

Facilities & Technology

Briefs

Luckwell ploughs cash into Unit

Focal Awards winners

Librarians pulled off their specs and let their hair down at the fourth Focal International Awards in association with AP Archive. Recipients of the 16 awards included Denis Norden for *It'll Be Alright on the Night* with a special award for promoting the use of footage in entertainment. Best use of footage in an entertainment production went to *L'Aventurière*. For a full list of winners see www.focalint.org/focalawards.htm



Rushes buys Fusion

Rushes has purchased five Fusion licences to bolster its compositing capacity in its 3D department. Features include speeding up the performance of retouching and general painting, and new tools for geometry manipulation.

Red Bee restructuring

Red Bee Media has reorganised its business development team. Director of sales John Phipps has appointed Karl Stone, head of business development for Piero, and Neil McLaren to the position of head of media management. Stone previously sold Leitch products in Europe, Africa and the Middle East and McLaren joins from Harris Corporation.

Locomotion appointments

VFX specialist Locomotion has added to its creative team. Orna Bradshaw is a designer, animator and digital artist from New York, where she worked with NBC Universal, MTV and Sony Music. Lee Bamsey comes from Bruce & Dunlon Associates where

By Nicola Brittain

Soho-based Unit will more than double in size after securing a cash injection from media investor and The Moving Picture Company founder Mike Luckwell.

Luckwell has pumped a six-figure sum into the facility, which was formed just a year ago and will become a non-executive director. He has taken a significant but not a majority share in the company.

The Carlisle Street-based outfit will use the funds to expand into the premises next door, more than doubling in size from 3,200sq ft to 7,000sq ft. It will add 10 more Final Cut Pro online suites, taking it to 18. The new suites will boast Apple's recently-released equipment.

The firm's VFX division, which works on Shake, After Effects and Furnace, will be boosted with the incorporation of VFX specialist Split Image. This is a three-man outfit with credits that include a video for UK Eurovision entrants Scooch and a variety of ads.

Storage capacity will be increased from 40Tb to 150Tb and a new audio division installed supporting 5.1 surround sound.

Unit was established in May 2006 for around £500,000 by former freelance producer David Peto with Tom Bridges and Roland Woolmer, a former production director and editor respectively. Unit's turnover was £1m in its first



Unit founders: Tom Bridges, David Peto, and Roland Woolmer



Luckwell: six-figure investment

year and it projects a 250% increase in revenue in the next year. Peto said: "We set up Unit because we believed there to be a gap in the market for online editing within the Apple environment. I think we've been proved right."

Unit differs from the standard post-house model by employing freelance rather than full-time editors. It also allows producers or directors to use their own editors. In addition the company will send editing equipment and

technical support to a production team for "out of house" editing.

Luckwell, a former director of Hit Entertainment and current chairman of trade body UK Post and Services, has not invested in post-production since establishing The Moving Picture Company in 1970.

He said: "This is the first opportunity within the industry that has interested me for a long time. When investing I look at both the timing and the management. The timing is perfect in terms of the Apple equipment and the management at Unit is very strong. The whole industry has changed and what Unit is doing matches those changes."

Luckwell reversed The Moving Picture Company into Carlton Communications for cash and shares in 1983. He became Carlton's managing director and largest individual shareholder before resigning in 1986 and selling his shareholding for £25m.

CREATIVE REVIEW

