabitants.