

## One Night in Bangkok – an ICON in Technicolor

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By **Stephen Bruel**

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Technicolor is a pioneer of the film industry with an impressive list of achievements. Established in the U.S.A in 1915, Technicolor introduced colour to motion pictures that same year. It also contributed to the first all-talking film in 1929 and the first full-length animated feature in 1937, Disney's Snow White. True to their pioneering spirit, Technicolor recently upgraded its Bangkok Film and Post Production facility with a two-seat 48-Fader D-Control, Digidesign's flagship Integrated Console (ICON) work-surface. This is the first two-seat ICON installed in South East Asia, and also one of the first ICON's of any configuration for the area.

Technicolor's Glendale California facility Lead Mixer Todd Anisman, was responsible for the upgrade and install. With a Music Degree from Berklee College of Music, extensive experience in wiring many studios in the Los Angeles area, and more than 10 years working with Digidesign Pro Tools, Todd was more than qualified for the task.

"I mixed there (at the Technicolor Bangkok facility) for the production of the Cantonese, Thai, and Korean versions of Shrek 2 in May 2004," says Todd. "The challenges of meeting a modern day deadline proved almost impossible using analog technology, and I realised that the facility needed a serious upgrade."

### Technicolor Bangkok's Main Mixing Stage



Technicolor Glendale's Director of Audio Engineering Rick Austin designed the install. Todd returned to the Bangkok facility in August 2004, and brought his personal Pro Tools HD3 Accel rig and Control 24 work surface to demonstrate their functionality to the team.

"They were blown away with how powerful Pro Tools system's have become," says Todd. "We were able to send the mixes to Los Angeles for final approval, where they could make any final adjustments directly on the session – it was pretty darn cool."

Technicolor's goal of seamless workflow between global production houses, led the company to choose Digidesign products for the Bangkok upgrade.

Their aim to use the same type of system worldwide also helped them reach the decision.

"Technicolor as a group has decided on standardising as much as possible, so therefore the decision was made to switch to Pro Tools rigs," says Todd.

The D-Control ICON also brought some serious features into the Pro Tools environment that Todd had been hoping to see for some time.

"Custom faders, the focus channel strip, the channel strip master, are all things that the big guns have had, and now Pro Tools has them as well," says Todd. "That, coupled with Pro Tools' superior automation, editing, and ease of use, make it the clear winner."

Cost was also an important consideration for Technicolor in deciding to choose Pro Tools, and in particular the Digidesign D-Control ICON large format mixing console.

"Basically there isn't better value in the mid-priced console environment," says Todd. "A two-seat Euphonix or Harrison console would cost US\$500,000 plus, so we were able to take the cost savings and buy a heck of a lot of Pro Tools gear."

One big challenge was to try to impress and accommodate the diverse set of clients that use the Technicolor Bangkok facility. The workflow, flexibility and speed achieved by utilising the D-Control ICON with Pro Tools helped accomplish this.

"They (the Bangkok facility) work on everything from local Thai productions, Pakistan and Chinese Film Clients, to major international film versioning for Asian markets, and local TV international versioning as well, so the client base is incredibly diverse" says Todd.



### Technicolor's Todd Anisman and colleagues during the install



Technicolor Thailand's Section Manager of Technical Operations Richard Hocks concurs with Todd's conclusions on diversity, adding that this extends to the scope of production materials submitted.

"We receive field production materials and pre-recorded video and audio in many formats," says Richard. "Some are even shot on regular tape cassette."

Originally from The Netherlands, Richard has been based in Bangkok for four years, since joining Technicolor in 2001. Richard was trained as a Sound Engineer at the Media Academy in Hilversum, the sound and video production city of The Netherlands, and has 10 years experience in live and studio engineering for many European bands.

"For me it's a bigger challenge to work in post-production and audio here than in Europe," says Richard. "I have to be more creative with the vast array of production materials I receive, and invent tricks to bring the end product to international standards."

Technicolor Thailand's audio infrastructure was completely overhauled. All of the facilities existing systems were replaced with Pro Tools HD and installed in a central machine rack in order to provide better security and flexibility, and fully networked together with both iSCSI and XSAN for storage.

The facility has two Digidesign Consoles, a Control 24 in their small Mix Room, and a two-seat D-Control ICON in their Stage 5 Mix Theatre. The latest Apple Mac Dual 2.0 G5 computers, and a standard plug in set which includes Waves Gold Packs, Dolby Surround Tools, Machine Control, Pitch'n'Time, and Digitranslator are also used.

### M I Engineering's Project Manager Jeerasak Roopleya



"One of the systems is my old HD3 Accel system with Control 24 work surface which now resides in their Stage 4 mixing room," says Todd. "They refused to send it back - can you blame them?"

Bangkok-based M I Engineering's Project Manager Jeerasak Roopleya (Jee) and Digidesign South East Asia Product Specialist Nadiyam Ravisankar (Ravi) were responsible for the install of the D-Control ICON.

"The old Neve console took four days to disconnect and remove from the studio," says Ravi. "It took Jee and I three hours to set up the ICON, once we had pulled all of the gear out of the boxes".

The D-Control ICON consists of a two-seat master section set up with 48 faders. The team at Technicolor Bangkok was impressed with the speed of the install, considering the size of the D-Control ICON.

"The Technicolor guys came back from dinner, thoroughly impressed," says Ravi. "Wow, it's bigger than the Neve and already setup."

The room was tuned by Mark Kenna from Dolby, and has both Dolby EX and SDDS capability. The Technicolor crew also made a few other adjustments to complete the studio, in particular tweaking the D-Control ICON to suit their preferences for working.

"We had our in-house machine crew do some work on the producer's desk so that we could mount our Multimax, Soundmaster, and meters to the D-Control," says Todd. "It looks slick."

### Digidesign South East Asia Product Specialist Nadiyam Ravisankar lends a hand



It only took a total of 12 weeks to complete the install process. This included building eight rooms (including the machine room), re-wiring the entire facility, creating a machine rack and changing the entire workflow of the facility, all without the facility going dark.

"Thanks to ICON and Pro Tools, and the tremendous team we have here at Technicolor Bangkok, we never had more than one room down at a time," says Todd. "We were able to use these cost-savings to train the operators on their new toys."