



POWERING THE GAMES

Sean Taylor, Senior Manager in the **Panasonic UK** Olympic Project Office, has been working full time on the delivery of the Olympic project for the past four years. As one of the *TOP* sponsors, Panasonic provides a diverse range of equipment – not only broadcast equipment and screens but also HD visual communication systems and CCTV security around the Games. For the consumer the excitement is to watch it all in glorious highly defined 3D – how will Panasonic deliver it?

London will be the 10th Olympic Games where Panasonic's broadcast technology is used to capture and acquire images for the Olympic Games and it will be the first HD 3D live broadcast in the history of the Games. Panasonic has a wide range of 3D equipment so this is an exciting time for us and probably for OBS as well. We'll be using one of our latest cameras, the Panasonic AG-3DP1, a fully integrated twin lens camera recording format.

We are expecting to acquire in excess of 200 hours of extremely high resolution 3D footage of the Games' events. We are providing camera equipment, but also the viewing equipment to be able to view the images in 3D, and some of the post-production equipment as well. Our P2 solid state recording format technology will be used in London as the official recording format of the Games.

There's a shift in technology for sharing the Games on the screen...
As the *TOP* global sponsor in the

“**The D-Imager camera senses gestures and movement and allows you to interact with 3D footage**”

AV category we provide a whole host of different screens. In our professional range, the range goes from small format screens right up to the world's largest plasma 152" screen. Each of those is now capable of providing an immersive 3D viewing experience. We also provide the very large screens which are used in the stadia – the large LED screens that you see at football matches for example. These will be positioned in all the venues. And as part of the Live Site project we are bringing that screen technology to audiences beyond the Olympic venues and beyond London. At 21 official Live Sites in different cities throughout the UK people will be able to congregate and watch Olympic content on these large 25 square metre screens. The great thing is that those screens will be left in legacy after the Games, so that they can be used by the local communities for many different purposes.

Some of your screens use U-Touch overlays – how does that work?
A U-Touch overlay can be applied over any of our screens. What this

allows us to do through infra-red technology is sense when a user is touching the screen in a particular location and then from that particular touch create an action which changes the image or gives you additional information etc - all driven by a piece of content on a PC. This is extremely flexible technology – you can have a single touch screen where just one person touches the screen at a given time or the multi-touch format screen where over 30 people touching the same screen are able to do different things.

Clearly it is key what content is driven to those screens and how clever that content is. So as screens become very versatile now and as the content development market is becoming stronger we will be able to provide much more interactive experiences.

What do you offer for output on multiple platforms?

Panasonic does not drive that part of it; we are delivering footage that is flexible that the broadcasters can use in many different formats. Our technology is solid-state and very robust and we go back to the P2 format as well which is very flexible so that we can take that solid state, record information and edit it very quickly, and edit it to different formats that can then be used in a multitude of ways by the broadcaster.

How do you ensure there is not a single point of failure?

This is the 10th Games that have used Panasonic's broadcast equipment. Our HD P2 uses removable solid-state memory cards, so there are no moving parts inside the cameras, they are not subject to mechanical failure.

Our cameras are used by a significant part of the market now for field based capture, they are capable of operating in very robust environments, for example the BBC's 'Frozen Planet' used our cameras in extreme conditions.

Has your Olympic partnership had a direct influence on products?

In terms of product development,

we have been working with the Games now for over 25 years and certain products and certain enhancements are always made with the Olympics in mind. The standard of the Games is probably one of the highest and most demanding that you can ever have for a piece of equipment, it has to work first time, it has to work every time, it cannot fail.

What are the challenges for fulfilling your London brief?

From a technical perspective the Olympics is always very challenging so we have a large number of people within Panasonic working on the Games, including support from our engineering facility in Japan and expertise within the country itself. We test and re-test and plan for many years prior to the Games to make sure the operation is perfect, and at Games time we have a very strong technical base around the venues. And as the Games have become more technical over the years, there are more screens than ever before, there's more broadcast footage going to be captured than ever before.

How can the viewer experience the Olympics in 3D?

The viewer at home will be able to see live Olympic footage in 3D at the flick of a button. For viewers in the Olympic park, it is possible that Panasonic technology will play a key role in providing 3D viewing experience in zones within the park.

Where is the technology for sport coverage going?

My personal view is that we will see an increase to the next standard of HD which will be super high definition. 3D super high definition as well which will be the next step, to make the viewers feel they are actually at the event themselves.

How can broadcasters use your Pinewood Experience Centre?

We have quite an extensive facility now in Pinewood which we use with broadcasters and content producers. They can sit with our

“
Our cameras are used even in extreme sub-zero conditions
”

experts to see how they can use Panasonic equipment in different formats and ways, analyse footage and get tips on how they can improve their shooting angles, as well as try different things. 3D is always dependent on shooting angles.

Will 3D finally take off?

3D has taken off in the market. We have certainly achieved many of our forecasts in terms of use and sale of 3D TV sets. 3D will become a standard feature of most TVs so the viewer at home has the option to switch between 2 and 3D and then I think people will start to embrace it more. There are other applications of course outside the consumer area, particularly for interactive 3D in simulation and design for example.

The Panasonic D-Imager camera which we have developed – which is a little bit like the Xbox Kinect – senses a person's gestures, position and movements and then allows them to interact with the 3D footage. This is extremely useful for applications in design or science for example but it's not just about the technology, it is also about the content that drives this particular technology.

What time-frame are you working to?

We are now into the delivery phase and have gone through a number of 'London Prepares' test events. In the next major test event our large format 103" plasma screens are being hoisted to the ceilings above the audience. All we are doing every month is making sure that our technology will work before we go live in July.

How will you watch the Olympics?

Hopefully I'll watch some of the Games live in a venue but I would also like to watch at some of the Live Sites because the atmosphere there will be very exciting.

Sean Taylor, thank you.



www.panasonic.com

