



WIRED BROADCAST • CLIENT STORIES SERIES

Ahoy, Matey! On BBC Two, James May's Man Lab demonstrates pirate radio live from a canal barge, thanks to Plum Pictures and Wired Broadcast

Plum Pictures is an award-winning independent production company based in London, UK, that makes factual entertainment and documentary television. Projects include George Clarke's Amazing Spaces, James May's Man Lab, and documentaries such as Billionaire's Paradise: Inside Necker Island. The company's productions are broadcast on BBC, ITV, Channel 4, and Sky, and are distributed in more than 140 countries.



Challenge James May's Man Lab aired on BBC Two and was hosted by James May of Top Gear fame.

In the show, May initiates modern man in the lost ways of making, breaking, and fixing, with challenges such as mining coal to make soap, building a pool table, and felling a tree to make toilet paper. In one episode, May's challenge would be to demonstrate pirate radio over a 5-hour broadcast while navigating a 12-mile stretch of the Grand Union Canal. The entire event would be filmed for the episode. With just one week's notice, Plum

Pictures gave Wired Broadcast a brief to install and staff a fully-equipped radio studio on a narrowboat, erect an FM transmitter on the roof of a church in Milton Keynes, and set up a broadcast-quality stereo link between the two.



Solution

To create a reliable stereo link between the moving boat and the transmitter site, Wired Broadcast installed a multi-WAN router with six 3G connections on the boat and another router at the church with four 3G connections plus a link to the church's guest Wi-Fi. To strengthen cellular signal quality under bridges and in canal cuttings, the team installed a 3G signal amplifier on the boat. The result was a reliable connection for the Tieline® codecs and 192-kbps stereo link between boat and transmitter. The team also installed a studio on the prow of the 72-foot boat, complete with on-air mixing desk, CD players and record deck, radio mics with in-ear monitoring, broadcaster's phones, and digital cart machine, all powered from a UPS (uninterruptable power supply) and generator.

Results

Aboard the sturdy *Elizabeth of Glamis*, May and team embarked on the maiden voyage of *Man Lab Radio* using an FM RSL (restricted service license). The show included interviews, live music, listener call-ins, and May spun his favourite tracks on vinyl and CD with expert guidance from Wired Broadcast engineers on board. Even using highly-contended cellular connections, May had glitch-free connectivity for interviewing guests located on board, on nearby craft, and in local pubs and establishments along the way. In making this creative programme technically possible, Wired Broadcast helped Plum Pictures achieve yet another outside broadcast victory.

About Wired Broadcast Wired Broadcast is an international provider of agile connectivity for mission-critical applications and a trusted provider of end-to-end broadcast and live event facilities and services. Since 1992, we have served hundreds of influential clients in broadcasting (BBC), construction (RG Group), banking (Royal Bank of Scotland), live events (Live Nation Entertainment), defence, and more.

We manufacture Mediaport® multi-WAN solutions and distribute related products. Our wide range of multi-WAN solutions provides reliable connectivity for mission-critical applications in fields as diverse as security, law enforcement, the military, construction, education, live streaming, and of course, TV and radio.

To learn more about our multi-WAN solutions for remote broadcasts and live events, contact us at sales@wiredbroadcast.com or give us a call at +44 20 3376 7710.

