

Case Study

Plain sailing for Datapath at visual spectacular

Written by Steed Webzell

100,000 people witness Datapath technology in action at famous sailing event

The glittering closing ceremony of the Vendée Globe 2013, the ultimate race in the ocean sailing calendar, featured lights, music, video and fireworks synchronised perfectly to create a breathtaking multimedia performance. Over 100,000 people looked on in awe and amazement at the 90-minute visual spectacular, which centred on an impressive stage constructed on the beach at Les Sables d'Olonne in the Vendée region of western France – the start and finish point of the race. At the core of the video solution was the Datapath VisionRGB-E2S capture card and Datapath x4 display wall control technology.



Test of Endurance

As the world's only single-handed, non-stop (without assistance), round-the-world sailing boat race, the Vendée Globe is a serious test of individual endurance, and is regarded by many as the ultimate in ocean racing. The closing ceremony of the 2013 race was designed to not only honour the exhausted Vendée Globe skippers, but to provide a visually breathtaking display for the enormous crowd that had gathered on the beach on a pleasant evening in mid-May.

AMP Visual TV, Vendée Globe's audio-visual provider, was executive producer of the event and GL Events provided the video processing and projection to the screens.

The latter relied on Kshow from ShowKube for media processing tasks throughout the entire ceremony, a cutting edge video presentation solution that uses Datapath capture cards and display wall controller.

ShowKube specialises in multimedia, communications and image processing solutions for events. The company's Kshow video presentation solution integrates a live mixer, a rich timeline and a powerful 4k media server. Kshow is a Linux-based 4U appliance built with the latest in real time processing technology and ultra-low latency. It allows for simultaneous reproduction of content from live cameras, laptops, live streams and local media files to a wide variety of screens.

Huge Screens

The Vendée Globe 2013 closing ceremony used six synchronised Kshow Pro systems (with timecode and framelock) and 11 video projectors, some using dual projector stacking, to display a huge image on three large projection screens covering different structures including towers, semi-globe and lateral screens – one measured 120 by 16 metres. Kshow also fed two LED screens on the main stage.

Kshow's advanced keystone, warping and edge blending tools helped to combine five projector overlays on the two biggest projection screens, as well as to adjust image position and shape on the projection screens.

Datapath is a strategic partner of ShowKube and products such as the VisionRGB-E2S capture cards and x4-1U (Datapath x4 in a rack mount) are at the heart of Kshow.



The VisionRGB-E2S is a stand alone PCI Express x4 plug-in capture card. It delivers extreme performance with 650MB/s transfer bus bandwidth, and has two complete capture channels supporting up to 1920 x 1200 DVI. The card captures the DVI data and triple buffers it into onboard storage. The data is then copied using DMA to the host system for display, storage or streaming.

The Datapath x4 is a stand alone display wall controller that accepts a standard single or dual-link DVI input which can be displayed flexibly across four output monitors. Each output can represent an arbitrary crop region of the original input image. The output resolution and frame rate does not need to be related to that of the input, as the Datapath x4 display controller will optionally upscale and frame rate convert each cropped region independently. Each output monitor can take its input from any region of the DVI image, since all the required cropping, scaling, rotation and frame rate conversion is handled by the x4 hardware.



Show Stopper

The advanced Datapath technology is befitting of an awards ceremony that undoubtedly, in the world of sailing, gathers the most people. The masses on the beach were treated to the most beautiful images of the Vendée Globe and a 15 minute retrospective film of the race, all projected on giant screens. The crowds also saw the first preview images from the new (2013) feature film 'En Solitaire', starring famous French actor, François Cluzet. The film depicts one man's determination to win the now legendary Vendée Globe.