

STAR Channel, Greece

A state-of-the-art broadcast monitoring system

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Vassilis Kyriazis, General Director of Sales & Management, Telmaco



STAR Channel Greece, which was launched in 1993, is a private TV station that broadcasts mainly US produced (children's) series and feature films, complemented by local productions, such as information shows and news. Thanks to the high quality of its programs and exclusive output deals with leading US producers, such as Warner Bros, NBC Universal and Dreamworks, STAR Channel has become a leading free-to-air TV network which covers almost all of Greece. To consolidate and further strengthen that foothold, the TV station invests in first-class programs, equipment and infrastructure. The purchase of Barco's innovative Networked Broadcast Monitoring System (NBMS) fits perfectly in this strategy.

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STAR Channel's relocation to a brand-new building in 2008 was an ideal opportunity to thoroughly review the existing technical equipment and decide where upgrades were needed. STAR Channel called in the help of Telmaco, one of Greece's leading technical providers of image and sound communication solutions, to help perform that task. "We were responsible for the initial build-out of STAR Channel in 1993 and we have been working together with the broadcaster ever since," said Vassilis Kyriazis, Telmaco's General Director of Sales & Management. "So they relied on us to plan and manage the relocation, including the full design and installation of three TV studios. The challenging job consisted of upgrading and integrating older equipment with the newly purchased systems, among many other tasks."

Early adopter

One of the systems that absolutely needed replacement was the one to monitor the broadcasting process. Telmaco suggested switching from standard monitoring on simple displays and MultiViewers to Barco's brand-new Networked Broadcast Monitoring System (NBMS), which distributes an unlimited amount of video sources and metadata over an IP network. Vassilis Kyriazis: "Telmaco has been installing Barco solutions for many years now and we are always impressed with the level of innovation and quality of every system. The NBMS solution was brand-new in the broadcasting landscape and exactly what a growing, forward-

looking company like STAR Channel needed. STAR Channel really is an early adopter that is open to any new technology that fosters its business. So we felt confident that they would be enthusiastic about NBMS."

Networked monitoring system

Telmaco was proved right. The TV station appreciated the wide functionalities of NBMS in Telmaco's demo and gave the green light to install the networked monitoring system. Since June 2008, operators at STAR Channel's new control rooms have been using the IP-centered NBMS solution to monitor all broadcasting activities. The system, which currently handles 135 video sources, is composed of a networked hardware platform and an NBMS software package, which allows complete system control and is accessible from any system network connection.

Facility-wide access

"Networked visualization, as offered by NBMS, enables the use of widespread Ethernet networking technology as the backbone for distributing real-time content wherever it is needed, both within and beyond the monitoring room. The data is captured once and distributed over the network as many times as needed," Vassilis Kyriazis explained. "This facility-wide access truly is a distinct advantage. STAR Channel now has the flexibility to distribute the sources within

the different rooms where monitoring is required. It was, for example, very easy to add two displays to the dubbing room and view the sources required there."

Monitor on any display

STAR Channel uses 34 Barco 47" LCD displays in the three studio control rooms and the master control room to monitor the sources. A single LCD panel is capable of simultaneously displaying multiple sources together with related metadata, audio metering information and computer applications. In addition, all information is also available on the broadcaster's 250 PCs, which STAR Channel considers a clear asset. The fact that, thanks to the visualization, very limited cabling was required between the rooms was appreciated likewise.



The advantage of scalability

For Telmaco, the NBMS installation was quite new. Thanks to Barco's extensive support and training, the Telmaco engineers were able to smoothly integrate the system at STAR Channel's control rooms. They provided the TV station's operators with a couple of training sessions, so that these can now make full use of all NBMS' advantages. "Everyone is very happy now with the system's unique functionality," Vassilis Kyriazis concluded. "Thanks to the scalability of the NBMS, they can even rest assured that they will enjoy the solution for many years on end. No matter how STAR Channel grows, there will always be a possibility to add extra sources and displays to keep a close, real-time eye on all their broadcasting activities."

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