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PostScripts

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As we start a new decade and our 16th year in business we're very excited by the number of new projects which many of you are discussing with us. I invite you to read about how we continue to invest in new technology and develop creative solutions so we can tackle your challenges, as we did for "Hot Toxic Love".

PPD Has Gone Toxic



L to R: Iris Nemani, Director of Operations, Dancap Productions, Michael Burshtyn, PPD editor, Caroline Harvey, Producer

LTO-4 Back-Up Service

We have implemented a new backup technology which is less expensive and has a longer shelf life than hard drive backups.

The LTO-4 tape technology has been used by banks as a secure and reliable data backup system for some time. The 800 Gb tapes are much less expensive than the equivalent hard drives and they have a considerably longer shelf life.

For clients wishing to move their backed-up projects from hard drive over to LTO-4 tapes we will be offering special discounted rates.

As always, backing up media files is a great short-term protection, however periodic changes in digital file formats can result in backed-up media becoming partially or totally obsolete. Producers should always store a split-track master in addition to a digital file backup.

For the past three months the environment at PPD has been "toxic". We've had lots of fun working on a 44-minute HD documentary called "Hot Toxic Love – The Making of The Toxic Avenger Musical". The program, which is scheduled to air on City-TV, Sunday March 7th at 10 PM, tells the story of what it took for Dancap productions to mount a major musical production at Toronto's The Music Hall theatre.

The project was shot by director Jeff Cipin over a five-month period using various HD cameras including DVC-PRO HD, P2, AVC 50 & 100 and XDCAM-EX. PPD editor Michael Burshtyn, working with producer Caroline Harvey, sifted through over sixty hours of footage to tell the story which features extensive interviews with the two lead actors: new-comer Evan Alexander Smith and veteran stage performer Louise Pitre. The documentary includes multi-camera footage of the dress rehearsal and opening night, along with other cast and crew interviews and behind-the-scenes footage.

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Useful Tip: The WD TV Media Player - Easy HD Without The Disc

We have discovered a great piece of inexpensive gear that will enable HD playback without having to author a Blu-Ray disc or output to an expensive HD tape. The WD TV media player is an extremely small device that supports the playback of almost all video and audio file formats. This device essentially acts like a set-top box or Blu-ray/DVD player allowing you to play, fast-forward, rewind and even loop your videos. The interesting trick is that your videos are actually stored on a removable USB drive or key. There is also a network version which can be connected to a company's intranet.

This device will be great for anyone doing boardroom presentations, tradeshow or even digital signage. Call us for details on how we can edit and encode videos for use on the WD TV media player or for a demo.

Toxic (cont.)

Due to the volume and variety of digital media, our Avid Certified Service Representative Erin Carroll contacted Avid's technical support team before we began editing to ensure that this complex project would flow smoothly through the post production process. Using Avid's new Media Composer Version 4 software and an AMA (Avid Media Access) workflow, we were able to instantly access all of the media, saving many hours of digitizing. Once the footage was all carefully logged and organized by Erin and assistant editor Jon Morrison it was transcoded to an offline resolution for Michael to work with. Erin also set up Avid's script sync feature which allowed us to search for specific words in the interview transcripts and instantly cue up the footage on the Avid. This feature saved hours of time searching for dialogue clips. Avid's multi-camera editing feature helped Michael to quickly and easily edit the seven-camera performance which was shot

on several different occasions and had anywhere from 16 to 24 tracks of audio.

Editor Bruce Rees created an impressive After Effects graphic sequence for the opening, bumpers and stings. PPD handled the offline and online editing, colour correction, closed captioning and descriptive video, while The Dark Studio Sound Company handled the post audio mix. The final master was delivered on HDCAM tape. By taking advantage of our new creative and technical tools, our team was able to deliver this very complex project on time and on budget.

Sony XDCAM-HD Drive and Sony SxS Memory Card Reader

In response to client requests we now have an XDCAM-HD drive and a Sony SxS card reader. If you are working with XDCAM-HD or XDCAM-EX cameras there are a few issues to consider. An XDCAM-HD disc holds either 23 Gb of data (single-sided) or 50 Gb (double-sided). With the larger disc using the highest quality bit rate of 50 Mb/s you can record up to 95 minutes with 2 channels of audio. There are lower quality 35, 25 and 18 Mb/s bit rates which allow for a recording time of up to 265 minutes but we recommend shooting in 50Mb/s mode.

The SxS Memory Card reader is able to read media from the Sony XDCAM-EX cameras. With a 32 Gb memory card you can record about 100 minutes on each card. As a general rule you should shoot 1080i - 59.94, however there are times when other frame rates may be appropriate. If you have any questions about HD formats please call us before you shoot so we can design a smooth production and post-production workflow for your project. With digital memory we always recommend backing up the media.

Thanks for taking a few minutes to read PostScripts. I also hope that you will take time to support the people of Haiti in any way you can.

