

Panavision South Africa Puts SCRATCH at the Hub of Digital Cinema Workflow

Panavision Digital in Cape Town, South Africa, started with pioneering a data workflow for its Phantom HD high-speed camera, but quickly realized how ASSIMILATE's SCRATCH® Digital Finishing Solution can work as a multi-purpose tool throughout the post-production process.

Along with putting the power of filmmaking back into the hands of the artists – directors, DPs, editors, and colorists – SCRATCH is also now proving to be an invaluable item on the producer's budget sheet for the post production of features and commercials. Daniel Smith, head of Panavision Digital in Capetown, South Africa, explains.



Production Images courtesy of Panavision Digital, Cape Town, South Africa

Why SCRATCH? We initially purchased SCRATCH to work with our Phantom HD high-speed camera as it's very good for playback viewing with color correction. Additionally, the ability to transfer the 2K resolution 14-bit Phantom HD files for editorial and final delivery on SRW, QuickTime, MXF or DPX sequences, we see as un-paralleled. We quickly discovered that SCRATCH was, and remains, extremely versatile at working with other cameras, and that ASSIMILATE has a very progressive attitude towards adopting new formats. Being completely resolution, frame-rate, and color-space independent, this platform can service any future formats immediately.

Camera QC: We constantly run tests to prove the integrity of camera sensors and image quality, and SCRATCH is invaluable in this respect. SCRATCH rapidly became integral to our QC of cameras and rushes from Genesis, RED ONE, ARRI D21. This has now been extended to include ARRI's new Alexa camera,



plus the recent RED MX sensor upgrades, and RED's new Epic and Scarlet cameras.

Workflow hub: We also realized early on that SCRATCH has capabilities beyond being a camera QC station. On a feature production, especially one with several different camera formats, SCRATCH is really helpful as a central hub. A production might use a Sony F35, a Phantom and a Canon 5D, each having different chip and color metrics, as well as file formats. You can get these quickly transcoded and streamlined onto a DPX timeline in SCRATCH; get the footage graded and matched, output to Avid DNxHD for the offline; and then import the EDL do the final conform.



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Projects: SCRATCH is perfect for the post production of feature films. We packaged SCRATCH so it was portable, and shipped it off to Durban for *Florida Road*, directed by Brad Glass, with Dave Aenmey as the DP. This production was shot on the RED ONE™ 4K camera. We were able to get the REDRAW footage into SCRATCH very quickly; apply a LUT ready for the director and DP to review graded rushes; and do the transcoding for the offline. They could see the footage straightaway and knew where they were at all times in terms of image quality, lighting,

and if they needed to do any reshoots before striking the set. When we got the EDL back, we could view the conform at 2K. SCRATCH was used for the final conform and color grading of the entire movie.

Cost-effective: We can offer SCRATCH as a very cost-effective DI tool suite. You only need one operator, maximum of two if there's lots of data to handle, and can run it 24 hours a day. By using SCRATCH on *Florida Road*, we were able to ingest the data, handle dailies, do the editorial and color grade, and do the transfer back to SRW, all from a hotel suite. No more shipping of tapes or disks between set and a lab. No more lab costs and negative prints. This is extremely cost-effective. This is an entirely new workflow model for us and a highly attractive proposition for filmmakers in South Africa.

More projects: We've also used SCRATCH as the final grading system on the all-CG animated feature *The Lion of Judah*, co-directed by Deryck Broom and Roger Hawkins. SCRATCH's range of input/output formats is great as we could ingest QuickTime Cineform codec files directly in full 10-bit quality, and then grade and output to 2K DPX, as well as print to SRW, Digi-Beta, and MPEG2 and 4 for the other deliverables. Our SCRATCH system is busy on commercials too - primarily for the transcoding and management of Phantom HD and RED camera data. SCRATCH works exceptionally well for us, and is a huge benefit for clients shooting multiple formats.

Time-saving happiness: Traditionally, it might take 10 hours, or longer, to get camera rushes ready for an Avid edit: four or five hours to transfer the material to the lab, and a further six to do the transcoding with the DNxHD wrappers. But in SCRATCH, the entire process of getting the files rendered and ready for the edit takes less than two hours, and then they're immediately accessible by the Avid. Plus the images get color graded. The

speed and streamlined nature of the SCRATCH data workflow keeps everyone happy all the way through.



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SCRATCH in control: We feel that the control over the production, as well as its cost-effectiveness, will make this SCRATCH workflow the future of feature-film production. This is especially the case when fitted, like our system, into a vehicle to provide an on-set digital processing lab. Being stereoscopic 3D-ready, we realize that vast amounts of data will be processed and transferred. For this, our SCRATCH solution will be the final answer in terms of the quality and control over the images from these camera rigs, as well as financially.

“**SCRATCH is
INVALUABLE**”

Daniel Smith, Head of Panavision Digital
Cape Town, South Africa

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