

FOX Streamlines Media Operations



Infrastructure growth challenges solved while giving operators much greater flexibility using Amulet Hotkey KVM Extenders

FOX Networks Group Europe (FOX), formerly FOX International Channels, is based in Shepherds Bush, UK and re-versions National Geographic and FOX materials. FOX also creates promotions and adverts, prepares programmes for transmission and on-demand viewing for Sky and Virgin in the UK, with a further four channels for Africa. Although tape still plays a reduced role in the acquisition and delivery of material for broadcast, the internal post-production process at FOX is exclusively file-based.

Amulet Hotkey KVM Extenders solves demand for infrastructure growth within limited space. Growing demands by operators to access file-based content puts significant pressure on the facility network infrastructure and requires additional equipment in the Master Control Room (MCR).

To increase the capacity of the office management and post-production systems at the Shepherds Bush facility would be disruptive and costly. At the same time, MCR space constraints impact the installation of additional equipment.

Simon Brett, Director of Operations and Technical Facilities, takes up the story. *"The need for increased file-based access presented a challenge. We wanted our traffic team to be able to use the post-production system which would have required an additional high spec PC loaded with the necessary fibre and network cards, but we simply didn't have the desk space for that and the associated monitoring."*

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- Simon Brett, Director of Operations and Technical Facilities
FOX International Channels

Customer profile



Company	Fox Networks Group Europe (formerly FIC)
Industry	Media & Entertainment
Country	United Kingdom
Statistics	£3.1B revenue (Europe) 1000+ employees
Website	www.foxnetworks.com

Business Need

Meet growing operator demands while solving facility and infrastructure challenges. Enhance operator flexibility while saving time and effort.

Solution

FOX and Root6 used Amulet Hotkey KVM extenders to centralize media workstations/systems and used Amulet Hotkey DXZ zero clients to connect to any workstation from any desk or media control room.

Results

- Amulet Hotkey allow us to grow technical resources in a cost-effective manner
- Reliability allowed graphics team to move out of a revamped MCR
- Increased operator flexibility saves time and effort.
- Amulet Hotkey KVM Extenders fit into existing network infrastructure

Solutions Featured

Amulet Hotkey KVM extenders and DXZ4 zero clients



“Operators can now spot check files, organise file traffic and instigate transcodes in addition to day to day editing and graphics operations; it’s cost-effective and saves time and effort.”

Simon Brett,
Director of Operations and
Technical Facilities,
FOX International Channels

“We approached media workflow experts root6 with the challenge and they introduced us to Amulet Hotkey which they had already successfully deployed in a number of facilities.

Initially it looks like a conventional KVM extension that enables the CPU to be removed from the suite and located elsewhere, but in reality it’s a great deal more than just a point-to-point solution.”

Phil Crawley, Head of Systems Integration at root6, maintains that Amulet is one of the most significant technologies that the company has engaged with in recent years.

“Originally the system was widely adopted by the financial services community,” explains Crawley. “It enables users operators to access multiple systems from a single interface over a network connection without operators and, more importantly, the OS/application, being aware it is being used from afar. When we first saw the Amulet Hotkey KVM Extender solutions, the advantages for our market were immediately apparent.”

Amulet Hotkey KVM Extenders fit into existing network infrastructure

As the FOX facility was already Cat 5 enabled it was a relatively simple task to connect the Amulet Hotkey KVM extenders to the network for shared resources.

The user sees a list of all connected devices – Avid Media Composer or ContentAgent automated file-based management, for example – and can switch between them, taking control with a single keyboard and monitoring system.

“Amulet allows us to grow our technical resources and gives operators much greater flexibility without sacrificing valuable desk space,” said Brett. “It’s proved very reliable and we have now extended the network to seven machines, moving our graphics team out of a revamped MCR.”



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Amulet Hotkey incorporates purpose-built remote display protocol processors that support PCoIP - a highly innovative protocol licensed by Teradici, to transfer high quality content within the constraints imposed by the available bandwidth.





Amulet Hotkey DX Rack KVM Extenders and DXZ zero clients use Teradici PCoIP processors to provide anywhere access to graphics, media systems and tools without loading the workstation CPUs or impacting the operator experience. Media systems and workstations are centralized in the data center and compact DXZ zero clients are used in the MCR to connect to any system.

Important DX Rack features:

1) The solution is independent of OS or application software. Only display pixels are transmitted and consequently, bandwidth and latency limitations are overcome. Growing network capacity between systems within the data center is much more cost effective – if it is required at all.

2) Intelligent image decomposition and analysis. Performance is maximised by deploying a range of codecs each optimised for elements of the material on screen, whether it be titles, text or moving images.

3) Dynamic Network Adaption. The UPD protocol as employed by IPTV, is used to maximise the available bandwidth still further.

To date, the Amulet Hotkey KVM Extenders at FOX are on an internal network. As the organisation looks to utilise offsite storage and processing in the future, the network is fully capable of facilitating that transition.

“Today I can check, update and control any networked machine from my desk. While that in itself helps streamline operations, the idea that remote operators could access any tool in a central resource over the Internet is a very exciting prospect.”

Simon Brett,
Director of Operations and
Technical Facilities,
FOX International Channels



About FOX Networks Group Europe

FOX Networks Group Europe is 21st Century Fox Corporation's international multi-media business. It develops, produces and distributes 300 wholly- and majority-owned pay-TV channels across, Europe, the Middle East and Africa, in 44 languages.

In January 2016, FOX International Channels was split into three divisions:

- Fox Networks Group Europe
- Fox Networks Group Latin America
- Fox Networks Group Asia

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