



Wirecast



Meredith Stations Choose Wirecast Gear for Facebook Live Streaming

How Meredith's broadcast TV group uses Facebook Live to extend their reach and connect with viewers

"Since live video news is a key service that we provide, Facebook Live presents a unique opportunity for us to raise the visibility of our media brand on Facebook, and to share the timely and trusted news programming that airs on our main channels."

Larry Oaks, Vice President of Technology at Meredith Corporation.

Today's DTV stations face some of the most daunting challenges in the history of broadcasting. With the widespread use of mobile devices like smartphones and tablets, appointment TV is giving way to on demand viewing, and interest in watching videos on digital, OTT and social media sites is quickly reaching a tipping point.

The Opportunity

At the Meredith broadcast television group, this social media revolution is not viewed as disruptive, but rather a valuable opportunity to expand the audience for the high-quality news and entertainment their stations provide.

As a publicly held media and marketing services company based in Des Moines, Iowa, Meredith Corporation's broadcast television group:

- Owns and operates 15 U.S. DTV stations in 13 markets
- Reaches 12 million—or 11%—of U.S. households
- Operates seven stations in the top 25 U.S. DTV markets, including Atlanta, GA, Phoenix, AZ, St. Louis, MO, and Portland, OR.
- Produces over 700 hours of local news weekly

Recognizing the potential of Facebook Live, Meredith issued a corporate directive to the digital content teams at its stations to use Facebook Live to:

- Reach and court new viewers that tune into social media more often than TV
- Connect with loyal viewers outside of normal news cycles, such as newscasts
- Receive direct viewer commentary and feedback to specific program content
- Serve as a trustworthy news source for the Facebook community

At Meredith, the mission is to deliver and cross-promote their stations' branded live news content across their broadcast, digital and now, social media platforms.

The Initiative

To support its Facebook Live strategy, Meredith invested in Wirecast Gear—a streaming production solution from Telestream. In doing so, Meredith is empowering its stations to stream breaking news and news-related content directly to Facebook.

Wirecast Gear will be used at 13 of its stations nationwide to stream content via Facebook Live, and eventually to other social media platforms, on a regular basis.

The digital content teams at each of the stations will determine what content streams live on Facebook Live, including:

- Live breaking news outside of the typical news cycle
- Live camera feeds and field reports
- Simulcast of Live TV news
- Pre-recorded studio-based news content
- Public service information
- Promotional content for news

Wirecast Gear from Telestream appealed to Meredith because this solution integrates the core toolset essential to streaming production, including:

- Reliable operation from a company they know and trust
- A user-friendly interface, intuitive operation and quick learning curve
- Image branding, graphics, keying and the placement of logo bugs
- Multi-camera switching, audio mixing, roll-ins, greenscreen keying, and other production tools
- Quick, easy connections to go live on leading social media sites.
- Multiple inputs for HD-SDI camera inputs, routing systems and other sources

Telestream was among the first vendors to recognize the potential of the Facebook Live API and customized its Wirecast software to automatically establish links enabling its users the quickest, easiest process to take content live to Facebook.

The Background

In choosing a new streaming production solution, Meredith group also gave a great deal of consideration to the reputation and integrity of the technology vendor and its brand.

Since Meredith had already been successfully using other Telestream products—including the Vantage media-processing platform on Lightspeed servers for accelerated GPU processing—they were inclined to trust Telestream and Wirecast Gear for their Facebook Live initiative.

Vantage is widely installed across the group, including two systems that are centrally located at Meredith's two operational hub centers, in Atlanta and Phoenix. At each of their local stations, one Vantage is strategically situated at the heart of the newsroom production workflow, while another interfaces with the Vantage systems at the operational hubs.

“Our Vantage installation has been growing and evolving over the past seven years to where it’s now become an integral part of our day-to-day operations. By automating our media processing, Vantage does very heavy lifting for us. It reduces the operational overhead and manpower required to get video content into our facility pipeline and on the air at our local affiliates. As a result, we’re seeing impressive operational benefits, including timesavings, financial savings, as well as increased productivity.

Tom Casey, Director of Engineering and Centralcast Operations for Meredith.

“In light of its mission critical role in our daily operations, I would rate the reliability of Vantage as very high, particularly with respect to generating iterations of media files. Once you configure it, you can turn your back on it and count on it to transform and move a high volume of media assets in an efficient, automated way.”

Tom Casey, Director of Engineering and Centralcast Operations for Meredith.

Across Meredith, Vantage performs a wide array of tasks including:

- Automatically identifying media files that need to be transcoded
- Executing automated workflow instructions
- Transcoding media files of incoming syndicated programming and commercials into the precise formats and specifications needed for production and multi-format distribution
- Performing media analysis for quality control
- Sending notifications to alert the staff when media assets are ready for review or use
- Ingesting video needed for local news production
- Transcoding media files for local news operations, such as video editing and playback

The Challenges

Since local news is a time-sensitive business, ease-of-use and speed are key challenges that they needed to address. Any system they chose would have to be:

- Able to take live feeds being sent back to the station
- Easy for news crews to master quickly
- Ready to connect to Facebook Live and other social media sites
- Capable of maintaining high production and branding standards

Meredith was also very interested in replacing their existing mix of third-party streaming products with a single, uniform, integrated live streaming solution that looked and worked the same at every station, having one number to call for hardware or software issues.

The Solution:

At the start of 2017, Meredith began a 60-day rollout, during which Wirecast Gear systems were installed at each of the local stations, with one additional appliance situated at a centralized location for testing and training.

The Workflow:

Meredith selected Wirecast Gear, which is Wirecast software fully loaded and configured onto a compact computer hardware device considered a streaming appliance.

The local stations' house routers feed video to one or more of the four inputs Wirecast Gear offers. The video can also be from HD-SDI cameras, iOS and webcam devices, remote video feeds and other acquisition devices and sources.

“When we were evaluating our choices, Wirecast met all of our criteria. This includes integrating the key live production capabilities we need into a single, compact, affordable system that’s easy to learn and operate. More importantly, Wirecast makes it simple to get a secure connection and start streaming media to social destinations. We just select Facebook Live from a pull-down menu and it facilitates whatever handshake, log-in or settings we need to start streaming quickly and reliably.”

Larry Oaks, Vice President of Technology, at Meredith Corporation.

“Our primary interest is to use Wirecast Gear for Breaking News outside our typical news cycle but also for simulcasts of our studio broadcast, or promotional and prerecorded content. With the ability to interface with our routers, we can drive any content from our facility or a remote to Facebook Live, complete with branding.”

Larry Oaks, Vice President of Technology, at Meredith Corporation.

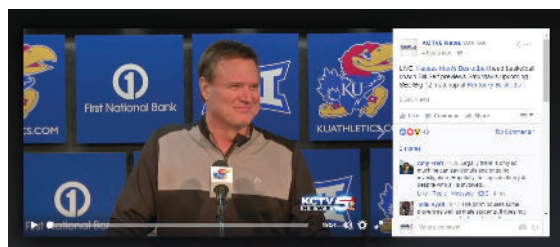
To stream video to Facebook Live, Wirecast software makes it easy for users to:

- Select Facebook as their desired output destination from a dropdown menu
- Login and authenticate account access
- Choose the precise destination page or site to stream to
- Choose a stream type and encode setting
- Stream video live to Facebook Live
- Save and record their broadcast

The Results:

“We’re big fans of Telestream products. One of the most efficient and timesaving functions these products provide is to process, manage and move media across our operations in an automated way as required for production and distribution. For example, Vantage automates the transfer of media files from the hubs to the local stations for air.”

Tom Casey, Director of Engineering and Centralcast Operations for Meredith.



“Now, our Wirecast Gear systems move video—whether it’s live or pre-recorded—directly to Facebook Live. For us, having the ability to stream our trusted, high-value video news content to Facebook Live is the key to really engaging social media users. It’s a way of expanding our market reach into social media, while enticing devoted social media users to also check-out our on-air channels.”

Larry Oaks, Vice President of Technology, at Meredith Corporation.

To learn more

To get more information about Telestream or products mentioned, call 1-530-470-1300, or visit:

Telestream Wirecast:

<http://www.telestream.net/wirecast/overview.htm>

Telestream Wirecast Gear:

<https://www.telestream.net/wirecast/wirecast-gear-us.htm>

Meredith Corporation, Broadcast & Digital:

<http://www.meredith.com/local-media/broadcast-and-digital>

Video: How to stream to Facebook Live:

<http://www.telestream.net/wirecast/how-to-stream-to-facebook-live.htm>