

Video Design Software's Liberty Reality Studio

BY D.R. WORTHINGTON

The broadcast industry has undergone significant changes in terms of workflow, and the products that are used everyday — both hardware and software — have also had to change in order to keep pace and continue meeting end-user requirements. One example of this trend is the Liberty Reality Studio from Video Design Software (VDS).

The Liberty Reality Studio, a complete graphics creation system that integrates Liberty's paint, animation and compositing software with Leitch's dpsReality DDR, has undergone several changes in the year since VDS acquired the Liberty product line from Chyron, including increased

compatibility with other industry graphics applications.

Operators now have the ability to capture video material, create and add graphics, composites or animations, and then output directly to other

analog or digital video I/O with key channel, SD and HD options.

The system can be used for applications including network and show look development, news and sports graphics, animation and promotional

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record and playback devices, all on one resolution-independent system.

The graphics system also features direct native file support and control of most industry-standard graphics and video display/playback systems; and built-in real-time, uncompressed,

spots, as well as to composite 3-D renderings and edit work that was produced on other systems.

Essentially, there are two ways to establish a broadcast graphics design department. It can be a turnkey operation where everything is handled within one application, from video ingest and adding graphics to packaging and output. A platform like Liberty Reality Studio could be used in this case. Users can create graphic elements, or can import material from other systems, since Liberty communicates natively with most common industry products.

Alternatively, some graphics departments make the decision to work with multiple software products on consumer quality hardware using remote I/O devices. The problem with this is that some applications, like Photoshop, are general in purpose and not specifically designed for the broadcast industry. The operator ends up spending much of their time rescaling images to meet broadcast aspect ratio criteria, importing and exporting material from one application to another, and then having to output remotely. All these little steps add up to big production time costs. In addition, one will almost certainly encounter the issue of having to import



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material directly from Chyron, Aprisa, Avid, Pinnacle or Quantel systems, as general-purpose graphics products typically do not support these industry-standard native file or database entry formats.

With Liberty, users can create graphics in these native formats at proper aspect and save directly to the device, complete with metadata where applicable. The Chyron operator (for example) can then instantly recall the file directly from their message directory. Safe title is safe title, colors are correct, aspect is accurate and key channel is happening.

The same is true when dealing with moving or sequential video. The system incorporates the dpsReality disk recorder, allowing it to provide approximately one hour of real-time uncompressed video I/O with key channel. It also has full control over the dpsReality within its interface including video I/O configuration, clip generation and full transport control. So, animations can be rendered directly within the system as DPS clip files as opposed to having to leave your animation or compositing application, open the dpsReality UI, create a new clip media, go back to your application, and then render sequential image files back to the disk recorder's virtual file system. As with many applications, the operator would then have to use the dpsReality interface for ingest and playback as well.

The graphics system comes in many different system configurations. If facilities were to piece together their own systems, adding applications individually to reproduce the functionality of Liberty, the costs could end up being prohibitive and the workflow process not as efficient.

The system allows the creation of layers of graphics, each of which can be a different type of graphic or element. All these elements can be composited and sent back out or directly to a device such as a Chyron or any number of still stores and clip players. To handle any changes that need to be made, the system has its own layer file structure, allowing users to go back at any time and

swap a layer of text or graphics, much like they would in Photoshop.

Liberty reads and writes Photoshop layers, so if there's a facility that has a need to work with Photoshop or wants to move up to a more productive broadcast system, all its archives and other material saved in Photoshop formats are still viable and can be used within Liberty. The same holds true when operators working within the system need to send something to a department that's using Photoshop. They can simply save the work as a Photoshop layer file. The artist also has access to the hundreds of supported Photoshop and After Effects plug-ins within the UI.

There is also a 64-bit version of the graphics system, which is useful for film work. Sixty-four-bit Cineon files are not converted to linear or 32-bit format when they're read into the system, although the display is converted so the image looks good to the artist. The actual work is carried out in log, resulting in a high quality file with no conversion artifacts.

This feature makes the system useful in the feature film community as a tool for efficient rig and dust removal, as well as color correction and other image processing effects. With its built-in dpsReality software and its support for VDS' CPHD-DDR, as well as the dpsRealityHD, special effects artists can rotoscope through their work and save material as large Cineon files, but at the same time they can also be previewing their

work in progress, in real time and high-definition resolution. Previewing in film work has always been a problem because if the content is not being viewed in a large enough format, then it's difficult to see if all the little bits, pieces and other artifacts have been caught.

Finally, looking down the road, in addition to continually developing new features and third-party product support for Liberty, VDS is currently re-architecting the product from the ground up. The new product is called Twister. Twister runs as a plug-in or stand-alone Windows application, currently featuring about 95 percent of Liberty's paint functionality. Twister was designed to bring content creation tools to products like Chyron's Lyric running on Duet. **BE**

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