

GRAPHIC ORB INC.



Many of the movie ads in your local newspaper spring from the creative minds at Graphic Orb of North Hollywood, CA. The design studio creates newspaper ads for the latest films, then distributes them nationwide, using SoftArc's FirstClass Intranet Server.

Hundreds of different ad templates for each of 40-50 movies are posted on the server at any one time. Ad agencies download ads off the server, then add theater names, show times and quotes from reviews. The finished product is shipped electronically or delivered to your local newspaper.

"We do a huge volume of ads - an insane amount of stuff - and we started using FirstClass for large-scale ad delivery about two and half years ago," says Wes Adams, vice president of operations for Graphic Orb. "We're a one-stop shop for agencies that place movie advertising for all the major studios. We've been using FirstClass to make ads available to agencies for five or six years."

Graphic Orb began designing on computers 11 years ago, and is a 30-year veteran of film advertising. "You name it, we have it," Adams says, "designers, copywriters, graphic and production artists, scanners, laser printers, image setters, computers everywhere."

Some ad creations have been real monsters - The Mummy, Godzilla and Jurassic Park, for example. Babe was a whole-hog effort. Graphic Orb develops advertising campaigns for movies like Dante's Peak, EdTV, Life, Man in the Iron Mask, and the remake of Psycho, to name a few.

The design firm uses a secure private web site for its customers to download ads in Quark format. Adams likes the security that FCIS provides - "only our customers can access the server." The history feature gives complete tracking of each download transaction. Despite Graphic Orb's rapid growth in recent years, the FCIS server has kept pace with heavy transaction volume.

"It will not crash," Adams says. "Never. I have a backup FTP server, but we've never used it. FCIS gives me so many features I can't get on an FTP server."

He cites two of FCIS's greatest features as letting customers use "not only the Internet but also direct connections via modems. We have a huge band width connection to the Internet, but when the Net is having problems, a lot of agencies dial us direct to get their ads, and that's critical in meeting deadlines and providing service." Graphic Orb has installed banks of 56K and ISDN modems for direct dial-up connections.

FirstClass Personal gives agencies the ability to automatically download files. This critical feature makes it possible for agency computers to regularly check for newly posted files and download them unattended. "This gives us a comfort zone," Adams says. "We sleep better at night. We know that our ads have been delivered nationwide by the time we open our doors at 9am. You can't do that with an FTP or Web server."

A group of 50 agencies across the United States handle all placement and distribution of ads produced by Graphic Orb. About half the agencies use B-Linked, a customized solution for electronic ad transmission in the pre-press industry. SoftArc Platinum reseller Todd Melet, president of B-linked.com, sells this customized solution.

Adams summarizes the strengths of FCIS: "Good. Fast. Reliable. Lots of critical features. It works for us and the ad agencies."

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