

SUCCESS STORY



NCPower Pro Rollout at RTL

The successful implementation of NCPower Pro at RTL Luxemburg paves the way for Europe's other RTL channels. RTL Cologne, n-tv, RTL Croatia and RTL Hungaria are already on air.

The challenge

As one of Europe's largest media concerns, the RTL group makes especially high demands of its broadcast systems. The regional channels and news departments work independently and often have different workflows, IT infrastructures and instrumentation. At the same time the aim is to improve efficiency through the Group's Europe-wide presence by localizing stories and formats.

The solution

At RTL Luxemburg NCPower Pro replaced the newsroom system in use, and broadcasting did not even have to be suspended during implementation. The required integration of Solutions for Media (S4M) in the existing Video Preview/Management System (VPMS) was solved, as were the connection and control of the existing graphics and playout infrastructure. The successful Luxemburg project has now won over the other regional studios.

The success

According to RTL's own assessment, it now has one of the most up-to-date broadcast systems for reliable 24/7 operation. Both the quality and efficiency of editorial work has benefited from the high performance of NCPower's retrieval tools. Thanks to the XML-based architecture, NCPower Pro is scalable and can be flexibly integrated. A further plus is that future web, IPTV and mobile TV formats can be integrated into NCPower Pro.



Successful Implementation in Luxemburg

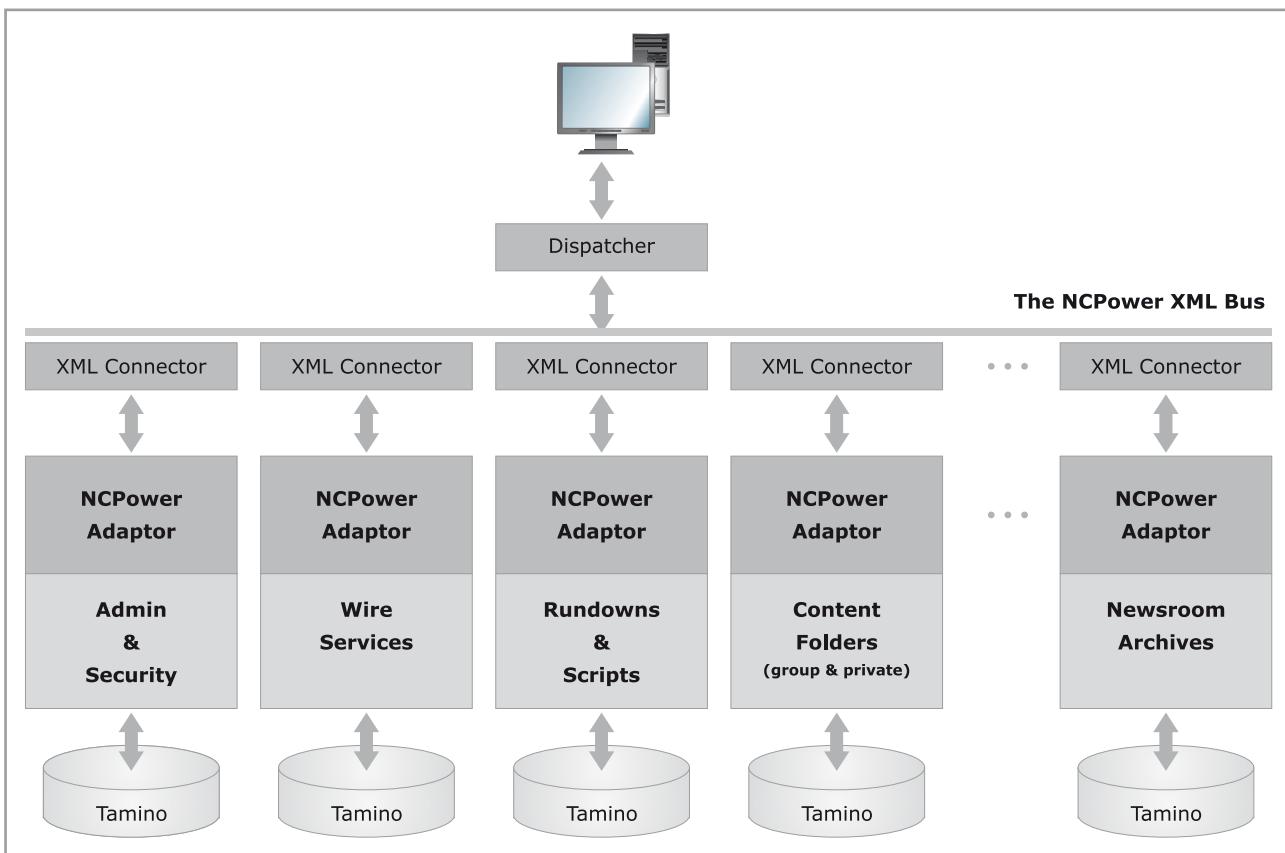
In 2002, the directors at RTL Luxemburg were faced with a difficult decision: On the one hand there was the pressure of dissolving the outdated existing newsroom system to meet the growing demand for speed and quality of news production in future. On the other hand the news department's 24/7 operations should not be disrupted and investments in the existing infrastructure should not be lost. Beside playout automation, graphics systems and periphery, this included the Video Preview/Management System (VPMS) from S4M that is a key component of RTL's editorial work.

Following extensive tests by its future users from the editorial department and experts from IT and Organization, NCPower Pro

(product name at that time: MPower) was chosen as the new newsroom solution.

Three features were especially decisive in swinging the decision:

- the future-oriented XML architecture that allows a simple integration of components such as VPMS
- the integrated, multimedia-able retrieval tools that simplify and speed up news editors' work
- NCPower Pro's ability to be used in different media for planned productions in the areas of web, IPTV, and mobile TV



NCPower XML-Bus and adapter technology ensure smooth integration of external components.



The central control room at RTL Luxemburg.

With the help of the NorCom team, NCPower Pro was implemented and integrated as required without any interruption to broadcasting. RTL Luxemburg went on air with NCPower Pro in December 2003:

- MPEG-1 proxy copies are made of video material which is archived in high-resolution MPEG-2 4:2:2 by the VPMS, while related metadata and individual key frames are replicated in NCPower Pro. In this way, news editors can search, view, and edit material from any workstation using NCPower Pro.
- NCPower Pro offers editors new and powerful retrieval tools. Newswires, picture databases, websites and video archives can be accessed via a single interface with convenient search functions. Material in all formats can be dragged & dropped into containers, and used in the scripts for features.
- Peripheral equipment such as teleprompters and graphic systems are controlled directly via MOS or ActiveX components.
- NCPower Pro offers editors all necessary tools and materials via a uniform workflow-oriented interface. This raises both efficiency and quality of work.

Success Model is Taken Over

The project's success and employee satisfaction at RTL Luxemburg led to the decision to introduce NCPower Pro at RTL Deutschland in Cologne.

This decision was made not only on the basis of the positive experience with NCPower Pro's integration, but also because of the system's scalability, as the Cologne site is to become the base for the production of a large number of news broadcasts, such as the news channel n-tv, for example. Another persuasive factor was that NorCom's solution prepares not only text, but all formats and media (text, images, graphics, video, etc.) for retrieval and editing in NCPower Pro.

In 2003, 'RTL aktuell', RTL's news flagship program, went on air with NCPower Pro. Today, NCPower Pro is used for all news and television shows that are broadcast from Cologne.

A New RTL Channel in Croatia

RTL Televizija, launched in 2004, is the media company's own TV channel in Croatia. The channel went on air using NCPower Pro just four weeks after receiving the go-ahead – the fact that there was no running production to consider was a helpful factor.



News broadcasting at RTL Croatia.

There were not only technical benefits to be reaped from the experience made in Germany and Luxemburg; the economic benefits of a unified country-spanning newsroom infrastructure also began to be noticeable: TV formats such as Explosiv/Exploziv and Exklusiv/Exkluziv could be adapted nearly seamlessly, and their content jointly used.

In addition to the VPMS, Omneon video servers, DivArchive and StorageTek band archive systems were integrated in Croatia.

The most recent installation of an NCPower Pro newsroom server was implemented – within a very similar framework and again with huge success – at RTL Hungaria.

Facts & Figures

- Step-by-step introduction of NCPower Pro as the broadcast solution for RTL stations throughout Europe
- Access to research, collaboration, and editing tools via a unified interface
- Integration of the Video Preview/Management System (VPMS) from S4M
- Integration into various IT and product infrastructures thanks to flexible XML-based system architecture
- Customization to channel-specific workflows
- Reliable 24/7 operations for several hundred freelance and permanent employees

RTL Group

The RTL Groups is one of Europe's leading media companies with a participation in 38 TV and 29 radio stations in 10 countries as well as production companies throughout the world. The most well-known RTL channels include RTL Television in Germany, M6 in France, Five in the UK, the RTL channels in the Benelux, Croatia and Hungary as well as Ren TV in Russian and Antena 3 in Spain. RTL's production company FremantleMedia is one of the largest producers outside USA and produces more than 10,000 program hours in 22 countries a year.