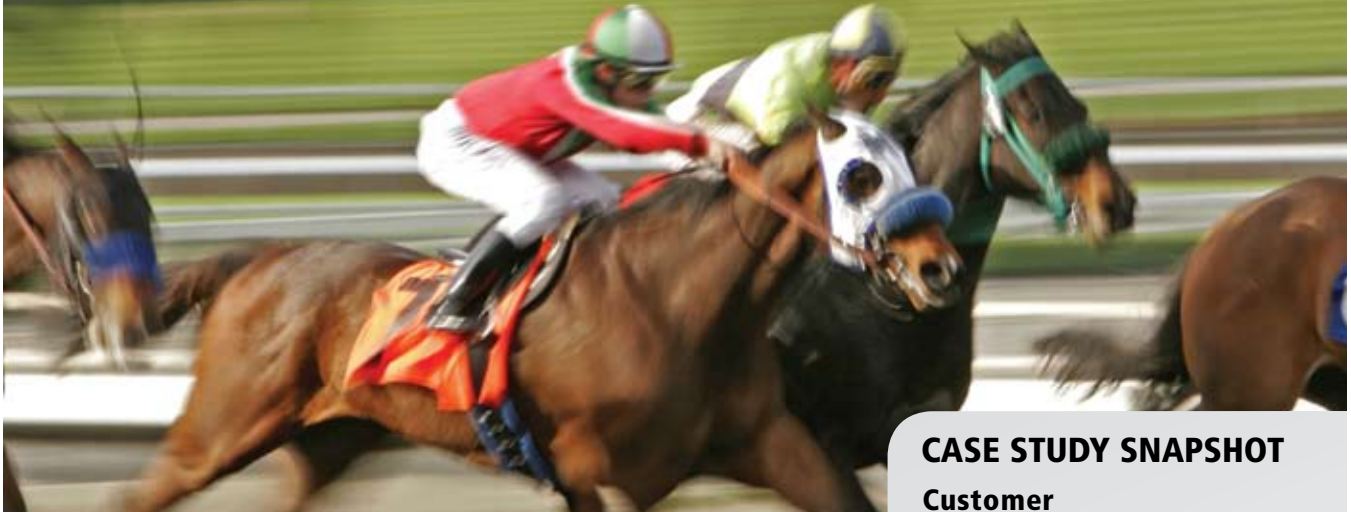


# Capital OTB

A Day at the Races with Harris Digital Signage™



Schenectady, New York-based Capital Off-Track Betting (Capital OTB) is a unique example of a company taking advantage of the multifaceted potential of digital signage.

## Customer Profile

Capital OTB is a quasi-government agency established to serve as a legal bookmaker for horse wagers and return its profits to local government and the horse racing industry. In addition to providing off-track betting services, the Schenectady facility doubles as a television broadcast network.

The broadcast facility at Capital OTB includes a production studio used to create local programming, as well as a full-blown master control center to distribute the station to regional cable services around the state.

## Business Challenge

The Capital OTB station broadcasts races from an average of 20 tracks around the globe each day from 12 noon until midnight, with in-house and local productions comprising the bulk of programming overnight and throughout the morning hours. Although Capital OTB does not broadcast every race, it does receive data and video from nearly every one, so it needed a powerful but easy-to-use system to efficiently process this large volume of information.

The Schenectady facility decided to implement digital signage technology as the basis to compile, edit and transport racing information with video, which is made available to Capital OTB's 54 off-track betting branch locations throughout upstate New York.

## CASE STUDY SNAPSHOT

### Customer

- Capital OTB — Schenectady, NY

### Industry

- Off-Track Betting Services/  
Broadcast Television

### Business Challenge

- Compile, edit and transport racing information with video from multiple sources, which is made available to 54 off-track betting branch locations throughout upstate New York

### Technology Solution

- Harris Digital Signage™ solutions, including InfoCaster Player™
- Bannister Lake software

### Business Value

- Simple but powerful replacement for traditional broadcast CG
- Efficient processing of high volume of data and video from multiple sources
- Intuitive operation streamlines workflow in high-pressure environment
- Greater creative freedom for operators



*"Our operators essentially produce these visuals race-by-race, using the InfoCaster system to generate creative displays that provide the information our viewers need."*

Jim Barber,  
General Manager of Off-Track Betting Television

### **Technology Solution**

The digital signage system, featuring Harris® InfoCaster Player™ systems and an advanced XML file parser and converter application provided by Bannister Lake Software Inc. in Ontario, Canada, is the central repository for all the racing information coming into the house for eventual broadcast, provided. The solution is integrated at the facility's "mutual information gathering point," where operators collect a stream of information for each race scheduled for broadcast that day. The information is then ingested into a centralized database, and later mixed in master control.

### **Video Distribution**

The video signals and data information come into the facility separately. A disseminator based in Las Vegas delivers video signals from tracks around the world to Capital OTB and its branch locations via satellite. The signals are downlinked at several dish farms on the Capital OTB campus, delivered to satellite receivers in the technical core, and conditioned, converted and synchronized for in-house distribution over a house router, which distributes both video and audio sources throughout the facility and elsewhere.

### **Data Integration**

The racing information, which includes venue, horse, jockey and track assignment data, is downloaded over an FTP connection every 15 minutes and sent to the InfoCaster Player systems as a data crawl. Each scheduled race is automatically given a start and end time, and track abbreviations are translated and written to the database track table. Open text fields allow operators to enter any last-minute information about race track conditions and scratches.

Because the wealth of data received is so immense, the facility required an advanced data management solution to parse, translate and manage selected dynamic XML racetrack data. Bannister Lake developed data parsers for each source, with each parser formatted specifically for the layout presentation in the InfoCaster Player.

The Bannister Lake solution is based on the Windows.net environment, and communicates with the InfoCaster Player systems via basic ODBC (open database connection) protocols to display the data. Some of the applications run as required for data conversions, while other applications such as Crawl Manager are constantly pulling and retrieving information coming in from the various external sources.

### Channel Layout

Due to lack of space in the facility's control room, the InfoCaster Player systems, along with a video server for archived material, are housed in a single equipment rack located in an area separate from the technical core. A reception area was converted into an IT room, and a distribution system was built out strictly for InfoCaster signage and archival playout, with most of the material from the video server streamed to the Capital OTB Web site or scheduled into its pre-race morning lineup.

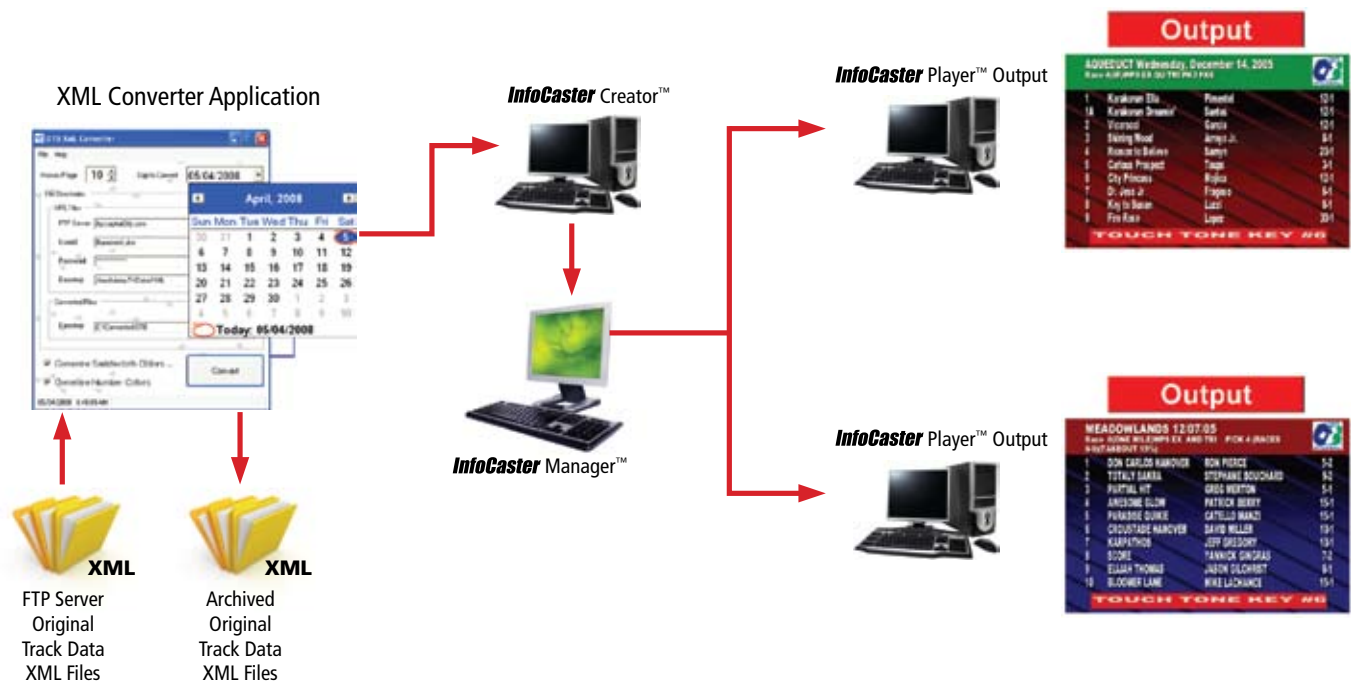
The space was CAT5, with direct connections to the Sigma routing system. The InfoCaster signals are routed to master control to mix the video and data. The final broadcast product is then routed to the outbound cable equipment for transmission, and around the facility for the facility's closed-circuit television (CCTV) network.

*"There's not a ton of bells and whistles to confuse people when the pressure is on, and the system provides a clear set of preferences for file conversion and managing the overall video and data workflow."*

Jim Barber

The CCTV network offers a select number of channels that are only seen in-house, but feature races and other information that will eventually be mixed into the live cable broadcast. One channel simply broadcasts an InfoCaster display featuring various racing information, including winning horses from recent races. That display page can also be switched to air at any time using a Harris Videotek® 1x10 switcher if other programming is unavailable.

### The Infocaster Suite — Managing Content From Start To Finish



## Business Value

Jim Barber, general manager of Off-Track Betting Television, believes that the digital signage solution from Harris and Bannister Lake is the jewel of his facility, serving two distinct functions tied to the organization's mission: bringing together data and video from multiple sources and making them available to viewers and bettors across the state; and delivering pertinent information to employees that is vital to the daily operation — all while allowing his staff more creative freedom in piecing together the broadcast product.

"Our operators essentially produce these visuals race-by-race, using the system to generate creative displays that provide the information our viewers need," said Barber. "But they are also putting together promotions throughout our organization about events taking place both here and at our branch locations. For example, we're using the signage system to promote Ladies

Day at the Kentucky Oaks, special giveaways and handicapping contents. The InfoCaster system serves as a poster-board of sorts when there is a lull in the racing action."

Barber added that the simple, intuitive operation of the technology is essential to keeping everything moving forward in a fluid motion. "There's not a ton of bells and whistles to confuse people when the pressure is on, and the system provides a clear set of preferences for file conversion and managing the overall video and data workflow," said Barber. "The need to process this amount of information requires a rudimentary application that any professional or volunteer can pick up within a matter of minutes, and we've found that with a simple but powerful digital signage system that essentially replaces the traditional broadcaster character generator."



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