

## **Bling Digital Relies on PreRoll Post to Archive Its Most Important Assets**

Bling Digital, a division of the Sim Group, is a postproduction technology and services company that specializes in on-set cart rentals, dailies services, editorial-system rentals, and data management and archiving. The company started out about 15 years ago providing on-set video-assist services for the commercial market in Toronto. After joining forces with the Sim Group in 2009, Bling expanded drastically to serve film and television productions everywhere. The company now has brick-and-mortar offices in Toronto; Vancouver, British Columbia; Los Angeles; Atlanta and New York, and virtual teams around the world. In 2015, Bling handled jobs in 21 different cities.

The Sim Group family of companies offers grip and lighting, cameras, 24-frame playback, video assist, data management, dailies, editorial system rentals, offline editing, online editing, sound design/mixing and final color services. By working with its fellow Sim Group companies, Bling can provide complete production packages, from the camera through final delivery.

Backed by Bling's Digital Cinema expertise and the Sim Group's R&D and innovative tools, Bling's workflow supervisors and workflow producers have come to play a major role in decision-making regarding metadata and color management for their clients — with the aim of maximizing production efficiency. Bling typically has about 30 scripted, long-format jobs running at any given time, split between television shows and feature films, and the goal is to safeguard its post customers against surprise bills after they begin their work.

To help meet that goal in terms of data archiving, Bling uses PreRoll Post from Imagine Products for all master media in its LTO archives. PreRoll Post is an application that automatically indexes camera originals — complete with thumbs, proxies and metadata — while backing up full-resolution media to local disk and long-term LTO tapes, Sony Optical Disc Archive, or local disk or server. PreRoll Post takes advantage of the Linear File Transfer System (LTFs), which mounts a tape as a volume (hard disk) within OS X or Windows. This makes it possible to write and read from the tape as if it were a disk, without proprietary software or formatting.

Bling made the transition to PreRoll Post after its clients began asking for LTFs tapes, which have since become the standard for all of the studios Bling works with. Since then, PreRoll Post has met all of Bling's criteria for an archiving application.

For one thing, PreRoll Post lets Bling scale up or down quickly, a critical factor when dealing with as many as 30 jobs at any given time, each with its own unique requirements. For example, one production might travel to a new city every couple of days, which necessitates backups every day at every location. Another production might be managed from an office that is always connected to local storage, while yet another might be run out of one of Bling's facilities off of a SAN or NAS.

Another important benefit is the ability to roll out the software easily in many different locations.

“With the number of remote jobs we do and how quickly we have expanded, we needed software that was easy for new crews to learn,” said Jesse Korosi, director of workflow services at Bling. “We have found that one of the biggest benefits of using PreRoll Post is how easily we can roll it out. When you're talking about servicing 30 shows at a time, all in different cities or countries, we're constantly hiring new, local crews, and knowing that they will be able to learn the software easily is a huge relief!”

Bling services are behind hundreds of popular, critically acclaimed productions, from FX's " Fargo " to USA's long-running legal drama " Suits " to the 2014 film " Whiplash ."

In one example, Bling is working as a vendor on the Netflix television series " Narcos ," providing dailies, LTO archival and editorial-system rentals. " Narcos " has an on-set data manager who backs up the master files from the Red Epic camera to three hard drives that are part of a backup system located on the camera truck. One of those hard drives is a rotation drive that gets sent to the Bling lab at both break and wrap, depending on that day's production locations. Once Bling's dailies technician receives the drive, he mounts it and backs up the files to two LTF5 tapes simultaneously using PreRoll Post. One of these copies will eventually be sent to the studio and the other will be held in Los Angeles at the finishing facility. Once writing to the LTO tapes is complete, the Bling technician notifies the camera crew that the files are secure. At that point, using Imagine Products' ShotPut Pro automated offloading application, the camera crew can wipe the camera cards and put them back into rotation.

When all is said and done, while scalability and ease of use are certainly important, just as important is the software's security and reliability, because the LTO tapes are the most important assets Bling creates and/or manages. For that reason, impeccable software goes hand in hand with a relationship based on cooperation.

"After all of the money the production company spends on crew, locations, props, wardrobe, cameras — all of the millions of dollars — eventually everything is left only on these tapes. So it is very, very important that we trust the software writing them without a shadow of a doubt," Korosi said. "Finding this balance between ease of use, security and trustworthiness can sometimes be challenging, but PreRoll Post answers every one of our needs. What's more, Imagine Products listens to our concerns and feature requests, and works with us to ultimately make their product better. It continues to get better with each update."