Totally Tubular

Television Revolution

"It used to take an operator about 30 minutes to set up an image for postscripting, now the system can handle images via a drag-and-drop method."

— Steve Thomas
TV Guide Associate Graphics Design Editor

When you flip through page after page after page of **TV Guide**, you'll note that it's kind of crowded in McLuhan's global village—with satellite, cable, and pay-per-view— there are a whole lot of programs out there. But what you might not note is there are actually 225 different editions of the magazine, with 11.8 million copies circulated each week. And in the last three years, **TV Guide** has even managed to double the number of editions they put out, while cutting the layout work down to a fraction of what it was. How do they do it? AppleScript.

As the demand has increased for variety in television, the folks at **TV Guide** needed a way to keep up with their workload without getting whooped by a system or staffing overload. So they developed their AppleScripts. Working together, Jim Flach, Ryan Emery and Steve Thomas developed editorial to make operations run cleaner than ever before and created some revolutionary applications that have changed the way **TV Guide** operates.

Run over two Power Macs, a LaserWriter and a Xerox copier, they (along with a consultant) developed the "Autograph" application to automate the workflow of the editorial pay-per-view. The application they developed now allows a designer to take pay-per-view features that have been created on a Mac, and postscript them all at the end of the production.

"It used to take an operator about 30 minutes to set up an image for postscripting, now the system can handle images via a drag-and-drop method. It can perform a set of setup tasks on a folder full of files, rather than one at a time. This alone saves the company one full day per week," says **TV Guide** Associate Graphics Design Editor Steve Thomas.

"When the script finishes the processing, it even automatically e-mails the user so they can go pick up their galleys," Thomas continues. "This is especially important on the extremely expensive pre-press side of things." And where it used to take four or five designers a week to lay the section out manually, it can now all be done in about 20 minutes.

The other cutting-edge application that the **TV Guide** team developed, called "Graphics 99," automates the postscript process. This adds inserts for cable systems such as Media One, Time Warner, and USSB. The application opens the files with Quark, applies the page setup and print settings, generates a postscript file with the appropriate name, saves it, and closes it. Kind of like having an extra programmer on hand.

Before the "Autograph" application was created, four designers had to manually enter all the information into layouts on the UNIX system and because editors were not trained to operate on this system, the designers also had to make all editing changes. "Since the features are now created on the Mac," said Thomas, "One designer can postscript all the editions in approximately 15 minutes." Which is just in TV time.

—Stephanie Jorgl

Video, Film, & Photography | Design & Print | Music & Audio | Web Publishing

Visit the Apple Store online or at retail locations.
1-800-MY-APPLE