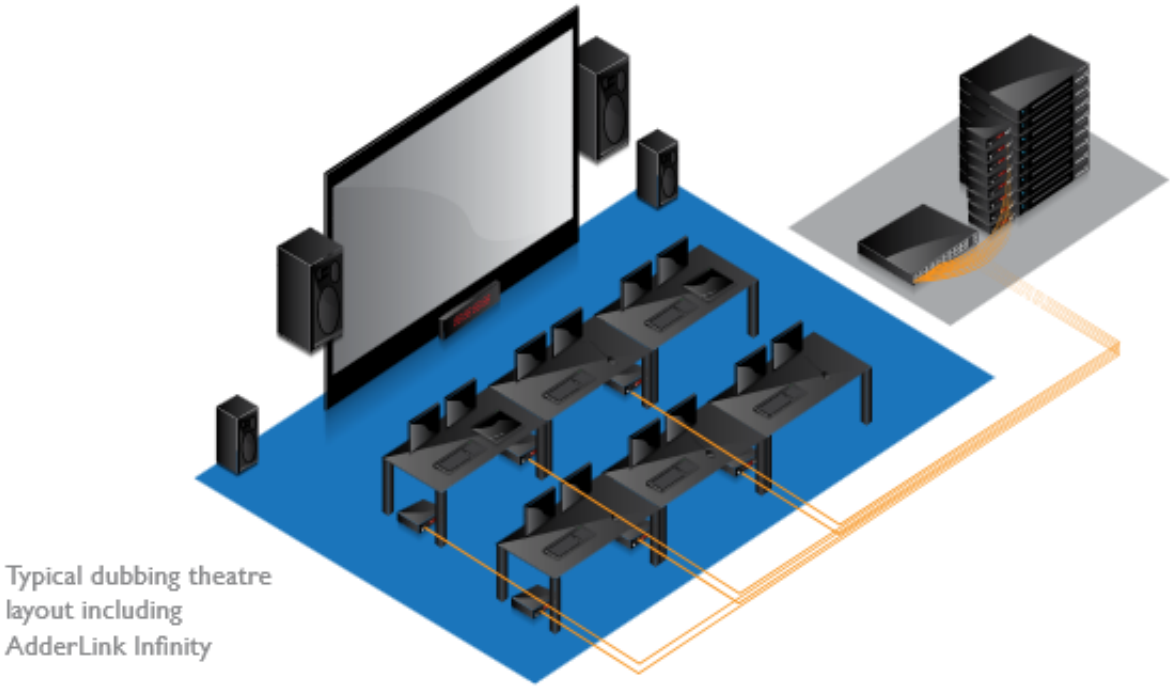
Twickenham Studios

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Typical dubbing theatre layout including AdderLink Infinity

CHALLENGE

At the beginning of 2012 the future was uncertain for the historic and world-renowned film facility, Twickenham Studios. The ailing, but much-loved studios were at one point on the verge of being sold for re-development, before being bought by London-based businessman and film enthusiast, Sunny Vohra. Vohra had the vision of turning Twickenham Studios around and re-awakening its reputation as a centre of excellence for filmmaking.

Part of this ambitious project was to modernise the out-dated sound stage to create one of the best post-production audio facilitiesin the world. As Tim Cavagin, head of sound at Twickenham Studios explains: “We needed to go digital to compete with other sound facilities. There has been massive investment in audio equipment to bring the studio up to date with its competitors as it was lagging behind for several years. When the studios were analogue, the equipment used to take up an

entire room the size of the dubbing stage itself. Mixers had to wait until a project was in their console before they could work on the sound, which meant they could only change the volume and equalisation.”

To attract filmmakers from competitors such as Pinewood Shepperton, Twickenham Studios had to offer not only the latest post-production sound technology, but also a working environment that allows creative talent to work productively and comfortably. This is vital as directors, engineers and designers spend long days working collaboratively on complex projects. Further, they need the flexibility to seamlessly pass files between workstations or work on two files at the same time. Cavagin explained: “The director, mixers and myself, as Head of Sound, might want to work on the one screen.”

Not least, Twickenham Studios needed equipment that offered superior controllability and reliability, as any mistakes could result in lost time and money.

SOLUTION

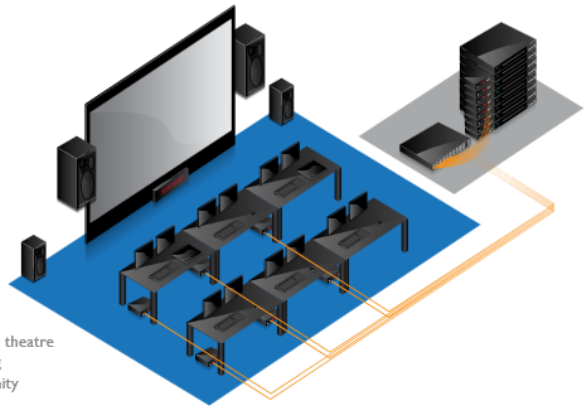
To provide the best working environment for sound professionals, Twickenham Studios has created two open plan sound rooms that enable individuals to access and share platforms from wherever they are, whether that is relaxing in a breakout area or sitting at the state-of-the-art Neve sound console. This has been made possible through using the AdderLink Infinity Dual, the most advanced keyboard, video and mouse (KVM) extension and matrix solution in the world.

Carl Childs, head of engineering at Twickenham Studios, said: “Our aim was to have the best equipment. AdderLink Infinity Dual allows us to treat a monitor as an IP address and allows us to ping a signal to whatever location we need to view it on, which is increasingly a need in this environment. The AdderLink Infinity has a great interface that is very user friendly. It is also extremely reliable. In the event of a power outage, everything remains as it was when power is restored. I’ve used various different brands over the years and I have always come back to Adder kit, I find it the most reliable. From this perspective it was quite an easy decision for me to choose Adder.

“The centre piece of the room is the digital mixing console, which receives inputs from Mac and PC based playback machines, video servers and 2K projection editor solutions. This is why we needed a KVM solution of the calibre of the AdderLink Infinity. The Dual head capability is great, because there is often the need for our mixers to see what is happening on two different machines on the screens in front of them.”

Both theatres now have exactly the same equipment, meaning a job can start in

one room and finish in another, which was not previously possible.



Typical dubbing theatre layout including AdderLink Infinity

RESULT

Twickenham Studios now has Dolby Premier Studio Certification, a standard awarded technical excellence at every level of the studio’s operation. This includes room acoustics, monitoring standards, equipment selection and installation standards, which are all measured and evaluated as part of the certification.

Cavagin said: “We now surpass our competitors and have the best dubbing theatre in the country, bar none. We offer the highest grade equipment in the best sound room, which is bigger than any other room in Soho.”

Childs explained the necessity of the AdderLink Infinity in the new studio setup: “People often forget how important KVM solutions are. This is because if the system is working exactly how you want it to, then you will not notice it.”

“An example of how it has improved working is the ability to relay system controls. Before, we had a hotkey solution, which meant editors had to remember combinations of keys, but now there is an interface, which enables the operators to bring up exactly what they want. This is great for when the pressure is on and removes the hassle so that you can get on with the job in hand.”

Cavagin concludes: “Flexibility is key, being able to see whatever is going on in the studio at any particular point on one screen is vital: We need to get our hands on the audio ProTools and the visual ProTools; we have to access all of these screens at the flick of a switch.		

The switching capability makes us the UK’s most flexible sound theatre. Mixers can now work with audio before it gets to the console, meaning they have control over every single element. What we have in the Adder system is fantastic.”		