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Name of Entry:
DigitalFilm Tree's Self-Post Workflow Initiative

The Submission:
DigitalFilm Tree (DFT) continues its history of vibrant collaboration and development with their "Self Post" Workflow Initiative. DFT envisions Self Post as a way to support the evolution of Post Production, by streamlining the post production pipeline and bringing it closer to the production company. The latest in a long line of R&D centric projects for DFT, Self Post enables the complete creative post and finishing for an entire series by integrating a traditional editorial environment with a full blown post production pipeline. DFT, a post production, consulting and software development company, has designed a pipeline that includes traditional editorial, online, titling, color, dailies, and VFX, outfitted with high-capacity, high-performance storage that contains the entirety of the show's assets in one place.

Implemented in September 2012, DFT's Self Post Workflow Initiative has proven successful in facilitating the complete post pipelines for the ABC series, "Mistresses" (Season 1), and for the Turner Studios series, "Perception" (Season 2), which airs on TNT.

DFT's installation provides all of the capacity and bandwidth needed to package high-end color correction and DI workflows into a small, mini post house form factor. DFT's system also allows the Studio and production entity to choose the best tools for each job, because it supports all industry standard applications.

DFT'S Self Post Workflow Initiative provides the bandwidth and storage necessary for a production company to manage and have access to an entire season – 13 episodes of a one-hour drama - while also reducing the power consumption and heat emission from that of a traditional SAN. This robust and compact design allows post production teams to easily complete on-set or near-set dailies housed in close proximity to the set. Once filming is wrapped, hard drives with camera RAW Apple ProRes 444 footage are brought to the office and loaded into a 96TB Facilis TerraBlock SAN for the dailies to be processed.

Once dailies are processed, an editing team is able to cut multiple streams of Avid DNxHD Mbit/s36 offline from the SAN. There is always a link to the RAW material housed on the SAN, so the post production team can easily lock a cut and reconnect to the online ProRes 444 material on site, rather than having to

access the material from LTO or the post production facility's SAN.

Why it's Noteworthy:
DigitalFilm Tree is breaking new ground in post production by working closely with the Studio and production company to design and implement the Self Post workflow that works best for each show.

What DFT has done can best be described as "disruptive implementation." While new technology has created the horsepower to allow for this "post in a bubble," the workflow is more about the post house facilitating and managing services in a radically different way than how it was done a year ago. It's the assimilation of small, incremental technical improvements combined with extensive R&D and evolving post production knowledge that made this initiative a reality.

Designed to help the client utilize their own staff, Self Post also offers the benefit of highly skilled DFT team members who provide full post production services and support, from scheduling to Final Air Master.

DFT is focused on R&D. They bring a deep understanding of technology to the post process. Very specialized tools had to be evaluated and built to make Self Post a reality and to create an integrated environment that works seamlessly. "We are taking PCIe SSDs, liquid cooling of processors, and other components and building hardware specific to this task. We are finding the bottlenecks and creating whole systems to overcome those areas to ensure that material is being dealt with in a manner that is always faster than real-time," says Guillaume Aubuchon, CTO. The result is a process that is faster and more efficient.

On both "Mistresses" and "Perception," everyone from the AP to the Post Sup, DP, Editor and Showrunner have been amazed by the speed at which online, color, and VFX is done, as well as pleased with their new ability to multitask between editorial and post finishing at a high quality level. DFT's Self Post Workflow Initiative has brought file-based post (typically at the facility) and file-based editorial (typically in another location) to one integrated hub. For example, the post supervisor doesn't have to assign someone at a facility to grab a clip pull; he/she can have the assistant editor do it on the spot. Having everything -- including all the camera Raw files, VFX files, color projects, offline editorial files, titling files, and everything related to the show (data and metadata) -- in one centralized storage location is the epitome of efficiency, giving time back to the creatives working on a project.

DFT's Self Post Workflow Initiative streamlines workflows to new levels. DFT's Self Post Workflow Initiative does not interrupt the pipeline – it is integrated into the pipeline. The process is simply a behavioral and mental shift for those who have worked a certain way for a long time. With "Mistresses" and "Perception," that shift has taken place and provides a new post paradigm for all new shows to consider.