

Infront Sports & Media

Imagine Communications Brings Action to Fans from Pitch to Mobile Phone

Customer Profile

Infront Sports & Media, headquartered in Switzerland, is one of the world's leading international sports marketing groups, with a team of 500 staff in 20 offices across 20 countries.

The company manages all aspects of successful sport events, including the distribution of media and marketing rights, advertising and sponsorship, media production and event operations, delivering 3,300 event days of top-class sport around the world every year.

Infront manages the host broadcast production for a range of summer and winter sports, including football, worldwide. It has formed long-lasting partnerships with 120 rights-holders and hundreds of sponsors and media companies. Its clients in Italy include Sky, Mediaset and RAI.

Business Challenge

Infront Italy, the Italian subsidiary of Infront Sports and Media, is contracted by the Italian football leagues Lega Nazionale Professionisti Serie A and Lega Nazionale Professionisti Serie B to make sporting highlights available to domestic broadcasters for news purposes in compliance with Italian legislation.

To fulfil this mission, the company needed to implement a system that would allow the local broadcasters to select interesting action during the streaming of a live match and to receive that content rapidly from the Infront system for their own personalized editing.

"The Imagine Communications workflow made the project possible..."

— Claudio Cavallotti, Infront Italy



Customer

- Infront Sports & Media

Industry

- Broadcast Television

Challenge

- Realize bandwidth efficiency for OTA signal encoding & superior processing integration in new file-based workflow.

Business Challenge

- Create/manage an HD archive of Italian football league matches and sell content rights; provide content to mobile phone service providers.

Technology Solution

- Nexio® digital asset management; Nexio AMP® servers, Selenio 6800+™ signal processing, Platinum™ router.

Business Value

- Simplified Operations
Single point in which to store and retrieve content
- Time Savings
Updates, such as an MPEG-4 license, easily implemented in-house. New updates automatically applied.
- Increased Revenue
Ability to sell rights to content both within and outside of Italy, as well as to mobile phone service providers.



“We went to Imagine Communications with a business requirement to create an overall archive of Italian football league matches that could serve Infront’s multifaceted needs in terms of live, near-live and delayed audio-visual material supplies,” commented Claudio Cavallotti, director, production and technical facilities at Infront Italy.

Infront Italy approached Imagine Communications with four goals in mind:

The first was to create and manage an HD archive of Italian football league matches and sell the rights of this content both inside and outside of Italy.

The second was to provide content to mobile phone service providers.

The third was to plan for future business expansion by offering remote access to the Infront archive to third-party non-customer broadcasters, such as in-house football team TV channels, and making revenue from digital archive access and rights to content. (This arm of the project is currently under construction and involves an Nexio web client for simple archive access.)

Finally, Infront wanted to expand its archive to other sports. It owns the rights to several sports besides football, like skiing, volleyball and ice hockey, disciplines to which it plans to expand the use of the system.



“Nexio DAM is managing the content from our Infront digital archive, based on a large Isilon cluster. It is an elegant and powerful media management tool that supports the exploitation of our valuable archive.”

— Claudio Cavallotti, Infront Italy

Technology Solution

The solution deployed by system integrator Prevideo at Infront Italy is a highly integrated digital workflow built around an Nexio® digital asset management core. The system integrates a number of technologies such as Nexio AMP® video server and storage units, a large Platinum™ router with a 512 x 512 video matrix and Selenio 6800+ fibre technology, as well as third-party IPV Curator low-bitrate video technology and EMC Isilon storage.

The tight integration of the Nexio digital asset management with the Nexio AMP video servers not only allows Infront to record content into a central storage facility, but also allows the live logging and editing of content in high- or low-resolution as the game is being recorded.

The system includes 14 record ports, all offering scheduled live ingest through Nexio® Capture, as well as live proxy logging. Nexio® Insight allows users to view the live content being recorded and to add metadata to clips. Simultaneously, low-resolution files are created by the third-party IPV Curator system, which is integrated into the Nexio

server. The IPV Curator system streams files out of the Nexio SAN and makes them accessible for annotation to low-res clients.

Thirty Apple® Final Cut Pro® editors are connected to Nexio and provide direct access to content on the Nexio SAN as it is being recorded. Editors can prepare TV, web and mobile phone highlights on the go, which speeds up the production process significantly. When the final whistle blows, highlights packages are already prepared and ready for distribution on various platforms.

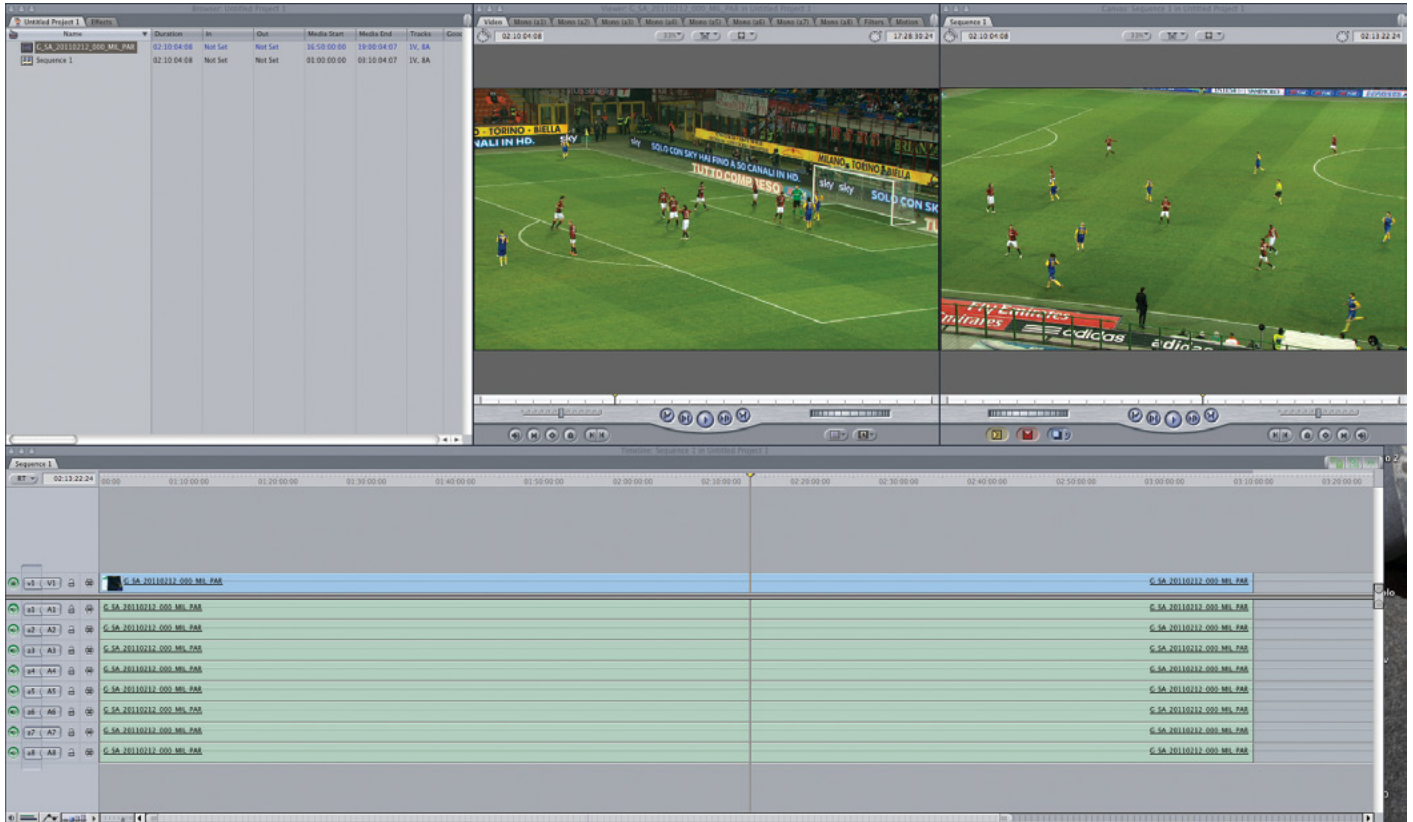
At the end of each day, games, clips and edits recorded on the Nexio AMP servers are stored and archived on an Isilon near-line disc storage system. The archived content, which contains metadata, is easily retrievable.

“The Imagine Communications workflow made the project possible,” added Cavallotti. “Nexio DAM is managing the content from our Infront digital archive, based on a large Isilon cluster. It is an elegant and powerful media management tool that supports the exploitation of our valuable archive.”

The screenshot displays the Invenio DAM interface. At the top, it shows the user is logged in as 'legacalcio'. The main area is titled 'Project Segments' and contains a table with the following data:

No.	TCIn	TCOut	Duration	Essence House Id
1	19:48:54.08	19:54:58.08	00:06:04.00	G_SA_20110201_000_MIL_LAZ
2	20:06:51.07	20:16:20.07	00:09:29.00	G_SA_20110201_000_MIL_LAZ
3	20:32:55.01	20:46:27.23	00:13:32.22	G_SA_20110201_000_MIL_LAZ

Below the table is a video player showing a soccer player in a red and black jersey. The interface also includes a sidebar with navigation options like 'Folders', 'Search', 'Content', 'Essence', and 'Project'. A detailed view of a video clip is shown in the foreground, featuring a soccer player in a light blue jersey. The video player includes a timeline at the bottom and various control buttons. The interface is complex, with multiple panels and a sidebar for navigation and settings.



Business Value

The powerful digital media asset workflow at Infront Italy contributes to link sports stadia with a network of millions of fixed and mobile devices. The system has simplified the operations of Infront Italy. Previously, without an archive, it was difficult for Infront Italy to find a single point from where to source pictures and footage to meet the demands of their clients. The new system has provided a single point in which to store and retrieve content.

The distribution of media content, in particular to mobile devices, is a valuable pillar in the commercialisation of sports events. One of Infront Italy's key business requirements was that action should be viewable on a mobile device no later than three minutes after it took place on the pitch, allowing the mobile platform to charge for this service. The Imagine Communications tapeless workflow has allowed this to take place, and this service is unique to Infront Italy. Imagine Communications believes that this installation is an early example of a growing application set in the new media age.

To learn more, please visit imaginecommunications.com.

