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Inside Track



Pros for Charity highlights results of work in Uganda

A news channel reporting on charity work in Africa by a host of American professionals from all walks of life – including American football stars – relied on BGAN to broadcast live updates.

Oklahoma-based News9.com deployed iPixel's ChaserView conferencing solution with BGAN to highlight work being done with children and women in remote Gulu, Uganda.

The *Pros for Africa* charity uses partnerships with professional athletes, business professionals and other organisations to provide food, water, clothing, medicine and other essentials to child victims of war, poverty and natural disaster.

It was founded last year by Oklahoma lawyers Reggie Whitten and Jay Mitchel, Bill Horn, president of a sports management company, and stars from the National Football League (NFL) – Mark Clayton, Adrian Peterson, Tommie Harris and Roy Williams.

Thrifty solution

The charity's Uganda 2010 mission was reported by KWTW's News9.com internet news channel.



Reports from the field were hampered by lack of electricity, so News9 relied on a Thrane and Thrane Explorer 500 BGAN terminal with airtime from Inmarsat partner Evosat - supported by ChaserView, a thrifty streaming solution from iPixel.

KWTW's news operations manager Greg Ward explained: "As a broadcaster, the ability to produce live shots from Africa while documenting the event was priceless.

"The laptop/phone equipment connections were simple, and ChaserView worked perfectly over the BGAN network. Gulu has no power during the day, so the portability and battery power made BGAN our only lifeline back to the TV station.

Stable streaming

"The ability to use a phone through this unit also saved us from heartache as our rented satellite phones ended up not working."

iPixel's chief technology officer Mansour Ansari said: "The ChaserView conferencing software solution ensures stable, low latency audio video conferencing featuring a new three-layered codec with the ability to micro-manage the BGAN bandwidth for best results – without the need to carry any extra hardware.

"The software contains an algorithm which constantly probes and tests the available BGAN bandwidth speeds if using the background IP, telling the software to alter and adjust to available bandwidth while maintaining picture quality.

Automatic switching

"For example, if speeds drop below 56 kbps for any reason, the software can switch to black and white video while maintaining

picture quality and the connection.

“A further increase of bandwidth automatically switches to full colour with no sudden loss of connection or freeze - mostly associated with other video conferencing solutions using off shelf codecs.

“The solution has been proven to have one second latency when used with BGAN. We’ve been shipping a beta version of ChaserView software designed for Inmarsat BGAN since the beginning of the year and News9 decided to use it because deployment to Gulu demanded use of ‘ultra portable solution’ which would require minimum training for the staff and reporters.”

AIDS victims

The *Pros for Africa* mission in Uganda included support for Sister Rosemary Nyirumbe and the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus who help former child soldiers, orphans and AIDS victims.

Sister Rosemary runs the St Monica Girls’ Tailoring Centre which provides displaced women and children with life skills and training.

Members of the *Pros for Africa* team distributed food, set up medical clinics and built wells in Gulu.

And they were accompanied by News9’s Amy McRee who filed live reports – including heart-warming moments with some of the children and women at the centre.

www.news9.com

www.ipixel.com

www.prosforafrica.com