

success story



mtv's REAL WORLD

CHALLENGE

To support production staff remotely; meter software usage; manage software inventory and new technology rollout.

ENVIRONMENT

Macintosh and PC

SOLUTION

Timbuktu Pro Enterprise & netOctopus

BENEFITS

- Support staff in all locations in real time.
- Trouble shoot problems from anywhere.
- Lower costs & increase support.

“Timbuktu and netOctopus make the real world an easier place to live.”

Tyler Knight, IT Director
Bunim-Murray Productions

BUNIM-MURRAY PRODUCTIONS



Bunim-Murray Productions purchased licenses of both Timbuktu® Pro Enterprise and netOctopus® software to help it internally, on the road and on the set of MTV's The Real World. This is the true story of Timbuktu Pro Enterprise and netOctopus software, selected for use in MTV's Real

World house, “to find out what happens when people stop being polite and start getting real.”

The Bunim-Murray production company is well known in the entertainment industry for its hit reality-based MTV series The Real World and Road Rules. Over the last 12 years, Bunim-Murray has and continues to be an industry leader that uses dramatic story structures to turn the lives of real people into extraordinary television.

THE REAL WORLD PIONEERED REALITY-BASED TELEVISION, DEBUTING ITS FIRST SEASON IN NEW YORK CITY IN 1992. EACH SEASON, THE SHOW UNITES SEVEN YOUNG STRANGERS UNDER ONE ROOF, IN A DIFFERENT CITY AND ROLLS THE CAMERAS 24x7, WATCHING AS THEIR LIVES UNFOLD.

THE REAL WORLD OF TIMBUKTU

For The Real World, one of MTV's highest-rated shows, Bunim-Murray utilized Netopia's Timbuktu to help ensure good television. Seven strangers in a house together do a lot of talking. Today, through Instant Messaging programs and email, the house computer has become a communications hub for Real World cast members. With the camera's rolling all day long, there's no time for computer problems. And any producer will tell you, watching the IT department troubleshoot makes for lousy television. Thus, the producers of the Real World mandated 99.99% uptime of the cast computer. Further, any problems could not be allowed to impact the production. To make matters worse, the show was shooting 300 miles away in the Palms Hotel in Las Vegas. Tyler Knight, the Bunim-Murray

Productions IT Director turned to Netopia for a solution. Utilizing Timbuktu Pro in Help Desk Mode, Knight could fix computer glitches remotely from his desk in Van Nuys, California. Not only could he handle the problems without the costly travel, but an IT technician never had to enter the cast suite to work on the computer. By the end of taping, Timbuktu Pro had saved expensive travel costs, provided the cast with everything they could need and protected the quality of the show. “The computer was certainly at the center of all kinds of cast drama, it just wasn't the computer that was causing the uproar,” Knight remarked.

Mr. Knight's initial thought on Timbuktu was to just use it on the Real World house

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computer, though he soon discovered additional, valuable applications of the software. Tyler found it an essential tool in helping his production staff in Las Vegas. Anyone in the IT department could easily address IT problems in Las Vegas from the Van Nuys IT offices. On numerous occasions, Knight remotely took control of production staff computers and solved computer issues ranging from printer configuration, software installation to advanced IT troubleshooting. Everything could be handled quickly and easily via Timbuktu.

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Bunim-Murray produces shows such as the Real World at a single location, but for its shows Road Rules and Making the Band, the cast and staff are constantly on the move. Past productions have taken laptops through Australia, Morocco, Latin America, Europe and Northern Canada. Computers provide a crucial link between the roving production team and the company headquarters. Lost functionality can mean lost shooting days and in reality television you can't go back and try it again.

Prior to Timbuktu, there was no efficient way to service the computers used to create Road Rules and Making the Band. "If there were problems on the road before, we spent hours on the phone, they just sent the computer back here, or they tried to find a local repair shop. With Timbuktu I'm able to resolve most of the software problems remotely. It is the perfect solution for us. When it comes to television production, the adage 'time is money' is never more true. Thankfully, computer issues don't mean wasted down time or travel time," commented Knight.

Having an easy way to solve their computer problems was a miracle for the mobile production staff. At first they were shocked to see Knight take control of their machine and fix the problem right away. As the shock wore off the staff quickly realized what a tremendous time and money saver this was for them. Timbuktu put an end to lengthy phone calls to Knight to try and figure out the issue. The software made shipping computers off to be fixed, or attempting to find computer repair shops on the road, a thing of the past.

USING ALL EIGHT LEGS

netOctopus is used internally at the Bunim-Murray corporate offices in Van Nuys, California for a variety of network management tasks. Bunim-Murray has been aggressively moving forward with various IT projects designed to integrate new technology into the world of production. Because the entire network can be accessed from a single computer running netOctopus Admin, Knight is able to track software throughout the enterprise, make broad-level changes to user computers and globally install, de-install and update programs, keeping his users up to date as new features are implemented. With an IT staff of two, netOctopus is a business imperative. Knight and his staff hope to make Bunim-Murray as much a force for change now as it was when Real World first aired. "Netopia has been there for me at every stage, with new features, great tech support and solid products" said Knight. "I see Netopia as a crucial innovation partner."

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Tyler Knight, IT Director
Bunim-Murray Productions

REAPING THE BENEFITS

"With Timbuktu, I love being able to just sit down at the computer and fix a problem. As a production company, we have unique IT needs. When our technology fails, time is of the essence. The software we use is not always standard IT fare. Because of these issues, it would be difficult and costly to outsource our IT needs. When you've been in this industry for a long time, you work intuitively. Timbuktu allows me to do just that, even when we are in a remote location."

Bunim-Murray is committed to continuing its strong partnership with Netopia. Timbuktu and netOctopus are now an integral part of how this company makes television.

netopia®

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