GDC Technology is digitizing the Asia Pacific—and the world

Earlier this year, on the eve of CineEurope, Screen Digest predicted that the global cinema industry would be 90 percent digitized by the end of the year. That’d be a 31 percent improvement over 2012, at the end of which 68.7 percent had been converted, and if the research firm’s forecast holds true, more than 20 percent of the world’s screens will have been converted to digital cinema in 2013.

Of course, there’s been more activity in some parts of the world than others. North America, for example, was already 84 percent converted at the end 2012. In the Asia Pacific, more than 23,000 were digitized last year, surging by more than half over 2011. The Philippines, India, and Malaysia all more than doubled their d-cinema footprint. By the end of 2012, the market was 59.2 percent digitized—more than 40 percent to go.

That’s where GDC Technology comes in. With more than 12,000 servers installed in the Asia Pacific by midyear—including 8,500 in China, 1,100 in Japan, and 1,100 in South Korea—the Hong Kong company is number-one in market share in the region with 44 percent. Between the first half of 2012 and the first half of 2013, GDC maintained its leadership role in established digital markets like China, Japan, Singapore, and South Korea and surged in emerging markets like India (where the company’s market share increased from nil to 11.2 percent), Indonesia (3.7 percent to 29.5 percent), Malaysia (5.8 percent to 33.1 percent), and Thailand (1 percent to 63.3 percent).

GDC’s exhibition partners in the Asia Pacific include number-one chains Wanda in China, Toho in Japan, CJ CGV in South Korea, Vieshow in Taiwan, Broadway in Hong Kong, and Golden Village in Singapore, as well as new partnerships with Major Cineplex in Thailand, Golden Screen in Malaysia, and Inox in India.

But GDC isn’t limiting its reach to its home turf in the Asia Pacific. Latin America had the most ground to cover at the end of 2012, according to the Screen Digest report, with just over 40 percent of its screens digitized, and GDC is moving in.

The company has established offices in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and Peru as well as a dealer network that will stock server units and spare parts locally and a 24/7/365 service support hotline in both Spanish and English. (A Portuguese hotline is coming soon too.) GDC Technology’s affiliate GDC Digital Network manages more than 4,600 screens across 600 VPF agreements with exhibitors and distributors worldwide and is now making its VPF program available to Latin America theaters. In addition, the firm has organized technical training classes for 34 resellers and 42 exhibitors in Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Chile, and Brazil and offers regular training to exhibitors, resellers, and partners in both Mexico and Brazil for its complete product line, including its servers and theater management systems.

As a result, GDC has partnered with a number of new customers in the region, including Cinemex in Mexico, to which GDC will supply servers and IMBs for the chain’s 1,500-screen, circuit-wide digital

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Released earlier this year, the SX-3000 Standalone IMB, which eliminates the need for a file server, significantly reduces energy consumption as well as operation and maintenance costs for exhibitors. Equipped with HDMI (for 2D and 3D content), 3D-SGI ports, and live streaming, the unit displays a wide variety of advertising and alternative content without the need for additional hardware, simplifying theater operations and reducing investment costs. The SX-3000 supports Dolby Atmos, high-frame-rate (HFR) playback in both 2D and 3D, and 4K resolution.

GDC’s 3TB Expandable Portable Storage and 8TB Enterprise Storage are scalable, cost-effective, and reliable solutions that work well with the SX-3000. They both adopt RAID 5 technology that allows them to remain operational in the event of a single drive failure at a lower cost than NAS and LMS solutions. Meanwhile, the company’s newly developed Content Library Adapter offers a secure and complete content backup solution to help exhibitors minimize hard-disk failure and maintain optimal operations.

The company also offers centralized multiplex management through its TMS-1000, QMS-1000, and NOC. The comprehensive Theatre Management System offers a centralized point of control for an entire multiplex. Reliable and easy to operate, the software helps manage user security, content, show playlist and scheduling, error, and screen control. Supporting Dolby, Doremi, GDC, and Sony servers as well as Barco, Christie, NEC, and Sony projectors, GDC’s TMS systems manage 10,600 screens worldwide.

The Quality Management System manages projection quality through automatic detection and data analysis of screen luminance, chromaticity, and sound-pressure level. Results are generated in report form in a couple of minutes, and the system automatically corrects projection quality to ensure it’s up to standard.
cinema deployment; Espaço Itaú de Cinemas, Cinespaco, and Circuito Cinearte in Brazil covering 250 screens in more than 50 theaters; and Multicines Cinestar in Peru and Cinemas Procinal in Colombia across their entire circuits. Between the first half of 2012 and the first half of 2013, GDC’s market share has grown from 1.6 percent to 34.3 percent in Mexico, 2.6 percent to 17.4 percent in Colombia, and less than 1 percent to 14.1 percent in Brazil.

If the global rate of digitization does reach 90 percent this year, it will be due in no small part to GDC’s efforts, especially in the Asia Pacific and Latin America. And going forward, the company aims to be instrumental in the worldwide industry eventually hitting 100 percent conversion.

GDC’s Network Operation Centers in China, India, Japan, and the United States support standardized management of theaters through a centralized network, offering a 24-hour call center, System Management Control, and Customer Relationship Management. The NOC governs cinema operations through defect alerts, remote maintenance, projection monitoring, and content distribution, simplifying multiplex management, reducing labor costs and operation down time, and increasing projection quality and customer satisfaction.

Finally, GDC’s Expedeo 3D Polarized System uses a unique polarizer to deliver stunning color fidelity and a fully immersive cinematic experience in 3D. The Expedeo 3D Polarizer connects to the Expedeo 3D Controller, which enables robust and reliable motorized 2D-to-3D lens shift. The system supports HFR content and 48 and 60 fps per eye and works with all DLP Cinema projectors.