



Pinewood Studios

Location

Buckinghamshire, England

Type of Business

Film, television and commercial production and post production.

Business Needs

A single solution to provide access to servers located in one secure area from various workstation positions.

Solution

Avocent™ HMX extender system

Business Benefits

- Multiple editors can access and share any data source without having to leave their editing suites or workstations, streamlining the workflow process and speeding up the delivery of final content.
- The IP-based system was smoothly integrated into the existing network, is simple to update and new stations can be added quickly and easily.
- The integration and sharing of systems that the solution offers saves costs and allows for easy integration with other areas of the business.

Desktop Area Networking and KVM over IP Switching

Pinewood Studios is the home of world class film, television and commercial production and post production facilities. The Studios provide facilities for major national and international film production, filmed television, studio television recording, the filming of commercials and post production sound services.

The post production audio and picture facilities at Pinewood and Shepperton rank amongst the finest in the world. With 16 post production theatres, ADR, Foley, narration, mixing and international dubbing, Pinewood post production offers everything required to support a production. The department has assembled an award-winning team of experts who collectively and individually deliver internationally-acclaimed audio and picture post production for film, television and commercials.

“The Avocent HMX solution has been a great asset to this part of the business—without it, our workflow would be more difficult to manage and time would be wasted moving operators between servers.”

– Patrick Wilbraham – Post Production Project Engineer

The Challenge

Pinewood Studios recently opened up a new department carrying out film and audio restoration; and a lot of new equipment needed to be purchased and installed quickly. These servers needed to be interlinked to a central Storage Area Network (SAN) and accessed from different terminal locations. There were seven systems in total, all running on different platforms, ranging from Windows™, Mac™, Linux™ to waveform meters, video playback systems and archive tape robots, all of which needed to access the SAN.

“We were looking for a solution to provide us access to servers located in one secure area, from various workstation positions—we had no existing infrastructure; it was a new build,” says Patrick Wilbraham, Post Production Projects Engineer at Pinewood Studios.

The Solution

Avocent and our Elite Partner, IP Performance, were able to design a solution based on the Avocent HMX extender system and the HMX Manager, a hardened Linux server which manages the connection brokerage and session switching across a copper CAT-5e Gigabit Ethernet switched network infrastructure. Once a Proof of Concept (PoC) was complete and the design approved, Pinewood Studios tested the equipment in the restoration and transfer bay areas of the Post Production Department for several weeks.



The Benefits

With the help of IP Performance and Avocent, Patrick's team has equipped the post production editing suites and transfer bay with the Avocent HMX 1070 user station and IQ transmitters and an HMX Manager appliance, allowing multiple editors to access and share any data source. Those data sources may be as disparate or diverse as the Spycer software program for content management running on Linux, a Clipster DI editing system running on Windows XP, a ProTools system running on an Apple Mac or a Linux-based compositing or rendering application. Leveraging the native IP multicasting functionality of the system using the HMX Manager, a server-based appliance controlling sessions and connection brokerage, editors are able to access and share resources without having to leave their editing suites or workstations, streamlining the workflow process and speeding up the delivery of final content.

"One of the reasons that we went with IP Performance's Avocent-based solution was that the system is IP-based, so it is very easy to integrate into the existing network we have here, and it also has the ability to share systems. It is simple to update, and new stations can be added quickly and easily," adds Patrick. "Throughout the project there was a feeling that we were supported by IP Performance and Avocent and that issues were speedily addressed and resolved."

Patrick continues, "I have to say as well that the pricing structure was very good. It is hard to quantify ROI as this whole department is a new build, but integration and sharing of systems will definitely save costs. The system allows for easy integration with other areas of our business—even though they may be a few miles apart, they can still be integrated via our existing IP network, and this is something we will be looking at in the very near future."

Partnering for Success

IP Performance has been delivering specialised infrastructure solutions and integrating complex network systems since 1994, delivering internet/networking services and products as well as professional, certified network management and technical support services - 24 hours a day. IP Performance has built a reputation for technical expertise across a range of technologies, and can demonstrate a history of translating technology into solutions for our customers, improving productivity and efficiency, and delivering a real return on investment.

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