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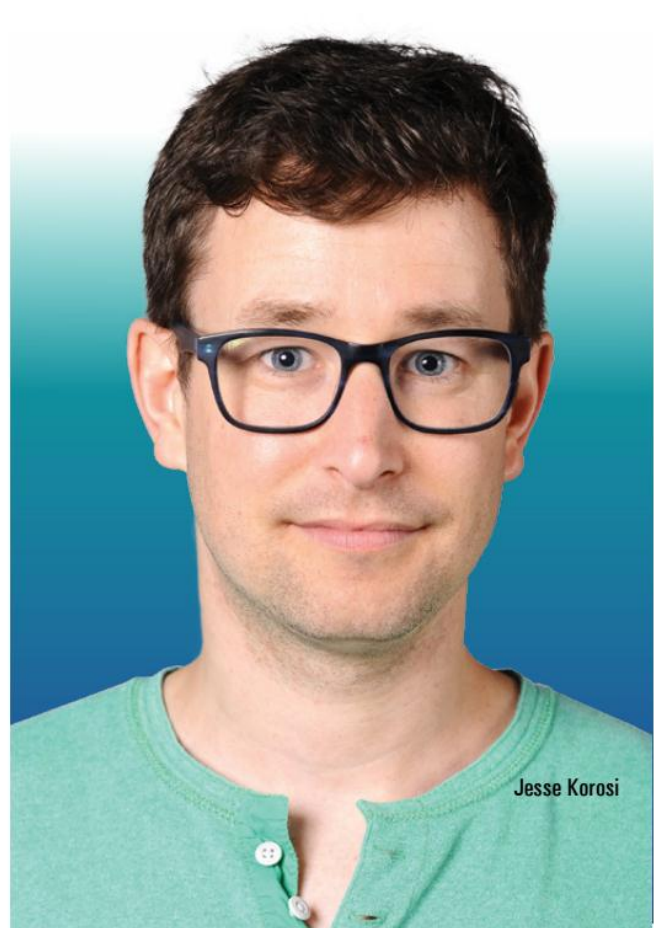
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STREAMLINING TRAVEL-LESS PRODUCTION

BY JESSE KOROSI, DIRECTOR OF WORKFLOW SERVICES, THE SIM GROUP

Tax credits, exemptions, fee-free locations, and other incentives for productions to travel to less common shoot locations have been popping up left and right for the television and film industry. With editorial teams requiring their dailies the morning after production shoots, traveling to less common shoot locations has presented many operational and technical challenges. File-based productions coming into existence certainly opened the door to new possibilities for transferring data instead of the physical negative. However, up until recently, this was not a reality for many jobs, due to cost and schedule implications. With some major advancement in software, hardware, and internet availability, it has now become very common to not only have your job travel to another state, but even other countries, without the need to FedEx drives and cause delays to your schedule.

As a dailies lab, you have many responsibilities. Aside from ensuring that the files recorded on set are safe and secure, your main objective is to ensure that the editorial team gets their footage delivered with color, sound, and metadata intact.



Jesse Korosi

Delivering these files by the next morning at 9 AM, regardless of where production is shooting, is pretty standard on scripted episodic/feature work. However, traveling away from the stability of your brick and mortar facility means that delivering footage, with color, sound, metadata, having the negative backed up to LTO and providing ongoing support becomes uniquely challenging.



FILE- BASED PRODUCTIONS COMING INTO EXISTENCE OPENED THE DOOR TO NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR TRANSFERRING DATA INSTEAD OF THE PHYSICAL NEGATIVE



Let's jump back to 2010. I am on my way to New York City to start up the dailies lab on my first travel job; Suits. The shoot will take place in Manhattan and the editing team will be in Los Angeles. This was my first introduction to the term Co-location or Data Center.

The system was setup as such that once production wrapped for the day, transport brought the day's footage to the production office where I housed my local crew. After my team finished processing dailies, the files that editorial needed for editing would then be put on a portable hard drive. This drive would be taken to the nearest data center, often in the very early hours of the morning, where I had set up a Mac mini. The drive was plugged directly into this Mac mini to initiate the transfer to a second data center we set up in LA. This second data center was necessary because, at this time, it was not common for any editorial team we worked with to have sufficiently fast Internet directly in their office.

Fast-forward seven years, and my team at Sim not only travels regularly to other cities and states, but also other countries and continents. The availability of things such as

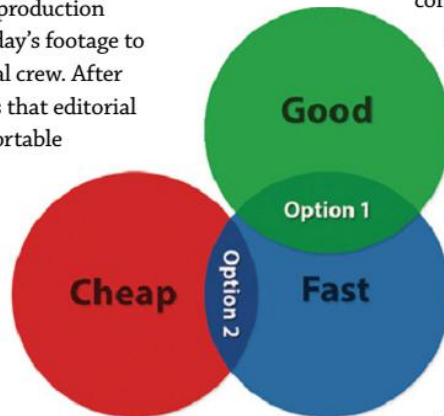


This map represents where I have had my teams working on the ground

secure office space, reliable and fast Internet, and security protocols that allow us to transfer thousands of files over the course of a shoot all impact each job's workflow for file management and delivery.

Each company seems to have their own approach for handling this variability, which is unsurprising considering that the options you have to vary quite extensively from one location to another. To add an additional layer of complexity, many of the elements of your workflow are dictated by the available budget, leaving you with two options.

Some companies are now choosing to transfer proxies recorded on set back to a lab in Los Angeles regardless of where you're shooting and dailies be done off of these, rather than the masters. Therefore no one is on the ground to support production and corners are cut with the QC of your negative before cards are wiped on set. However, it is, in fact, Cheap/Fast and for some jobs, this may make sense. Other options may be to get creative with how you find bandwidth, by aggregating 4G



(Choose Option 1 or Option 2, not both)

connections, or running new fiber lines into your lab on location. Or maybe all master files are actually transferred each night through the co-location back to the lab to be worked on. This would put you into the Good/Fast option considering sending 4K RAW files and still getting your work done by morning will not be cheap. Or maybe you staff your lab up with locals, but your Workflow Producer manages it remotely. For this option I would recommend flying someone in for the first week or two of production, therefore we are now looking at Good/Fast.

A short while back, we had a job that shot the majority of their season in Toronto, Canada. However, they had a travel portion of their show that took them to Morocco, Prague, and Madrid all within a span of two weeks. Each and every day, this footage needed to get back to editorial in LA by morning. For this particular job, it made sense to work out of hotel rooms following production.

To stay competitive in today's market managing production data, you really need to be prepared to handle these kinds of curve balls. The biggest challenge regardless of what workflow you go with is often—the Internet. Therefore ensure that any time you find out you are going to be traveling and hiring a lab, you nail down high-speed Internet availability as soon as possible. Once this is a known factor, figuring out what workflow best services the creative will come much easier. There is no one size fits all, but much rather choosing what makes the most sense for your particular job. **CA**