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Hope's Approach

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To efficiently produce a non-profit, eight-minute, HD art film promoting a message of peace, called *Hope*, filmmakers at Luna Media, San Francisco, decided to adopt an Apple-based pipeline for the entire postproduction chain. As part of that workflow, the decision was made to compress Sony HDW-F900 HDCAM footage (acquired at 23.09fps) using the photo JPEG codec for the offline process to avoid any downconversion issues before mixing and matching original footage with stock footage and animation.

Eric Peltier, who served as DP and editor on the project, called the decision to digitize everything through the photo JPEG codec a great choice. "I could stay at the same frame rate [23.98] for the entire edit [using Final Cut Pro HD 4.5] that I shot the piece in to begin with, doing it all on my [dual G5 processor] computer. Then, when we were ready to go back and online it, we just recaptured everything from the original HDCAM tapes. The photo JPEG codec is the same color space [4:2:2] as HDCAM, and that meant I could even perform some color corrections during my offline that translated very well in the online phase."



The HD short, Hope, was offlined using the photo JPEG codec.

Peltier offlined the piece at his San Francisco studio, Tin Box Two, and onlined it at San Francisco's Rearden Studios, which donated a suite to the project. All media was stored on 2.8TB in an Apple Xserve configuration and a dual 2.5GB G5 computer loaded with a Cinewave HD board. Peltier replaced the G5 with a Kona 2 system halfway through the project.

Peltier suggests that this kind of pipeline has the potential to serve as a boon for independent and non-profit filmmakers. "If I had to build the same exact HD suite we used on this project, it would cost me less than \$15,000," he says. "And even the cameras are becoming affordable for indie filmmakers. I'm currently shooting a music video all greenscreen using [Panasonic's AJ-HDC27] Varicam ... using the DVCPRO HD format, you can avoid a third-party [acceleration] card altogether, and just play the media out of your internal drive. When that becomes more common, the line between offline and online will disappear."

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