

Video Takes Flight for OnBoard International with Digital Rapids StreamZ

by Mohd al Assad, Operations Manager, OnBoard International



OnBoard International is an MPAA-licensed and ISO2001:9000 certified company, fully dedicated to providing full In-flight Entertainment solutions. In the business for more than 10 years, OnBoard International has launched its new modern premises in the internationally renowned Dubai Media City to provide personalized service to clients in the Gulf region and the Middle East.

The ground work for OnBoard International was laid in London at the onset of providing IFE programs to the major airlines in the Gulf region such as Saudi Arabian Airlines and Kuwait Airways, competing with major IFE service providers in Europe and the rest of the world to set standards of service in the region that others have to follow.



Mohd al Assad of Onboard International and Amar Fawzy of MediaCast.

In addition to providing IFE services, OnBoard also represents the airlines to advertising agencies and media buying units for advertising placements onboard the aircrafts. OnBoard provides the platform to generate successful business matches and by being situated in Dubai has made the business accessible to major key media players, advertising agencies & media buying units in the region.

OnBoard International has updated its facilities to include encoding for the airlines' in-flight entertainment systems, which are from manufacturers such as Panasonic, Thales, Rockwell Collins and Teac. We use Digital Rapids' StreamZ encoding server for all such

encoding. The StreamZ encoder is a fully dedicated system in our company, catering for encoding to airline-based systems and portable media players. Because In-flight Entertainment is a closed medium, OnBoard International sought an encoding system as part of its "Fully Fledged Under One Roof" policy. Encoding for airlines is provided by only seven companies in the world, and because digital formats are currently dominating at a fast pace in the entertainment business, encoders are becoming a necessity for, rather than an addition to, existing facilities.

The User: OnBoard International, Dubai Media City

The Challenge: real-time encoding for airline in-flight entertainment

The Solution: StreamZ

"StreamZ has improved our productivity in time, quality and budget..."

capture

encode

deliver

Rapid Users

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OnBoard International bought the StreamZ-1500xs server unit to provide encoding to our airline clients and we intend to add two high-definition capable StreamZHD servers by the end of 2008. Although in general the encoding we perform with StreamZ is driven by airline programming requirements, some programmes, such as the news, are encoded and uploaded to aircraft on a daily basis.

We encode to both MPEG-1 and MPEG-2 files in a specific format dictated by World Airline

Entertainment Association (WAEA) technical specifications. Through our patch panel, StreamZ is connected to our Digi-Beta, DVCAM and Betacam-SP decks and Professional DVD players.

capture

I was previously a production manager for Inflight Entertainment Company, and had experience with StreamZ and its software. When evaluating solutions for Onboard International we looked at several systems, all of which were accredited by WAEA. For us, the best features of the StreamZ are the user friendly interface, the ability to save and re-use encoding profiles, and the real-time encoding with no frame loss. One of the key factors was also the fact that Digital Rapids has a Dubai agent, MediaCast, which provides excellent after-sales follow up and training.

deliver

The use of StreamZ has improved our productivity in time, quality and budget and, because our encoding is now in house, we have the ability to be more competitive when tendering for contracts.

As a person with 10 years in-flight entertainment experience, I can honestly say that the sky is the limit with digital technology, and Digital Rapids is the technology base from which we will continue to launch our business.

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