KKYK makes virtual switch

Little Rock station jumps from Discreet Logic/Devlin to Orad; retains Frost graphics

By Karen Anderson

When KKYK (TV) Little Rock, Ark. bought its new Discreet Logic/Devlin Design Group virtual set last October it had high hopes for its uses in news broadcasts. The WB affiliate liked the set because of its ease of use and the way it was integrated with Discreet's Frost graphics package.

But, said News Director Doug Krile, "the folks at Discreet could never make the system work."

As a result, Krile said, the station has dropped Discreet's virtual set and is now planning to use the Orad virtual set. However, he said the station is sticking with the Frost graphics.

Discreet and Orad are on the cutting edge of the virtual-set technology, which is beginning to make inroads at the networks and some TV stations. The technology can take the place of elaborate and costly physical sets for news and other programming.

The Devlin/Discreet system, costing $750,000, combined Devlin's SoftSet library of virtual set designs with Discreet's Vapour virtual studio module and Frost real-time 3-D broadcast graphics.

Krile said the system had camera

tracking problems. The image "would jerk when you hit a live video window," he said.

"I think they probably had never done an installation into an existing setup that was as analog as ours was," he noted. "What looked like it should work on

WB affiliate uses virtual set for newscasts.

paper just wasn't falling into place."

Discreet Production Director Chris Young blames station hardware. "The problem was related to the lens they had. It was an older lens that has optical center shift...[The problem was] very specific to this lens."

Discreet was working on a fix, but "we ran out of time," Young explained.

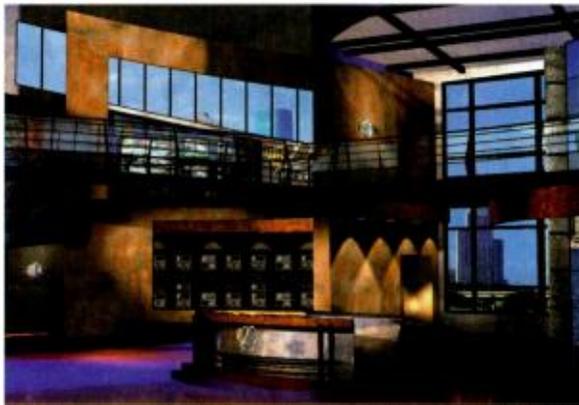"[Discreet] said they were 30 seconds away from making the system

work," said Krile. But he opted to make the switch to Orad because it has proven itself at the Madison Square Garden Network.

"KKYK wanted to get on-air [with a new set], and we provided assistance," says Orad North American Vice President/GM Matt Straeb. The Orad Cyber Set O costs about $280,000, Straeb said.

Krile said he had to make one major trade-off. Orad's set does not integrate completely with the Frost graphics. "We took a step forward in terms of having a set and a step sideways in terms of graphics," Krile remarked.

Devlin transferred KKYK's set design to the Orad system. "That's the beauty of what we do," said Greg Carter, Devlin's president. "The sets that we developed, we can take these and convert them to run in real time [on any virtual set software]."

Krile said that while more and more stations are beginning to use the new virtual set technology, using it for live news broadcasts is still very new. "We were trying to break new ground and produce a live news show," he said. "That takes a lot of coordination. I see a fairly extensive run-through, but we're getting there." ∎

Philly's KYW wraps up DNA testing

Panasonic news automation system is replacing vintage Sony/Basys gear

By Karen Anderson

After months of testing, CBS's Philadelphia station expects its Panasonic DVCPRO News Automation (DNA) system to be fully operational next month.

KYW-TV's DNA system comprises six NewsBYTE nonlinear editors with redundant Silicon Graphics Origin200 GIGA channel servers working on a Prisa Fibre Channel network. A Ciprico FibreSTORE online disk array pro-

vides 24 hours of online storage.

"You can air a file while it's being transferred," says KYW-TV Director of Broadcast Operations and Engineering Jim Chase. "You can do 1X dubbing, input or output, one 4X dubbing input or output, three simultaneous air playback channels and 6X fibre-channel transfers from edit all at the same time."

The station has been beta testing the DNA system since November and collaborated with Panasonic in writing the server control mirroring.

When DNA goes online, all news stories will be edited on NewsBYTE, and completed packages will be transferred into the SGI servers using the drag-and-drop feature. One SGI server will play the video to air, while a second will serve as a "hot" standby for redundancy, Chase says.

"One thing our editors really like is that [NewsBYTE] is very good at emulating linear editing," he says. "There's a jog knob...and using a little bit of the linear thought process, they