

BBC Research video compression unit Dirac Pro 1.5 Shipping Now!

Las Vegas, NAB (April 16 2007): Today the BBC announced that its Dirac Pro 1.5 video compression technology will debut at NAB in the form of both encoder and decoder hardware.

Distribution of high frame-rate progressive images such as 1080P50/59.94 requires twice the bandwidth of conventional HD such as 1080i50/59.94. SMPTE has already approved 424M specifying a digital format running at twice the normal rate. However, this is not backwards compatible with existing active HD distribution equipment such as switchers or routers. Dirac Pro 1.5 solves this problem by compressing the high frame rate progressive images into the same bandwidth used currently for HD. Dirac Pro 1.5 is fully backwards compatible with existing HD equipment and the units shown on booth SU4930 incorporate SMPTE424M interfaces with Dirac Pro 1.5 technology - providing a complete solution for existing and new high frame-rate HD distribution projects.

The technology which has been in development for five years has been incorporated into two compact video compression units which will go on sale via a technology partner at NAB. At the same time, Dirac Pro technology has been proposed to SMPTE for adoption as VC-2.

Dirac Pro is Open Source and will be available for use by the international broadcast community.

Dirac Pro is part of the Dirac family of video compression tools, optimised for professional production and archiving applications. Dirac is a wavelet-based image compression technology that has been developed by the BBC to meet the increasing diversity of programme origination and distribution formats.

Dirac Pro is designed for simplicity, efficiency and speed, and intended for high quality applications with lower compression ratios. Dirac Pro is an open technology, which works on all the major operating systems e.g. Windows, Macintosh or Linux. As it is an Open system, it is easy to import onto a wide range of hardware, from specialist signal processors to application-specific LSI circuits.

Dirac Pro is capable of being used in post production at resolutions up to 4K with a base layer plus enhancement system, allowing very high quality proxy workflows.

Visit booth SU4930 to see a demo or mail diracenquiries@bbc.co.uk to place your order.

Additional information can be found at bbc.co.uk/rd/projects/dirac

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