

Thoroughbred Racing Productions Wins with Dejero and Digistor

Phil Sandberg. January 08, 2016

Horse racing attracts a global audience of passionate fans and punters who thrive on the excitement of a live event. Bringing images of those events to viewers is a demanding challenge accepted by Thoroughbred Racing Productions (TRP) which provides exclusive High Definition outside broadcast and production services to the Victorian Racing industry.

Although TRP only formed in 2008, the company has leveraged talent and technology to quickly provide a full range of high quality and reliable services as the market has expanded. TRP expanded rapidly servicing over 500 races a year by using smart systems, supplied through an ongoing relationship with technology solutions provider Digistor, to reduce operating costs.

“When the previous production contract expired, the decision was made to bring facilities inside Racing Industry so we had a clean sheet to start with and a mission to provide the best facilities possible,” said Charles Cole, Engineering & Technical Operations Manager, TRP.

“When our teams turn up at race tracks they are obligated to provide a range of services to a number of stake holders. We need to deliver an integrated broadcast to the on-course club for screens in their bars and large outdoor screens. We also provide a clean feed to various broadcasters (free-to-air and pay) and a replay feed to the Stipendiary Stewards who manage the integrity of racing.

“We aim to provide the best quality signal we can so we start at the top where everything is captured in HD and then converted to whatever format is required by our various partners,” said Cole.

The high cost of traditionally delivering television material reflects the need to maintain the signal quality using expensive equipment and the price of satellite and microwave transmission.

Experts in blended connectivity



In 2011, TRP began investigating new, more affordable ways to capture and deliver racing material and contacted Digistor regarding the Dejero range of portable transmitters.

“We were interested in the immediacy of crosses to experts in various fields during news programming and how to provide similar updates or reports from various locations,” explained Cole.

“I knew this would involve a link between the various locations and our production headquarters in Sydney. At that time there was only first or second generation technologies on offer and Digistor demonstrated the Dejero LIVE+ 20/20 Mobile Transmitter. We staged a shootout with it set up against a competing system where we sent video and audio to our Sydney server.

“Dejero delivered quality vision which was very good despite a low bandwidth and we were impressed with how it handled the transport of the content once it was set up. The interface control system was intuitive and very easy to operate. The other system struggled with the quality when the available bandwidth dropped and had too many setup variables for me to send it out with a camera operator.”

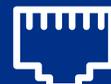
The Dejero LIVE+ 20/20 and its successor, the LIVE+ GoBox, are rugged briefcase transmitters for reliably broadcasting HD or SD video over any combination of cellular, Wi-Fi, ethernet, and satellite connections. Intelligent Connection Management technology auto-adapts HD, SD, and encoding bitrates based on network conditions to ensure consistently high video quality.

Users can manage the transmitter in the field from any web browser and route live or recorded video to a broadcast centre for on-air playout or to the cloud for online distribution. Additionally, ingest operators at a broadcast centre can remotely locate, monitor, and control the systems as well as switch and route live transmissions or recorded files with the Dejero LIVE+ Portal cloud-based management tool.

“We are now using our Dejero 20/20 transmitters regularly for live race trials and the reliability has been excellent in that time. The mobile data network service is only average at a couple of locations we go to so we use the 20/20 with a 4G hotspot to carry the payload,” said Cole.

“On other occasions we take it with us when we travel to record interviews with trainers at remote locations. We shoot on XDCAM then play it out into the Dejero. While the crew is driving back it is running on batteries and we can forward all the clips to our Port Melbourne production base.”

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The recent trial and installation of three Dejero LIVE+ VSET adaptive bitrate encoder/transmitter rack-mount systems has greatly enhanced TRPs capabilities. The VSETs easily handled the added responsibility for the live IP-based content programming on the consumer-focused digital racing platform www.racing.com

“This requirement is a quantum leap forward on what we need to do on the ground,” said Cole. “In addition to our normal operations racing.com wanted a news service from its headquarters at Racing Victoria with regular news updates each day. Additionally they wanted updates to the Integrity Control Room at Racing Victoria for stewards to discuss various aspects of racing on Saturdays.

“I knew the news service would involve a stand-alone setup with a journalist feeding the script into an autocue, making a connection and sending the report to our production facility. The initial proposal was to use a traditional bearer service but I said we can use a standard IP connection.

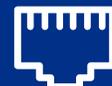
“So, we built a stand alone facility around a VSET hooked into Racing Victoria’s IT network that could send a signal over the internet to our production facility. We have been using it for three months and we have had no issues. The best way to describe it is a highly efficient and cost effective way to send content from Melbourne to Sydney.”

Digistor’s Melbourne office has assisted with TRPs technology needs and has provided a range of products including the Dejero systems. These include upgraded post-production facilities with the addition of Avid Editing workstations, storage solutions and Adobe software tools.

“TRP is a great example of a client who works closely with us to get the best solutions possible for their purposes,” said Darren Godwin, Digistor’s Melbourne-based sales manager. Other broadcasters have since adopted the Dejero systems we represent but TRP was an early adopter and the first to recognise Dejero’s potential. Our range of products and services enables us tailor options for broadcasters, content creators and post-production clients and in TRPs case we have delivered a very neat solution.”

“Whenever we need to expand our operations, we take our ideas to Digistor and start a dialog where they make suggestions for products or software,” said Cole. “We’ve always had post-production facilities but up to recently they have only been used on an ad-hoc basis. With Digistor’s input we now have four edit suites running full time to create packages to be played into our various programming.”

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But Cole reports it is the Dejero products that have made the biggest impact on TRPs operations.

“When I look at solutions years ago there was the huge cost of telco supplies and the added complexities of having to book time and facilities to get it switched out. Now the Dejero VSETs and server are sitting in a rack and the master control operator can quickly and easily locate files and route them out to wherever its needed.

“Even four years ago we used to shoot track work on XDCAM and take the disk to a bearer headend to send the content to our Sydney production facility – all at great expense for one half hour programme.

“But once we bought the Dejero 20/20 transmitter those costs dropped by 90 percent. It was a significant saving and provided a wider range of more flexible and improved services. And Dejero’s after sales and support is second to none. We can email their engineers with any issue and they will respond and deal with it in minutes – their 24 hour support is just outstanding.

The original article can be found at: <http://www.content-technology.com/sportscasting/?p=2145>

About Dejero

Driven by our vision of reliable connectivity anywhere, Dejero blends multiple Internet connections to deliver fast and dependable connectivity required for cloud computing, online collaboration, and the secure exchange of video and data.

With our global partners, Dejero supplies the equipment, software, connectivity services, cloud services, and support to provide the uptime and bandwidth critical to the success of today’s organizations.

Headquartered in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, Dejero is trusted for broadcast-quality video transport and high-bandwidth Internet connectivity around the world.

