

# CRAWFORD COMMUNICATIONS CASE STUDY

## Front Porch Digital and Crawford Communications Combine their Technology and Know-how in the Digitization of Large Videotape Libraries

Two Companies Team Up to Migrate 5,000 Videotapes For Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

Front Porch Digital and Crawford Communications collaborated to provide a complete end-to-end solution for large-scale videotape migrations to digital files for archiving and repurposing.

For this effort, Front Porch Digital brings breakthrough SAMMA technology (System for Automated Migration of Media Assets) to the collaboration. Its SAMMArobot is designed for migrating large libraries, while its SAMMASolo is built for smaller libraries and customer-site operations. Both these solutions are quick, cost-effective and adaptable to customer needs.

Crawford is a leader in the electronic media services industry with more than 25 years of operational and technical expertise. The company provides its clients with unsurpassed turnkey broadcast solutions, post production and now media management services. Crawford's complementary relationship with Front Porch Digital is a proven formula for success and meets the growing challenge of digital migration.

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**– Steve Davis, VP Media Management for Crawford Communications**



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## Digitizing 5,000 videotapes for the Holocaust Museum

The two companies have recently completed a joint effort for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington, D.C. to convert an extensive video tape library to digital files.

The project involved digitizing some 5,000 videotapes of testimonials by Holocaust survivors. The challenge was to preserve this irreplaceable content in archival form for posterity, while at the same time creating easy-to-share files for viewing by museum visitors, researchers and scholars.

The project began with preliminary discussions between the museum and SAMMA Systems, just prior to SAMMA's acquisition by Front Porch Digital in 2008. SAMMA brought Crawford into the discussion as a systems integrator and project manager, while both companies worked with the museum to structure the conversion process.

Front Porch Digital had developed a tape conversion technology that streamlined the digitization process and enabled migration with maximum cost effectiveness and minimum need for hands-on manipulation. Of the two possible Front Porch Digital Solutions – SAMMArobot and SAMMASolo – Crawford selected the Solo for the museum project.

## Project was staffed by locally hired non-technical operators

“We purchased four Solos – which included the first production models - and two tape cleaners (another Front Porch Digital product),” said Steve Davis, Vice President of Media Management for Crawford Communications. “We sat down with the museum personnel and finalized the project plan, including the workflow. In addition, Front Porch Digital developed a way to control multiple Solos from a single workstation.

“We demonstrated that we could hire local, non-technical operators to staff the project. By training them in our workflow, we were able to keep the project productive and on schedule,” said Davis.

According to Davis, one key to the success of the project was keeping a running log of the work with data entered by the staff, so that progress could be shared with the client and record of the process created.

## Proving the value of a service company

“The Solo's ability to handle any format was a great benefit to the project,” Davis said. “The tapes were brought out of storage to the museum and presented to us on shipping pallets — thousands of tapes, U-matic and BetaSP, with both PAL and NTSC standards randomly interspersed. Using Solos, we were able to quickly

change our configurations of VTRs as we worked our way through the collection.”

“The project proves the benefit of a service company,” Davis continued. “The client doesn’t have to own a Front Porch Digital migration system, and Crawford’s expertise bridges the various disciplines necessary to successfully perform a large migration: encoding, computer technology, equipment integration, and project management. Plus, our people are fully dedicated to the project. We just got on it, and stayed on it until it was finished.”

As soon as the project was completed Crawford removed its entire operation in less than a day, and returned the space to the museum. “We left nothing behind but their digitized collection and all of their new metadata,” Davis said.

The final output of the project was archival quality digital files for preservation, and production quality files for daily use in the museum, along with the metadata generated by the migration. The project averaged 44 tapes per day, representing about 33 hours of content. The system allowed for the cleaning of all tapes as part of the migration workflow. It also included rigorous quality control, logging, sorting and staging, delivery into client storage with crosscheck, and file verification.

The two-person team running the system was trained quickly and easily on the user-friendly Front Porch Digital software.

The project was completed in six months, much quicker than if it had been run as a manual process.

## Uniquely positioned to provide mass migration of large collections

Crawford, an Atlanta based, privately owned company, was started by Jesse Crawford in 1981 as a post house, providing the whole range of services to turn raw film and videotape into polished productions – including film transfer, editing, color correction, visual effects, sound design, scoring and mixing.

The company also provides comprehensive satellite services including network origination. Crawford currently originates 42 channels including the NFL Network. Over the years Crawford has performed various services for the Coca-Cola Company, Discovery Channel, National Geographic, DreamWorks, Latin American pay television, ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX and many more.

“Several years ago we decided we should develop a plan to capitalize on the growing trend toward digital acquisition and distribution,” said Davis. “We had already made the transition to file-based workflows, after 25 years of experience with tape-based technology. It was clear that Crawford was uniquely positioned to provide mass migration of large media collections.”

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