



Breaking new ground at M1 Kyiv

Launching a new channel is never straightforward. Each new project throws up its own set of challenges, while the bottom line remains unerringly constant: to get on air, on time, on budget and to present the final product in such a way that viewers, advertisers and the competition sit up and take notice. However many times you've done it before, you know it's going to be different each time.

Valentyn Koval, the inspiration and general producer behind M1, had a vision for the station. "I wanted a new, MTV-style music channel, running 24/7 in Kyiv and the 14 biggest regional centres of the Ukraine," says Koval. "To capture the growing youth market for popular music videos in the Ukraine, our channel had to be visually distinctive - unlike anything seen locally in the country before.

"We worked with Arunas Uksas from Lithuanian integrators TV and Communication Systems Ltd and took the decision early on in the project that, to stay ahead of the competition, we would make maximum use of an integrated station automation and channel management system. To many, this would not be a big deal. But for the Ukraine, which has no history of station automation systems, M1 represented a trail-blazing installation."

At IBC2001 the team from M1 visited the IBIS booth to look at an integrated broadcast information solution - combining metadata capture with flexible, live-to-air automation control. This visit coincided with the growing relationship between the IBIS automation development team and EVS with their fast developing range of video servers. In true IBIS fashion, Alan Hill had been in discussion with the EVS Group about developing a native interface to their new range of servers in order to exploit their maximum capabilities. The IBIS philosophy has always been to control devices at the native level, rather than to reduce everything to a common protocol operation. This approach had led to ground breaking work with server manufacturers the world over, producing variants of IBIS ingest, editing and playout applications - in line with customers' requests for something more appropriate to their way of working.

Having chosen an EVS SpotBox for playout of their music video playlist, M1 was now looking for an ingest, management and playout solution from a single supplier and was drawn by IBIS' ability to combine these functions with the IBIS PreCue channel management system, which permits the production of transmission playlists, the management of tapes in a programme library, production and management of promotions & interstitials, plus EPG preparation. As Project Engineer Arunas Uksas says, "We chose IBIS because of their experience in unusual station automation and fast cost effective design of complex custom required features."

Koval continues: "M1 worked with IBIS to customise PreCue to enable the capture of key data which could be used to enhance the playout live to air. By capturing the title, artist, label and year of production for each video within PreCue, the 'metadata' is made available to the IBIS Transmission Automation (ITA) system

once the completed transmission playlist is downloaded. This gives the perfect opportunity to offer live to air text and graphics output.”

The IBIS approach to device control is clearly evident here. By combining the ITA controller with the EVS SpotBox, Leitch matrix and a Miranda’s Oxtel Series Imagestore, a series of graphic overlays and DVEs are produced on playout of each music video. Each time a video plays to air, the ITA runs through a routine to produce a teaser of what’s coming next. “The sequence runs like this”, explains Koval. “5 seconds after the video is taken to air, ITA looks ahead to the next scheduled music video event and draws from the schedule the title and artist of the ‘coming next’ video – along with current video’s information. This graphical information is formatted into a Cyrillic (vernacular) font which is then taken to air over the video in an animated graphic template which matches the M1 logo style. Couple this with a simultaneous teaser of the next music video in a DVE window and you’ve a really neat, totally automated teaser routine produced live to air with no human intervention. Run this routine just before the end of the video too and you get a double hit at keeping you audience with you.”

Produced by IBIS, this same live to air routine is also used to create a menu keyed over another M1 graphic background showing the next four coming videos, which can be programmed to appear as frequently as the channel planners feel is necessary. According to Koval, “The truly clever thing about this routine is that, whatever happens to the transmission playlist, the ‘coming next’ teaser and the menus will always be correct because the information producing them comes directly from the ITA playlist in the transmission suite. No matter how often events are deleted or moved for editorial reasons, the ‘coming next’ information will always be accurate.



“Add to this scenario an ingest application from IBIS, called ServerLoad, which controls a remote VTR to load material into the EVS server and you have a complete, low cost, media and asset management environment. Because the IBIS system knows which videos have been planned days in advance, which have been ingested into the server and which are required for transmission, the operational staff at M1 are always aware of what they have and, more importantly, what’s missing from their on-air playlist - well before things become critical.”

Now that the system has been on air for almost 9 months, the original look and feel on screen has been further refined. Since the launch of this pioneering project, the IBIS automation team has worked with the staff at M1 to enable news and SMS messaging to air. In order to give the channel’s viewers a direct input into on screen graphics, upcoming videos can be dedicated to viewers on receipt of a text message to the station. These messages are compiled by ITA, controlling the



Miranda box and are then crawled, again in Cyrillic text, along the lower third of the screen between the two teaser DVEs, with the creation, appearance and timing of these messages handled by intelligent algorithm control from within the ITA system.

*Published in BroadcastPapers.com 2005
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About IBIS

IBIS produces a range of applications and products to enable the broadcaster to create an open and scaleable transmission solution. IBIS' distinctive and user-friendly interfaces minimise training time and their adaptable approach gives broadcasters the flexibility required in either a modular or customised system.

Further product and press information and images can be obtained from the IBIS website: www.ibis.tv