

Belo Corp. Rolls Out Sony XDNEWS™ Solution

CASE STUDY

Customer:

- Belo Corp.

Industry:

- Broadcast

Challenges:

- Replace linear newsroom editing systems.
- Provide simultaneous access to content by multiple parties.
- Streamline production from acquisition to air.

Solutions:

- Upgrade to Sony's Media Backbone XDNEWS news production system.

Benefits:

- Increased newsroom efficiency.
- Reduced time from production to air.
- Provided seamless interconnection to newsroom editorial system.



Belo Corp., one of the nation's largest pure-play, publicly-traded television companies, recently rolled out Sony's Media Backbone XDNEWS news production system. The first system was installed and went on-air at WFAA in Dallas / Fort Worth – the #5 market in the United States, and the group ultimately plans to install a total of five XDNEWS systems, ranging from large cities/markets like Seattle and Dallas to smaller cities like Louisville

and Austin. Belo owns and operates 20 television stations in 15 markets ranging from Seattle, Washington to Norfolk, Virginia, as well as four markets in Texas.

"XDNEWS is the perfect complement for our existing Sony XDCAM technology," said Craig Harper, Vice President of Technology at Belo. "It provides great support for metadata, proxy, and high-resolution workflows. We also like the way baseband feeds can come into the system – from a helicopter, microwave/satellite – and all the operators can immediately start seeing, editing and working with the material as it's still being recorded."

In the late '90s, Belo purchased Sony's NewsBase system for newsroom non-linear editing. The XDNEWS system in Dallas/Fort Worth replaces the oldest of these systems. According to Harper, XDNEWS replaces the Sony NewsBase systems in its largest markets: Dallas/Fort Worth, as well as Houston, Texas, and Seattle/Tacoma.

"It's really important that we have a robust, complete system for our end-to-end operation – not only on the air but on the web as well," Harper said.

Before making its final decision to convert to XDNEWS, Belo performed a competitive shootout to evaluate various systems' capabilities and potential not only for large markets but for medium and small markets as well. Belo found the XDNEWS system to provide the winning combination of functionality, power, ease-of-use, and price-performance.

Since the initial installation, WFAA crews have been impressed by the system's powerful proxy editing capabilities. The efficiency of proxy editing allows more of their journalists and editors to edit material (including adding voiceovers and effects) at the same time without dramatically increasing system costs. Operators can also add clip and timecode based metadata, even as material is coming into the system, which allows operators to more easily identify and jump to key points in video – further streamlining workflow.

CASE STUDY



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The XDNEWS system has already increased their newsroom’s efficiency – allowing them to increase story counts and air breaking news faster and easier.

In addition to the editing advantages of the XDNEWS system, other advantages for Belo have been the ability to give people simultaneous access to content, and a reduced time from production to air.

“The hallmark of many of our television stations is breaking news, so obviously when there’s a large story at 4:30 in the afternoon, to be able to ingest that video from the helicopter or from live vans and make that video available to everyone in the newsroom as well as the promotion department is critical,” Harper said. “It’s really a complete effort for us at our television stations to have the video available across the entire news department.”

Since its first installation of the XDNEWS system, Belo has benefitted from a seamless interconnection to its newsroom editorial system.

“Every word that’s read on the air, everything we do is based in that system,” Harper said. “To have the editing system as integrated as XDNEWS has been a real advantage for us. No longer do producers, writers or reporters have to go to multiple monitors to see their video. It’s all integrated right inside the system, which is really important for the speed to air as well as just the workflow that we try to build in each one of our television stations.”

Another benefit has been in the control room.

“To be able to seamlessly move and change the order of the newscast while it’s on the air and have the XDNEWS system follow the editorial rundown really adds flexibility to our producers’ work.” Harper said. “We’re not locked into exactly the way the newscast looked an hour before it aired.”

He added, “Being a company based on standards, it’s very important that when we make a decision about what our field format is, our newsroom editing systems or for our television stations, we need to be confident that we’ve made a great decision, and the track record that we’ve had with Sony for our field cameras and other editing systems just proves that this also will be chalked up as a big win for Belo and a right decision.”