

Harris 'surrounds' broadcasters with total content-delivery solutions

APB interviews Joe Khodeir, president of Harris Software Systems Asia Pacific (booth 1K2-2), on what his company plans to offer broadcasters in Asia.

What will your company be bringing to Asia this year in terms of automation and asset/content management?

Joe Khodeir: As part of our 'Surrounding broadcasters with total content delivery solutions' commitment, Harris has launched the H-Class content-delivery platform.

Representing a revolutionary and integrated approach to the management and distribution of rich media content, the H-Class platform features a broad range of integrated applications. These applications include next-generation playout automation and media business systems as well as digital asset management, media ingest, intelligent transport and shared services.

Harris is also presenting *Vision Global*, our integrated solution strategy for existing clients using current systems.

At BroadcastAsia2005, our automation and asset/content management highlights are H-Class Automation, D-Series Automation, ADC Automation, and Arkemedia and Invenio digital asset management (DAM) systems.

What kind of impact do you think your offerings will have with Asian broadcasters?

Harris will help get the right content to the right consumer on the right device at the right time. The impact of this will improve workflows, reduce costs, offer new services at the enterprise level and help generate revenues.

Which countries in Asia are your biggest customers for your automation and asset management products and why do you think they chose your products for their facilities?

With our comprehensive product range, we have established installations across most markets in Asia. Harris serves a comprehensive geographical spread across this region, and a large support base represents us across all markets.

Our depth of local support across the Asia-Pacific region has contributed to significant growth in both established markets and new territories, including Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, India and Australia.

Do you think the region will benefit greatly, if a huge majority of the broadcasters decide to invest in a DAM system for their production/playout workflow? Why?

Yes, but not if the investment in a DAM system is made in isolation. There are many DAM systems out there but the real objective is not only to invest in a DAM system but to successfully integrate these

Views from the top



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Harris Software Systems Asia Pacific

systems with 'book-end' systems such as traditional program management and automation systems to form a 'total content delivery solution'. Without these 'book-ends', the real efficiency benefits of a DAM system cannot be truly realised.

What about HDTV? How is this format different in terms of asset management? Do existing DAM facilities need to invest in other equipment to specifically handle HD format?

Irrespective of the format (HD or SD), it's digital that is the key. Once a broadcaster moves into a digital domain, the need for DAM becomes far more pronounced as broadcasters seek to diversify their channel profiles to take full advantage of their content assets. Traditional methods of broadcasting, these assets become cost-prohibitive and are better served by DAM solutions.

What do you think are the challenges facing Asian broadcasters who want to go to a tapeless workflow?

The biggest challenge is change management.

In addition, a broadcaster must be able to justify the upfront investment cost

against the long-term ROI benefits. Unless a single vendor provides all the elements of a total content-delivery solution, the broadcaster will need to rely on collaboration by industry partners to achieve an optimal solution.

How do you think these challenges should be met?

These challenges would be best met by the forging of closer partnership between vendors and broadcasters, and by vendors taking responsibility to integrate DAM as a cornerstone of their total integrated solution for the broadcast market and adjacent market opportunities — for example, broadcasting over IP and DVB-H/mobile video.

Five years from now, where do you think the region would be, in terms of tapeless workflow adoption?

In such a large region, the adoption will vary by market (no surprise there). The trend is that most companies will certainly have a component of tapeless workflow within the next five years.

Capital investment by these companies, however, is cyclical and thus what is to be expected is that, as assets are

regenerated, investment decisions will include a larger component focused on transitioning to a tapeless workflow. It should be noted, however, that it is a more difficult financial equation for broadcasters to justify upgrading assets that are not fully depreciated.

What countries in the region do you think are making or will be making an impact within the broadcast industry and why?

■ Japan — which is traditionally an early adopter of new technology and will have a projected 41% of the Asia-Pacific's DTV households in 2005. Japan is very much a market where new technology drives investment in new workflow solutions.

■ China — with the changes under way with the WTO and the country's hosting of the next Olympic Games we expect the Chinese broadcast industry to be far more active over the next five years. This activity and growth will create challenges as well as opportunities in the broadcast sector as by 2010 China is projected to overtake Japan in terms of DTV households and will represent 48% of the Asia-Pacific's DTV households.

■ India — recent and upcoming changes in Indian broadcasting legislation, for example, DTH licences will cause a change and growth in the Indian broadcasting landscape.

In truth, at such an exciting time of change in the Asian region, most countries will be making an impact around some fairly specific business objectives such as the repurposing of content and reaching a better targeted audience.

Any broadcast-related issues in Asia that your company is concerned about? Why?

Change is happening at a faster pace than ever before in the broadcast industry. New technologies, new workflows and, essentially, new business requirements are evolving every day. The question that is constantly being asked is, 'How does a broadcaster get a balance between investing in new features and technologies, and then ensure that a viable business model exists to support this investment?'

An example of this is interactive TV. When does the broadcaster invest? How much do they invest? What content can they repurpose? What is the financial model that supports all of the above investment? Ultimately, many broadcasters in the Asian region are asking themselves, 'Do we just make the investment to avoid our 'brand' falling behind if we don't?'

Other concerns are more due to legislative changes. Asia-wide, there is a governmental trend where broadcasters are being forced to comply with new regulations, for example, HD standards in Australia. For the most part, broadcasters generally do comply but there is no real business transacted in this sector as the financial model is still to be worked out.