



## SCRATCH Gets a Workout at Lumeni

The SCRATCH Data-Centric Workflow Solution scores high marks at Lumeni, a post-production facility in L.A. that produces high quality trailers for feature films. Enabling a streamlined and efficient DI workflow that vastly increases throughput and productivity, SCRATCH has become a workhorse system for Lumeni and is now used in some aspect of all their projects.

For almost three decades, Lumeni's creative and technical staff has been supplying the entertainment industry with cutting-edge graphics, film design, and effects. The awards stack up for their post-production work and trailers for such projects as *The Sixth Sense*, *Toy Story 2*, *Ransom*, *Hackers*, and *Get Shorty* to name a few.

A major emphasis for Lumeni these days is the finishing of trailers for feature films, which Lumeni considers to be mini-movies in themselves. "Trailers require intense focus and strong creative skills if you want to achieve the dramatic impact and exacting quality that motion picture studios demand," said David Basta, Technical Director at Lumeni.

"Combine this with a highly competitive marketplace and crazy deadlines, and you know you need to have high-caliber systems and solutions to get the job done." Over the years, Lumeni has worked on a variety of trailers such as *Hidalgo*, *Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen*, *Freaky Friday*, *Under the Tuscan Sun*, and *Bringing Down the House*. You can see an impressive list of clients, recent trailers, and more work by Lumeni at [www.lumeni.com](http://www.lumeni.com).

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Tony Valdez, Executive Producer at Lumeni, stated, "SCRATCH has significantly increased our project throughput, enabling us to expand our business. There's no doubt that SCRATCH is a workhorse. It's been an amazing experience for us to realize all the capabilities of the system, put them into effect for our projects, and get the satisfying results that earn us client kudos." Working on a trailer for a major film studio's upcoming springtime romantic comedy, the

studio's director of post production was wowed by Lumeni's quick project turn-around and color that far exceeded the acceptable norm, saying, "Amazing...I don't know how you did this so fast for a terrifically color-timed trailer."

According to Basta, the primary reason for the time savings on this trailer stems from SCRATCH™'s color timing capabilities, which enabled a 75% reduction in the time anticipated for this type of project. Prior to using ASSIMILATE™'s SCRATCH Data-Centric Workflow Solution, Basta comments, "Often you would really have to 'whack' color in a trailer, making noon-time shots into twilight shots for instance. To achieve the same look prior to SCRATCH, we used color tools in compositing programs - great tools, but much slower than SCRATCH."

Lumeni spent most of this spring working on numerous trailer campaigns. One in particular is for a "tent pole" movie in the mold of "Lord of the Rings." They are remaining coy about identifying the movie this early in the process, but they've already received kudos from the award-winning director and the movie studio executives. "It's our most ambitious project to date. Maintaining the integrity of the original was vital in order to convey its exquisite beauty, surrealistic effects, and intensity of emotions." said Basta.

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"The color timing for this project is very ambitious. And while we're not able to specifically mention the movie at this time, this project is typical of other

trailers we produce. This movie has numerous effects and therefore, so does the trailer," says Basta. "Moving from a non real-time color system to SCRATCH is like a person with bad vision getting a new pair of glasses. The client sees a clearer, larger and sharper image for a realistic, real-world theater experience. The studio director and his staff could color correct in real time and see exactly how the final trailer would appear on the screen for live audiences. This saved a boatload of time in the cycle of film recording, viewing the print in a theater, making corrections, and then going through the process again. We can now have the project built and approved by the client within a matter of days."

Basta and Valdez compare SCRATCH to a Swiss army knife, discovering new aspects of SCRATCH and how it's useful in all the various steps of the post-production process. "We did rigorous testing of SCRATCH and realized how robust it is, that it works natively on Cineon and DPX files, and the user interface is so straightforward we could see that it would require a short learning curve. We moved pretty quickly to purchase and immediately put SCRATCH to work on titles, and achieved great color from the onset. The production cycle of the past is broken - we no longer need to film record, send to the lab, review, and repeat. By previewing in SCRATCH, we can review and repair in just moments...pretty incredible," says Basta.

"Before SCRATCH, we were always scrambling for time but SCRATCH has eased the workflow, putting fun back into our work. We have the time to play with and enhance color as we see fit. Trackballs provide an immediate response in SCRATCH, and allow you to experiment like mad," notes Basta. "Taking the color of a project from good to great means a higher impact and reality experience for the viewer."

Basta believes that the logarithmic color timing abilities of SCRATCH preserves the photographic quality of an image, eliminating "video look" color. All the beauty of the film and all the enhancements enabled by real-time DI impact the storytelling, immersing the audience into the intended emotion of the film.

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Basta added, "We've also found the data management capability of SCRATCH to be

extremely valuable. SCRATCH offers a unique way of dealing with file structures and hierarchies that's tailored to a data-centric model. It's easy to get a global view of the project, divide frames into a series of groups, and create a hierarchy that displays footage in a number of different ways, such as timelines, shot channels, or free form."

Valdez notes that SCRATCH also enables Lumeni with a very viable business model for the future. "The combination of a data-centric solution and affordable high performance not only protects our investment in SCRATCH but we can expect significant cost savings in the future. In a few months, when we're satisfied with the production worthiness of 64-bit Windows XP computing, we can still easily make the transition while maintaining our existing SCRATCH workflows. And with SCRATCH, we'll only need to purchase the latest big, bad PC on the market to potentially double our throughput and not go through the incredibly expensive software upgrades and "big iron" replacement that other market solutions require. SCRATCH is a fraction of the cost of other post solutions that hover at \$600k and come with staggering payments. For Lumeni and other specialized facilities like us, as well as small and mid-sized houses, this means we can afford to do high-quality post production now, turn a profit, protect our investment, and know that we can financially handle seasonal slow periods."

"The vendor/client interaction has also worked very well. The ASSIMILATE team truly listens and acts on our needs," says Basta. "We're very comfortable with their commitment to develop ongoing products for the future. We wanted SCAFFOLDS for a multi-layered grading stack and secondary color grading, and next thing you know, we got it. It's easy to gush because we're living in an exciting time of change and making incredible advances in our craft...the epitome of what post pros and colorists love to do. Plus SCRATCH fits our budget and allows us to stay competitive and produce excellent work. It's a total win/win."