

EUREKA EUROSTARS PROJECT 8307 Tofu TV



TOFU TAKES TV ON THE CREST OF A WAVE

The Eurostars project Transcoders Of the Future Television (TOFu TV) helped keep its consortium partners at the leading edge of technologies underpinning the next generation of Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT). And for one partner it also opened up a surprising new market on the high seas.

High Efficiency Video Coding (HEVC) is the new standard for video technologies that will allow higher definition images at lower bitrate and support the delivery of more channels and wider access to other services.

Marc Leny is Head of R&D at French SME Ektacom who coordinated the TOFu TV project. "The fundamental basis of the project was to get ready for the TV of the future," he says. "With the new standard we are moving from HDTV to ultra HD and the ability to offer additional services such as second screens and automatic indexation. For us the heart of the technology was to ensure that video transcoding software was able to cope with the new video standards efficiently."

HEVC adoption started in 2015 with a massive transition to the format anticipated from around 2018 across broadcast TV and digital cinema, and also potentially in areas such as surveillance.

TOFu TV produced demonstrators that featured all the technology breakthroughs, illustrating the transcoding capabilities

and potential service enhancements.

Boat bonus

The project also opened up a brand new market for Ektacom. "During the project we were approached by a small sailing association based in Brest in Brittany. They asked if we could help with televising a junior race involving some 60 small laser class boats," says Marc. "The race was offshore, but the audience was in the harbour so they needed to see the action. We used the transcoders developed in the project to transmit video to a large screen in the harbour and also broadcast the content over the internet."

The event went really well and six months later the company got a call from the Spindrift racing team based in Brittany. Spindrift own some of the largest sailing boats in the world and compete in global yacht races such as the Jules Verne around the World challenge.

"Spindrift were looking for a solution to transmit live videos from their racing yachts from anywhere in the world in the very best TV quality. In fact this was a requirement from their sponsors," explains Marc.

Thanks to the technology developed through the Eurostars project, Ektacom were able to equip the boat with a system before the start of their next challenge. Using the equipment the racing team were able to deliver some 20 live TV interviews during the voyage including an exclusive

live interview on French TV as the yacht passed Cape Horn featuring live video from the boat's drone. "This was a big success for the team and their sponsors," says Marc. "And could not have done without the technology developed in the project."

Since then Ektacom have equipped more racing yachts for other teams. "These are some of the biggest racing boats with big budgets and need cutting edge



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technology," Marc says.

"It is a real return on our investment efforts," continues Marc. "This new market has yielded some very good results for us. There are around a dozen maxi racing trimarans in the world. Eight of them are in France and we have supplied systems for three already, with ongoing discussions for new ones."

Overall TOFu TV has been a real winner for Ektacom. "Since the end of the project the company has grown rapidly. We hired three new people and I estimate that we have gained around € 300 000 in new business due to TOFu TV outcomes," concludes Marc.

This project has received funding from the Eurostars-2 joint programme with co-funding from the European Union Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme



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TOTAL R&D INVESTMENT

€ 2.3 M

DURATION

October 2013 to December 2015

COUNTRIES AND NATIONAL FUNDING BODIES INVOLVED



BPI France



SERI Switzerland



SPW Wallonie, Belgium

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