



WALLABYPRODUCTIONS

12th October 2006

Report on the Datavideo MS-800 Mobile Studio

It's with appreciation that we develop this report on your demo [MS-800 Mobile Studio](#).

Firstly however, can I say how much we appreciated your professionalism and service over the recent period. One that had taxed us to our limits and it was only through the enthusiastic support of people such as yourself and Steve Hibberd from [Provisual](#) that we were able to deliver the product that we did.

We understand how much of a commitment to your product such an initiative is... because we often are involved in such things our selves and we realise that rarely do these things occur without a considerable 'leap of faith'.

Background:



As members of the [Lutheran Church of Australia](#) and being based in Toowoomba, it was an obvious fit for [Wallaby Productions](#) to be engaged to video record the 2006 triennial Lutheran Church of Australia Synodical Conference at the [University of Southern Queensland](#).

Negotiations began some 3 months prior and a very tight budget dominated. It then became our challenge to stretch that tight budget over a reality of a five (long) day retrieval period and to edit such a mass of raw material down to a useable 'highlight' DVD.

The obvious solution was to live switch the conference and have the nominated person from the LCA sit in with us and to 'log highlight'... Those highlights being edited into a 10 to 12 minute program for each day and for those daily highlights to eventually be authored to DVD and mass distributed to each congregation of the LCA across Australia and New Zealand.

It later became our aim to upload those highlights to the LCA website at the end of each day so that Lutherans all over the world could feel informed. The outcome by all accounts was as successful as it was bold and much of the accolades must in turn be to [GDB international](#) and [Provisual](#) for their incredible support in loaning us their demo [MS-800 Mobile Studio](#).

The Hardware:



The solution consisted of the [Datavideo MS-800 Mobile Video Studio](#) located in a store room to the side front of the 1200 seat auditorium.



The vision switcher was fed from 3 cameras located across the middle of the auditorium and up on 1.2 metre risers. Cable runs from each camera were up to 70 metres with composite video runs and 5 core 'comms' cables as well as mains power to each camera point.

The Sunday was the main event and a full crew was engaged to man all cameras and direct. A technical director was also on standby by in case of technical issues. All other days were covered by two locked off cameras in the same positions and one (Centre front) manned camera to cover all contingencies. The signal from the data projector computer was also fed to the [Datavideo MS-800 Mobile Video Studio](#) through a distribution amplifier and scan converter and then fed also down a composite run... some 50 metres.

It should be noted that even though there was a notional agenda... this was often diverged from and so we had to be ready for all contingencies.



From the [Datavideo MS-800 Mobile Video Studio](#), the signal was handled totally digitally and recorded to the hard drive recorder and also to an 'Avid' non linear suite and for added safety also recorded to a 'Philips' DVD recorder. This allowed us to keep our costs associated with recording media manageable for such a long form program.

Setting up:

As it is always our aim to have the director switch in a room whereby he could talk and live for the full five days and nights it was not desirable to have the [Datavideo MS-800 Mobile Video Studio](#) in the auditorium and this presented us with our first challenge.

The Datavideo MS-800 Mobile Video Studio comes with 4 by 20 metre rolls of 'comms' cables and this in our opinion is nowhere near enough for such a powerful facility. The fact that the 'comms' are not 'daisy chainable' (One fed from the last one on a single continuous cable) is also seen as a major drawback which necessitated individual cables to be manufactured to communicate with camera positions that were in fact 30, 50 and 70 meters out.

Editor's note: Datavideo now sell the [CB4 50 metre intercom cables](#) as a separate accessory. The CB4 cables can be linked to run a signal up to 200 metres. These cables were not available when Wallaby Productions tested the demo MS-800.

While on this subject, the open cup headphone is not really up to it when you consider the amount of ambient sound from the congregation singing or a band/choir singing etc. We understand that the industry standard closed cup headphones are an option... a very necessary one in our opinion. We did use the speaker and fixed mic in the front of the Datavideo MS-800 Mobile Video Studio however it would be best if the director also used closed cup headphones for discreet monitoring.

Editor's note: GDB are currently testing the closed cup industry standard headsets with the [ITC-100](#) and will be providing headset accessories for customers producing high level events.

Our next challenge came when we introduced sound from the 'front of house' sound system to the mixer by twin shielded audio cable and with it significant 50 hertz hum. As the mixer only had unbalanced inputs this seemed right in theory however we had to then install a small Peavey mixer desk at our end and feed it through a balanced audio lead and then run RCA stereo pairs to the audio mixer section of the vision mixer. We understand that this will be solved in future releases of the MS-800 studio.

Editor's note: The MS-800 now comes standard with the RP-4 Tally Light and Balanced Audio Panel, the RP-1 Analogue Video Panel, RP-2 Digital & Analogue Video Panel and the RP-6 Talkback, SDI Overlay Panel.

And really that was the extent of the issues for us. Knowing what we now know we could successfully set up this complete system in say 2 hours maximum with 2 to 3 people... a bold statement when you consider that scope of the brief.

Operation:

From an operation perspective we had two different directors using the studio and their comments are very much the same.

The unit worked faultlessly over the full six days with the exception of one minor glitch on the last morning when a small square appeared in the middle of the selected picture and on all rails. It was as if the picture in picture effect was on but a thorough check indicated that it was not. This was solved by turning the mixer off and on again.

Editor's note: GDB have isolated this small fault to their demo SE-800, and are currently fixing this problem.

As the nature of the event meant that our switching technique was very much of a slow dissolve and never did we get into rapid cuts except on one occasion when a band played it would be fair to say that we never really took the effects capability to the limit... however we were quite impressed with the selection of effects on offer.

It was the opinion of both directors that the switching buttons were altogether in the wrong place and by the end of the fifth day it became real drag to hold and support your arm over the panel to reach the switch buttons at the very back. We now understand that ['Datavideo'](#) offer a remote panel that takes care of this and we think that this would also be a very vital option box to tick if long form recording are to be considered and surely that's what this unit is aimed at primarily.

Editor's note: The [Datavideo RMC-90](#) is the ideal remote control for long form recording with the MS-800 and the [Datavideo SE-800 Vision Mixer](#).

Both directors felt that the 'comms' were the weak point in the studio and felt that closed cups were absolutely vital to a good outcome.

Editor's note: GDB are currently testing the closed cup industry standard headsets with the [ITC-100](#) and will be providing headset accessories for customers producing high level events.

Now that's about all we could find fault with and both agreed that the convenience of being able to walk in and set the unit up in minutes was an unbelievable step in the right direction. The ability to be able to use any source (composite, Y/C, Component and DV) was a real boon. We did in fact experiment with DV in and of course all output was DV so it fitted our model well. In a perfect world we would have run Y/C cables however these were not available in the run lengths we needed and fire wire was deemed to be too costly for our budget... however we would well look at that as the desirable option in a smaller room.

Editor's note: The [Datavideo CB-2](#) is an S-Video (Y/C) to two BNC connections, allowing you to run S-Video over two high quality coaxial cables. This would have been perfect for this situation.

The LCD monitors worked well for LCDs however we always cross checked them to a Sony broadcast monitor that was calibrated. This gave us peace of mind about our colour matching etc. It hindsight though this is a long held security and slowly we are starting to trust LCD monitors and the [Datavideo LCDs](#) seemed very trustworthy.

The 120GB [DV Bank](#) hard drive recorder also worked well... was intuitive and performed reliably. Perhaps our only comment here is that more storage capacity could be added at little cost and you can never have too much storage especially if you are into long from recording as we were.

Editor's note: GDB are expecting Datavideo to release a larger capacity hard disk recorder in the coming year.

The inbuilt fire-wire port was an unexpected bonus and made our life so much easier... just a note though... don't put anything new onto the hub mid session... derrrr all would say but we found out the hard way that its not a good thing to do.

Conclusion:

Having had the benefit of this unit over this 6 day period it was with a real tinge of sadness that we put it back on the courier. It was a very easy to use solution... in a very professional looking form and it worked extremely well for us over a very long production.

We would have no hesitation in using it again in the future if ever anyone purchases one to make it available for hire... though we do not do a lot of live recording.

All in all... 8 out of ten. This unit will take some beating when it comes to a convenient 'TV station' in a 'road case' solution for under 20K.

Cheers ☺

Neil Waller.
Managing Director

P.O Box 191 CAMBOOYA QLD 4358. Ph 07 4696 2194 Fax 07 4696 2835
email neil@wallaby.net.au web: www.wallaby.net.au