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Dish TV Upgrades with Pebble

By Ravi Puri

A subsidiary of India's Zee Networks, DishTV is India's first KU-band DTH service. It provides a mix of 165 plus channels as well as more than 35 radio channels, teletext, dual audio services, parental control and Electronic Programme Guide (EPG). We also recently launched our interactive offering.

The service is delivered to more than 12,000,000 customers across India and is also available to subscribers in the neighbouring states of Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

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In 2007, we decided to upgrade part of our playout set up, beginning with a 12-channel system in the initial phase. A key element of the project was our requirement to make use of as much legacy equipment as possible, enabling Dish TV to maximise the value of its existing investments.

Among the equipment DishTV decided to use for the new playout operation are Sony Flexicarts; a Harris Nexio video server; a Harris Platinum 256x256 router; Harris HDX video servers; Harris LogoMotion inserters; Sony VTRs; and

Miranda Imagestores.

UK-based Pebble Beach Systems was chosen to provide its Neptune automation product as well as transmission control hardware. The deal with Dish TV represents Pebble Beach Systems' first venture into the Indian market and we're confident that the Pebble Beach system will more than meet Zee's needs now and in the future.

The newly upgraded playout operation will see all media ingested from Flexicarts and four standalone VTRs to the video server. Schedules are provided by the scheduling department and verified against the automation database before

being added to the live playlists to playout the media on different channels. All items are played directly from the server to air. The servers run in Airprotect mode to provide 100 percent redundancy for the system. The system also makes use of six of Pebble Beach's transmission hardware control panels with their fully programmable, LCD backlit buttons.

We have been analysing different automation systems and one of the main considerations was to find a totally user friendly, open, highly reliable automation system, that is feature-rich and can be

tailored to our needs. After reviewing and carefully studying the different options we found that Pebble Beach's Neptune system met all of our requirements and had the capacity to support our playout operations as we continue to grow.

The Pebble Beach system was chosen for its highly scalable architecture, allowing it to be configured to specifically meet the workflow needs of Dish TV entirely. It is being used in place of legacy Harris automation systems.

We have migrated all of our TV channels running from ADC100 Harris system to the new Pebble Beach system and after commissioning and migration of the channels, operational staff are quite happy to have such a flexible and open system.

The installation, which went live in the autumn, supports two live channels, Zee News and Zee business, with a third 24/7 news channel added in January. Following the successful migration of the initial channels, there are now plans in the pipeline to expand the new playout operation to support a total of 24 channels later on in 2007. ■

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