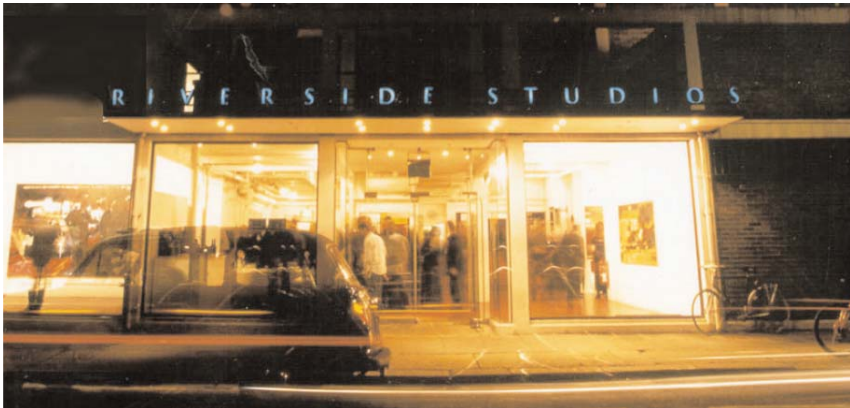


Case Study

Riverside Studios Adopts Kahuna™ Production Switcher as Centerpiece of HDTV Upgrade



Snell's FormatFusion™ empowers premier UK performing arts facility to produce television shows in any format.

The Customer

Riverside TV Studios Ltd operates 3 television studios. Studio 1 – 6000 sq ft, Studio 2 – 4000 sq ft & Studio 3 -1600 sq ft that has capacity for seating live audiences of up to 400 on the banks of the Thames in Hammersmith. It has become one of the most successful independent television studios in London. Studio 1 hosts a wide range of high profile broadcast entertainment productions from music specials to game shows delivering facilities for major broadcasters and independent production companies. Riverside TV Studios is a separate commercial company from Riverside Studios, a unique arts and media centre, comprising two main performance studios, a cinema, a television studio and production galleries, rehearsal/workshop space, numerous offices and a large contemporary cafe/bar and terrace.

The Challenge

The rapid transition to HDTV motivated increasing numbers of clients to request that Riverside Studios provide high-definition production equipment in its busy Studio 1 facility. Among them was BSkyB Ltd, who use Studio 1 to produce RuggieMedia's popular game show, 'Nothing But The Truth' hosted by Jerry Springer. The demands of these high-profile clients compelled Riverside to choose whether to upgrade the busy studio with in-house highdefinition production capability or to continue to hire outside resources.

When the decision was made to upgrade, Riverside faced the challenge of how to continue to service standard definition productions while migrating its legacy equipment into a multiformat environment. The facility also needed to ensure that any new investment be compatible with a scaleable, dynamic business model that allowed competitive pricing in the local HD production market.

"Snell has such a good pedigree in engineering—especially with up and down conversion in highdefinition. They are renowned as the leaders in the field," said Duncan Stewart, Technical Director at Riverside Studios. "I was also reassured by all the support, the Kahuna Club, and the whole Snell backup system, which is superb."



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Equally important, any new production switcher selected for use in Studio 1 had to provide the visual tool-set essential to support the creative requirements of all major genres of video programming, while being easy enough for freelance technicians to operate with minimal training. To make an informed decision on its upgrade options, Riverside's engineering staff began a period of research and evaluation of the multiformat products offered by all major broadcast equipment providers.

The Snell Solution

After evaluating production switchers from every major broadcast equipment manufacturer, Riverside Studios purchased a Snell Kahuna SD/HD multiformat production switcher with Impakt 3D DVE to replace the Grass Valley Zodiac switcher it previously used in Studio 1. The Kahuna switcher, which allowed Riverside to easily work in either SD or HD, was chosen because it offered the greatest flexibility in upgrading the SD facility. By allowing the easy migration of legacy equipment to HD, the Kahuna caused minimal disruption and provided an easy operational transition for the staff.

The Results

Riverside's new Kahuna, backed by new cameras and a high-definition studio routing infrastructure, went online in late 2007 with minimal interruptions to operations in Studio 1.

"The Kahuna offers our customers the opportunity to deliver in SD and HD simultaneously, without a need for additional HD post production or many other costs historically associated with the production of high definition video," said Victoria Finlay, Sales Manager at Riverside Studios.

"The studio's new flexibility is a huge draw for customers budgeting for a multiformat production, especially when they have a wide range of camera formats, insert VTs, and existing graphics that were costly to produce in the SD world. These elements are now seamlessly included and upconverted," she said. Since most of Riverside's customers bring their own production personnel to the studio, ease of use of the production switcher is always a key issue. "Kahuna's user interface is very intuitive. It has a logical layout that feels very familiar even if you've never used it before. People can sit down and start operating the switcher within minutes," said Duncan Stewart, Riverside's Technical Director.

Kahuna's unique flexibility and ease of migration gave it an "edge" over competing models, Stewart said. "We had all the pieces we needed to go from SD to HD. But we still have bits and pieces of legacy gear. No other switcher could handle all the multiformat issues as well as Kahuna."

Another major factor in Riverside's selection of a Kahuna was the Snell reputation for engineering excellence and support, Stewart added. "Snell has such a good pedigree in engineering—especially with up and down conversion in high-definition. They are renowned as the leaders in the field," noted Stewart. "I was also reassured by all the support, the Kahuna Club, and the whole Snell backup system, which is superb."