



مكاتب VTR في بيروت تقع في واحدة من أفخم أبنية وسط المدينة في القلب التجاري للعاصمة اللبنانية وتوفر إلى المخصصين في صناعة الأفلام خدمات من الأرقى في مجال المنتج وتدرج الألوان والمؤثرات البصرية وخدمات المقاطع الصورية الثلاثية الأبعاد لخدمة القطاع الإعلاني والموسيقى والأفلام الترويجية للمؤسسات، وقامت الشركة بتجهيز ثماني وحدات تشمل مسرح مراقبة يتسع لثمانى وعشرين شخصاً. يبرز كل ذلك فريق إبداع من الفنانين اللبنانيين والأوروبيين من ذوي المواهب المميزة.

Located in one of Beirut's most prestigious buildings at the heart of the business district, VTR Beirut offers film professionals top-of-the-line editing, colour grading, visual effects and 3D animation services to serve the advertising, music and feature film business. It has built eight suites, including a 28-seat screening theatre, drawing its creative talent from a pool of highly experienced European and local artists.

Unique post facility opens in Beirut

Post-production customers based in and around the Middle East can now benefit from the finest technology available anywhere in the world at VTR Beirut, the first-of-its-kind post-production house in the Middle East.

Although it kicked off just two months ago, VTR Beirut, (which takes its name from its highly reputed London-based partner VTR Ltd.), already has several bookings from Lebanon, Egypt and other countries in the region. "And it's because we don't really have any neighbouring competitors," says VTR Beirut's chairman Youssef Ayoub. "There are no similar post houses in the region. So really, our competition is Europe. And that's why we want everything to be up to European standards." Based on this objective, Ayoub made it his key policy to offer the same quality and standards to be found in any European post-production facility. To clients, this basically translates into getting the same first-rate post production services they were getting in Europe, but at better rates - all while keeping their foot in the region.

Heart of business district

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Format independent environment

Besides the advertising business, which represents the core of the industry together with music videos, VTR Beirut is targeting all kinds of projects, including documentaries, short films and feature films from all around the Middle East, North Africa, and even as far as Russia. "There isn't a project we can't work on," says VTR Beirut's facility manager Clare Murdock, casually. Her coolness though, is firmly grounded in a very serious and ambitious objective that VTR Beirut set for itself four years ago when this project was at its inception. And that is to provide a format-independent environment, with support not only for current standards, but for emerging standards as well. For instance, even though HD hasn't yet come around to getting a firm footing in the Middle East, VTR Beirut is fully HD compliant, ready to service its clients once the demand develops.

"Any format our client comes to us with, we can work on explains Rida Jaafar, VTR Beirut's Systems and IT Manager. . . Among other things, we're really flexible in terms of output. We can output in all streaming formats."

Spirit DataCine transfers

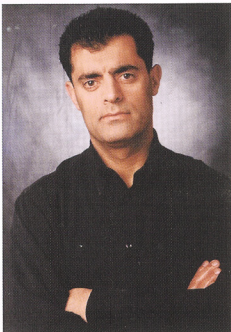
The facility's choice of tools was driven by two main considerations: first, VTR London's twenty-year-long experience - "It's all been tried and tested," insists Murdock - and second, the existing and potential demand. The core of the demand in the region being for telecine, VTR Beirut furnished its grading suite with Thomson's Grass Valley Spirit DataCine, which has been accepted worldwide as the reference standard for film transfers and used on an endless list of top-chart movies, including the Academy Award winner *L'Auberge Espagnole*.


In addition to the telecine, Discreet provided most of VTR Beirut's software for the post-production section. "There aren't that many choices in terms of technology. Discreet is really the best," comments Jaafar. The software includes the latest versions of Inferno, Flame and Combustion. The facility has also acquired

Discreet's Smoke editing system, which offers SD to HD scalability. For its two off-line suites, VTR Beirut is equipped with Avid Xpress Pro, with Mojo Digital Non-linear Accelerator (Avid DNA) hardware. As far as animation, the facility offers its clients the choice between Maya software or Discreet 3ds, again an award-winning software programme that's been used on such features as *The Day After Tomorrow*, *X2: X-Men United*, and *The Italian Job*. Both software programmes are used for 3D modelling, animation and character animation, as well as rendering for film, video, games, broadcast and web-based animation. Coupled with these high-end software tools, VTR Beirut gave special focus to achieving efficient project workflow. And the result is smooth workflow from beginning to end. Typical, once the telecine phase is done, the entire post-production phase is carried out seamlessly, with the rushes being transferred from suite to suite, while keeping the same quality. And once the work is completed, the film is converted into the format the client asked for.


Sophisticated infrastructure

The facility has all its systems installed with wire licenses that ensure a high-speed transfer of uncompressed video, film and audio between the different



Discreet suites, with a seamless sharing of video and audio clips, graphic files and metadata across its gigabit network. "The advantage is that we can work in RGB 10-bit all the way to the output stage, with the highest quality possible," explains Jaafar. The facility equally has storage and networking infrastructure, with background project loading and archiving. As Murdock sums it up, "VTR Beirut's competitive edge lies in its lower rates, its expertise, and its cultural sensitivity." Banking on these as well as the two key assets indispensable to any first-rate post house, namely creative talent and workflow, VTR Beirut is hoping to set off a quality and quantity leap in all types of filmmaking in the region, as well as contribute to improving the industry's standards. 

TSL integrates VTR in Lebanon

Systems integration work for the project was handled by TSL. The company was responsible for the planning, design, implementation, equipment staging, on-site technical installation and set-up the 1,500m² facility. TSL worked closely with VTR London as the co-owner and it provided technical expertise in terms of operational issues and staff training. The core build took five weeks in the middle of 2004, with a supplementary two weeks later in the year. Given the ambitions of VTR Beirut, the project had to be completed to a very high standard, not only technically but also in terms of presentation, providing TSL with a fresh challenge. For example, the control desks benefit from very high-level audio monitoring, not only for technical reasons but also for design considerations. The facility is wired for HD and this requires an extreme level of accuracy. In addition, the look of the finished project always had to be borne in mind with issues like the wiring. This is clearly not always the case. 

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