

WHY IS HDTV A FOUR LETTER WORD?

In February we will be transitioning to digital television. Most homes that received analog standard definition in the past will now be able to receive crystal clear digital television, and by extension, HDTV. If high definition was the buzzword in the '80's and the '90's for the future of broadcast television (simply because it seemed so new, shiny and far-away), why then are the buzzwords (or buzz characters) for this century now 2K and 4K? Is it because HD is now so ubiquitous—dare we say, commonplace—that it seems so ordinary, so low-tech compared to digital 2K and 4K?

Perhaps it's because everywhere we turn there are digital imaging devices that go beyond 1080 lines, both in still photography and in new motion picture cameras. There are video (...sorry, digital cinematography) cameras that image in 2K, 4K and beyond, and even the Panavision Genesis has a staggering 12.4 megapixel imager that essentially gives 10 bit color for every pixel site in its 1920x1080 output. Clearly Panavision is anticipating the necessity for greater detail and sensitivity in future imager technology. 2K projection systems are the norm for digital cinema display, but 4K projector manufacturers are now knocking on the projection room door and demanding a spot in the booth.

Which brings us back to lowly HD. It seems that most directors of photography who have recently begun to work with digital formats absolutely shun the term "high definition video" in favor of "digital cinematography." HD, both as a term and even as a format, is considered "unworthy" of serious consideration for film distribution, and this mentality has even filtered down to television. There is at least one cable network that currently has a series that was recorded on 4K cameras. But how practical is it to image in 4K, especially if it will ultimately be delivered to a broadcast network? Only a handful of post houses are able to handle 4K files, do simple editing, titling and effects work. The more data you need to acquire, store, manipulate and deliver to a network or a studio the more expensive it will be. Post houses are not motivated to give "volume discounts" when it comes to handling 4K files. Also, not too many theatres are equipped to handle 4K, at least not in the foreseeable future.

What is the difference between 2K and HD? Not much. Full, uncompressed HD has 1920 x 1080 pixels. A full aperture 2K image is 2048 x 1556, but most motion picture features delivered to a digital cinema will have a 1.85:1 ("flat") aspect ratio of 1998 x 1080 pixels. Compared to HD, that's a difference of about 84 thousand pixels or about 4% in total vertical image resolution difference. For some digital cinema purists that seems unforgivable, but consider the cost difference between 2K post work and HD post work. HD post production will be far more economical since the post path is well established— it is faster and cheaper than 2K; the equipment and software for editing, titling and manipulation of HD is readily and widely available. Plus, HD can be upscaled (ever so slightly!) to 2K with little detectable image degradation, even when projected digitally. For you film and digital cinema purists who remain skeptical, consider this fact: A single film negative frame supposedly has a resolution of over 20 million pixels, yet most film release prints top out at around 750 lines per picture height of resolution. That's far more than a 4% loss in total vertical resolution. Shooting then posting in HD for broadcast and consumer blu-ray while delivering a 2K file for theatrical release is a wise and cost effective way for budget-conscious producers to hold the line on production and post production costs while maintaining a high quality image. HDTV no longer has to be Hollywood's "four letter word."

THE APOCALYPSE WILL BE TELEVISED!

Morningstar Entertainment has produced for History Channel the two hour special "Seven Signs of the Apocalypse," an HD documentary brought to FILMLOOK Inc. for final color timing. "Seven Signs" seeks scientific proof of an impending worldwide apocalypse and interviews astronomers, historians, biologists and theologians who see evidence of future catastrophic disaster. This is the latest in several documentaries and series Morningstar has brought to FILMLOOK Inc. for final post work, including the hit series "Manhunters" currently airing on A&E.

ONE MINUTE CLINICS

The Tennis Channel is producing a series of tennis instructional spots entitled "One Minute Clinics" that were brought to FILMLOOK Inc. for color correction. The spots feature tennis stars, coaches and trainers giving fitness and strategy tips for improving the game for beginners and seasoned pros. The "One Minute Clinics" spots are brought to FILMLOOK Inc. for final color timing before air, and web casting.

FILMLOOK TODAY, GONE TO MAUI

The Grand Wailea Hotel in Maui is currently running a :30 spot on The Golf Channel that was completely posted at FILMLOOK Inc. The spot is a cutdown of a promotional video that was FILMLOOK® processed and given da vinci 2K color correction. The spot was cut, color timed and titled prior to delivery to the Golf Channel.

ESTATE OF FILMLOOK

Lock & Key Productions is using FILMLOOK for its new reality game show "Estate of Panic," SciFi Channel's new reality series. "Estate of Panic" takes contestants through the mansion of an eccentric millionaire as they search for money in each of several mystery rooms filled with unspeakable horrors. "Estate of Panic," along with "Scare Tactics," is the second FILMLOOK series on SciFi.

FANGS, DINOS AND DIRE WOLVES

Retromedia Entertainment has used FILMLOOK Inc. for post work on "Dire Wolf," "Recoil" and "Reptisaurus," three features heading for broadcast and video stores. The features are using FILMLOOK MEDIA AND POST for HD online, titling and color correction. "Dire Wolf," a thriller about a genetic experiment gone awry, is seeking broadcast distribution while "Recoil" and "Reptisaurus" are finishing up post production.

BATTLE FOR TOBACCO ROAD

HBO Sports has finished post work on "Battle for Tobacco Road: Duke versus North Carolina," a sports documentary shot in HD and brought to FILMLOOK for film simulation processing and color timing. Produced by George Roy who also produced the Emmy award winning documentary "Ghosts of Flatbush," the documentary centers on the origins of the intense rivalry between the two neighboring universities and their see-saw battle for domination in NCAA basketball. "Battle for Tobacco Road" will air during March madness on HBO.

LORENA OCHOA

HIP TV and documentary filmmakers Christopher Vittiello and Jonathan Ochoa have produced "Lorena Ochoa: el Camino a la Cima," a two part documentary about the number one ranked female golf pro whose meteoric rise to fame from humble beginnings was recorded by the filmmakers over the course of a year and culminates with her 2007 victory at St. Andrews. The Fox Sports Español documentary was brought to FILMLOOK Inc. for final mastering, titling and color correction.

STORIES WITH FLAVOR

HIP TV has completed post on four new episodes of the Discovery en Espanol cooking series "Relatos Con Sabor." The series features celebrities who share their family cooking recipes with series host chef Marcela Valladolid. The half hour shows are brought to FILMLOOK Inc. for final online and color correction. This is the second season of the popular cooking series and is currently on Discovery en Espanol.

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