



## PRESS RELEASE

### EUROPEAN DOCUZONE REVEALS TECHNOLOGY SELECTED FOR THE WORLD'S LARGEST DIGITAL CINEMA NETWORK

**UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 2PM CET** September 12th, 2004. . . European DocuZone (EDZ) today announced that the technology for the world's largest digital cinema network includes servers from GDC Technology and digital projectors from Panasonic. Over 180 independent cinemas across Europe will install customised GDC Technology DSR™ Servers alongside DLP™ projectors from Panasonic which reach a resolution of 1.4K.

EDZ's budget is €20 million for hardware, software and supporting infrastructures. The EU's MEDIA programme is contributing €2.2 million. The network will go live across Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Slovakia and the UK with an opening showcase on November 12th and 13th, 2004. The headline documentary *Peace One Day* will open as a pan-European premiere with a satellite-linked Q&A with the director, followed by seven other European documentaries over the weekend.

"Although there are debates raging over the technical merits of d-cinema over e-cinema, we like to call our solution c-cinema -- it is about content, culture and communities," said Kees Ryninks, managing director of EDZ. "We are using the latest in digital cinema technology to bring European documentaries and other specialised films, such as animation and shorts, to new audiences."

EDZ conducted thorough testing earlier this year with an evaluation team of nearly 100 cinematographers, producers, cinema owners and post-production houses at test beds in Germany and The Netherlands. The evaluation included 14 servers and four ranges of projectors. The test-bed, particularly during side-by-side comparison testing, brought some surprising results. For example, the audiences perceived the Panasonic projectors to offer a more cinematic experience despite being half the list price of DLP Cinema-based systems.

Both Panasonic and GDC were chosen on their technical merit as well as meeting other criteria. In the case of the server, EDZ required a software-based solution to easily upgrade the systems to support new standards and features as they become available. Subtitling support was also essential. For the DLP projector, EDZ wanted to offer cinemas a range of projectors and expected every model in that range to be of high quality. The new Panasonic PT-D7700 and PT-DW7000, which will be available in October, offer a contrast ratio of 4000:1, far superior than most DLP Cinema-based projectors which are up to 1400:1. Another key influencer was that these solutions were all very price competitive.

The resolution of the Panasonic projectors starts at 1K for the entry level single chip PT-D5500E, increases to 1.35K with the PT-DW7000 and for the PT-D7700 is 1.4K. Given that a typical EDZ screen is up to 250 seats, the audience will have the same viewing experience with a mid-range 1.35K projector as a 2K projector in a mainstream multiplex cinema with 600-800 seats. Launched in June 2004, the widescreen PT-DW7000 and high-resolution PT-D7700 3-chip large venue DLP projectors are brighter and sharper than competitive models

Built on the robust LINUX operating system, GDC Server's software design provides features such as multiple content packaging formats, digital rights management, encryption scheme, remote monitoring, compression standards and easy upgradeability over the Internet. The Server is being customised for EDZ to ensure compatibility with other server technologies including those to be selected by the UK Film Council. The EDZ server can hold up to 10 films with 13.5 hours storage. It is ideal for the multi-lingual European community because it renders different subtitles on the pictures independent of the compression and projector technologies. GDC has installed more than 200 DSR Servers worldwide since Q1 2003 and more than 80 full-feature movies have been released for DSR Servers to date.

### **About EDZ**

*"Fahrenheit 9/11* and *Touching the Void* demonstrated that documentaries can be more dramatic, entertaining and humorous than formulaic Hollywood fiction. We are building on this groundswell to introduce the best of European documentaries to new audiences," said Kees Ryninks.

The Netherlands Film Fund established the original DocuZone project in 2002 to determine the impact of switching to digital distribution – particularly whether digital could benefit the more vulnerable film genres and reverse declining audience figures. In its first year the results from the ten participating cinemas exceeded expectations by 50 percent.

Increasingly documentaries are shot digitally as filmmakers become aware of the benefits of additional control and freedom with cheaper production methods. At a fraction of today's costs for blow-up, print and transport, distributors, and filmmakers too, will now be able to reach a wider audience. Currently, a typical three print documentary release costs a minimum of €60,000 to €70,000 for blow up and distribution using traditional celluloid. "With over 180 cinemas in a single network we are already gaining such substantial economies of scale in distribution that we can now offer a new way for small specialised European films to hit the big screen and reach a new audience. We are turning even small cinemas into first-run cinemas," said Ryninks.

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Note to editors:

European DocuZone is an initiative of the Netherlands Film Fund in collaboration with Salzgeber & Co. Medien GmbH and Docspace UK. It is supported by the European Union's MEDIA programme.



<http://www.europeandocuzone.com>

<http://www.gdc-tech.com>

<http://www.panasonic.com/projectors>

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/media/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/media/index_en.html)(MEDIA web site)

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