

Digital intermediate

Digital intermediate (often abbreviated as DI) describes the process of digitizing a motion picture and manipulating color and other image characteristics to change the look, and is usually the final creative adjustment to a movie before distribution in theaters. It is distinguished from the telecine process in which film is scanned and color is manipulated but only intended for video and television distribution. A digital intermediate is also customarily done at higher resolution and with greater color fidelity than telecine transfers and utilizes only digital tools (no analog video devices).



TECHSPOTLIGHT

bioscopewala

The first DI house in Dhaka

IMRUL KAYES CHOWDHURY

BA NGLADESH film and television industries have long been deprived of many digital advancements going on in the world. A technological change was badly needed for the industry. Well, the wait for change seems to come to an end as 'bioscopewala' a digitised filmmaking solution claimed to be the first of its kind - has started giving solution with its Digital Intermediate (DI) house in Bangladesh.

Since the release of George Clooney's 'Oh Brother Were Art Thou?' the backbones of major Hollywood/Western media industries are many Digital Intermediates (DIs), that serve as the corner stone for converting analog data (35mm film) and digitizing the images without any sort of loss in terms of data (color, pixels, frames etc) and preserve the overall look of the film as visualized by the artists themselves.

In short, DI is the process of digitizing a motion picture and manipulating colour and other image characteristics to change the look, and is usually the final creative adjustment to a movie before distribution.

Every major motion picture/ TVC outside Bangladesh goes through this process of a DI.

The first and only Digital Intermediate in Dhaka, bioscopewala opened its door in June 2008. They include most features a DI house would such as film scanning, colour grading, 5.1 audio, offline and online editing as well as Visual Special Effects (VFX).

Though bioscopewala started its journey in 2008, the idea and planning of it started long before. The four souls Tanvir Huda, chairman, Mushfiqur Rahman, managing director, Sahadat Hossain, director (post production) and Bappi Rahman, director (audio post) - who are behind it, were well preparing themselves in the US and the UK to turn their dreams true.

Unknown but sharing the same vision, they came to know each other through a common friend sometime in 2004. "And we just clicked" said Tanvir Huda.

He also said they have established bioscopewala to take Bangladesh film and TVC industries to international standard. "It's not just our business, it's our passion too," he added.

"bioscopewala offers one stop service A to Z- to it clients," said Mushfiqur Rahman. It means the clients can get all the necessary things under one roof, from camera to audio postproduction, the final output of the product.

Their setup is based upon a complete digital workflow, hence eliminating the process of tapes and enhanced by the use of a storage area network (SAN) server. bioscopewala also offers a 2K workflow, which means the images processed here are 4 times that of the 576 horizontal pixels seen on standard definition



An editor works on the audio suite at bioscopewala

PHOTO COURTESY: HASIB Z

TV screen.

The heart of the company is high definition camera it rents out to clients. Filmmakers like George Lucas and Robert Rodriguez use these types of cameras to shoot most of their projects.

The camera comes with a variety

clients, thus giving every product of bioscopewala a unique look.

Other changes such as ColorFX (CFX) are also done in this stage. The project is then handed down the hallway to the Audio Suite. Here, using the latest audio devices (including 5.1 surround capabilities)



Work in progress on the colour grading suite

of 11 lenses, as well as a high-end lens adapter to get the best outlook. Once the shoot ends, the data stored in the camera is captured and edited in the offline suit. Then comes the rigorous process of color grading.

Now don't mistake colour grading with colour correction as most people usually do!

The grading process requires a colourist to meticulously grade or balance each scene to match the look or color tone as desired by the

and a professional standard vocal dubbing booth, the audio is processed and headed to the next phase of online editing.

In the online editing, the offline edits and the audio are synced and the project is conformed or matched with the original footage. If any sort of VFX and final color corrections are required, done here as well. Once the client approved the final cut, it is then downloaded either digitally or through DV tapes for television

channels.

Film and TVC makers usually go abroad and spend a lot of money for the DI solutions and thus a lot of currency drained out of the country, bioscopewala by providing same solution can help from draining money out of country. And it hopes more DI houses will come to this arena and help country's economy.

The directors of bioscopewala shared the same vision of revolutionizing the film/TVC market, not only by introducing a digital intermediate but also having highly skilled, trained professionals from Hollywood and London.

Their colourist had been trained under Kevin Shaw who worked in films like "Parineeta", "Black" "Troy" and various Hollywood, British and Bollywood films. At the moment, bioscopewala has 14-team members all excel in their respective fields.

So far bioscopewala has done TVCs of Grameen Bill Pay, Cell Bazaar, Banglalink Aunubhür Network, Banglalink Desh SIM, Dolly's Pickle and Romania Orange Cream Biscuit.

bioscopewala is also providing full HD support to First HD film of Bangladesh "Jaago".

If our mainstream filmmakers work with bioscopewala or any other DI houses (hopefully more DI houses will come eventually) audience may get some relief from watching ugly looking movies or they can even have more or less fun watching movies with international standard looks despite the low quality scripts!

TECH/NEWS

Automated Ctg customs house shines

ADIL MAHMOOD

CHITTAGONG Customs House earns the country a huge amount of revenue as it deals with tax and duties on the products exported and imported through the country's largest maritime port in Chittagong.

Chittagong Sea Port has resources that could not be utilized fully because of various hurdles like government red-tapes, extensive corruption, hassles created by the workers union and troubles by politicians.

In view of these problems, the immediate past caretaker government took initiatives in 2007 to turn the customs house and the port in Chittagong automated. DataSoft, Bangladesh Army and Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) cooperated with the government in the venture.

Before the automation project started, the customs house underwent various

reforms inside. All these reform works were highly praised at home and abroad.

But the taskforce, that worked to improve service at the customs house, identified several challenges such as involving all

stakeholders, creating a database of all stakeholders with photographs and verified signatures, developing user-friendly software, reforming in the sectors like manpower, process and infrastructure and involving NBR's involvement in mandatory and regulatory job.

To meet up the challenges the taskforce developed a database with photographs of all the stakeholders like C&F agents, shipping agents, freight forwarder, EPZ, private ICDs, surveyors, customs official and port authority.

It built a help desk, quality management centre to help stakeholders submit their individual data by using their own ID and password.

It also built a data centre and created a direct linkage with the National Board of Revenue (NBR) and modernised the chemical lab in collaboration with Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (CUET).

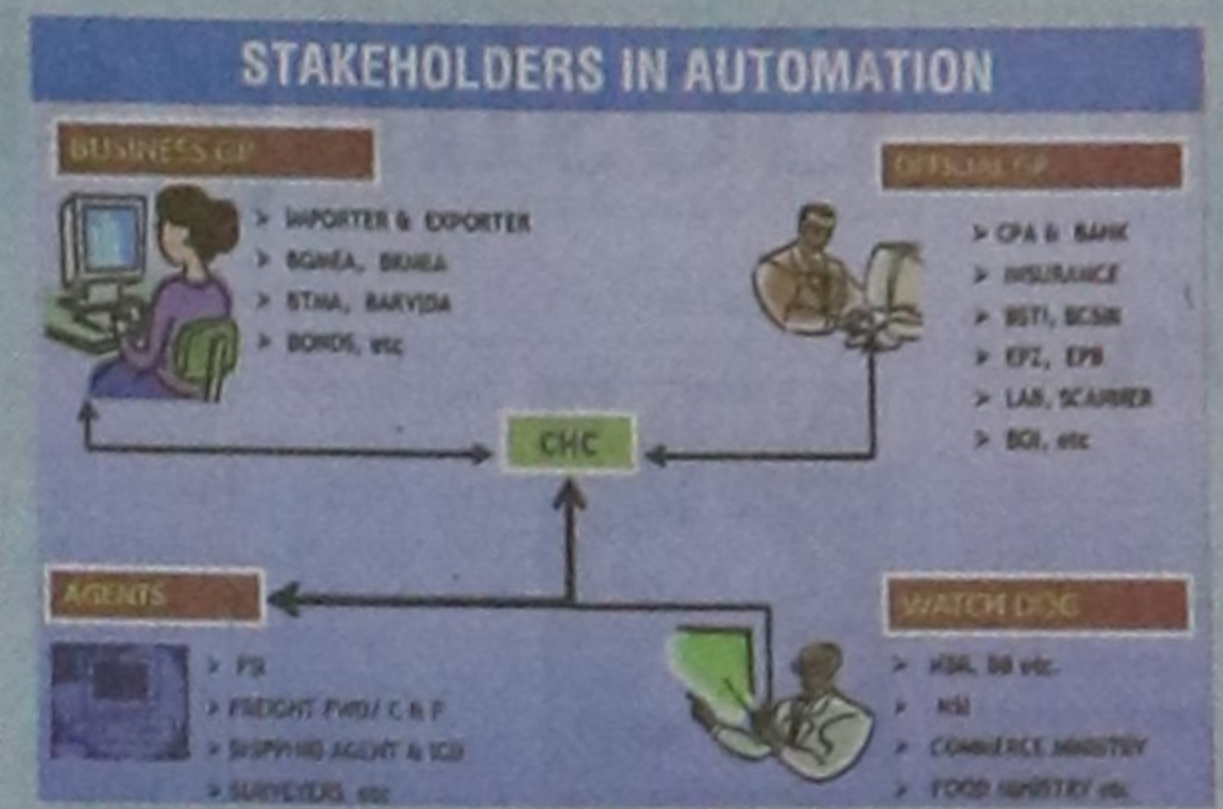
The taskforce established a one-stop service provider's booth and automated

revenue building branch of the Sonali Bank to help stakeholders open a resolving account. It linked the resolving account to the customs automation system and instant access for the stakeholders so that they can information about their current status.

To unload dangerous cargos from the ship in the port shipping agents can apply online and get the permission from the same channel. Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA) and Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) can easily submit their "Bill of Entry" and "Bill of Export" online.

Because of the automation, agents can now get their rotation number from the revenue authority by declaring the cargo holds of the foreign ships online. Shipping agents and freight-forwarders can submit their IGM and EGM online.

As the price of edible oil has been remaining a very sensitive issue for the last couple of years, authorities gave it a priority to resolve



the issue. Automation authority developed state-of-the-art software to measure oil inventory in every tank. Besides, the software has been developed in such way that the increase or decrease of oil inventory will automatically up-

dated in every 90 minutes in the Automation website.

Every pre shipment agencies have been given a password so that they can't forge the Clean Report of Findings (CRF).

In addition to building up a fibre-optic cable network, the taskforce installed a V-SAT as an alternative to submarine cable connection to ensure uninterrupted 24/7 Internet connectivity.

The annual income of Chittagong Customs House is approximately Tk 15,000 crore. It earns up to Tk 70 crore a day. But, unfortunately, spending a few crore taka on automation seemed to be impossible for it. Its steps were restricted in different ways. The same situation is still prevailing in all other government organisations. But most of the government organisation can be brought in this novel world of information technology. By thinking a little creatively to break the deadlock This very thing is now being done in Chittagong Customs House.

TECH/NEWS



Zoom Laptop Fair 2009 Hot deals in winter chill

STARTECH DESK

LAPTOPS are talking over desktops in Bangladesh. To heighten up the trend of owning a laptop, 'Zoom Laptop Fair 2009' kicked off on Wednesday at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the capital.

The fair, which comes to an end today, remains open from 10am to 9pm. Although there is an entry fee of Tk 20 per person, students up post-graduate level have the preference of free entry by showing their ID cards.

The three-day fair, inaugurated by Commerce Minister Faruk Khan, has been organised by Maker Communications. Top of the line notebook manufacturers like HP, Dell, Compaq, Lenovo, Fujitsu, Asus, Toshiba, Acer, Gigabyte, GreatWall, BenQ and Hasee are available.

The companies showcasing their products in 10 pavilions and 6 stalls are offering special discounts.

For the first time the notebook buyers

will enjoy international warranty on most of the labels. Previously international warranty was unavailable in Bangladesh.

Zoom, mobile wireless internet service from CityCell, the primary sponsors of the fair, is featured with each notebook with a significant discount on the package.

More than 600 units of laptops were sold in last years' fair, the first of its kind in the country. This year expectations are much higher than the previous year.

Students and young executives are among the main visitors of the fair. While speaking to them it was found that students are more concerned about the latest features, battery support and after sales service within their constraint budget, while executives are

focusing on mobility and warranty. Fashion show, puppet show, raffle draw and quiz competitions are being held on the sidelines of the fair.

Acer, Asus, Hasee and Toshiba are co-sponsors of the fair.

PHOTO/TECH



POLLEN-ROBOT

Employee for Japanese weather forecasting company Weathernews, Mayuka Nakatani, displays some of the 500 pod-shaped pollen counting robots called "Pollen-robot", which are ready to be used as nationwide monitors to observe pollen levels ahead of the coming hay fever season, at the company's headquarters in Tokyo on February 3. The Pollen-robot, which has two LED eyes and glows a range of five different colors to indicate pollen levels, will be placed outside houses and can send reports recording pollen, temperatures, humidity and air pressure to the company through the Internet.

PHOTO: AFP