



ASTRA MCR & Prime Image Time Tailor™ Integration

Dynamic Time Reduction System

Broadcasters are always looking for ways to insert additional commercials into their programming. Time Tailor from Prime Image is a unique technology that dynamically reduces a program's length without altering the artistic value of the program (acts / segments). However, time reduction complicates traditional automation systems as program durations from traffic are no longer valid. Astra MCR has solved this problem and offers a full transparent operational display to support this operation.

Prime Image Time Tailor

Time Tailor is a unique device that dynamically and transparently shortens a video clip. Their micro-editing technology removes frames in a way that is undetectable and does not compromise the integrity of the original content and endorsed by production directors and editors.

An example of this processing is that a 22-23 minute program can run in 21 minutes with no detectable difference in the eyes and ears of the consumer. The extra minutes can be used for commercials, promotional spots or public service announcements.

Key Features

- Dynamically and frame accurately add black holes for new ad revenues
- Compatible with existing facilities and workflows, SD / HD compatible

Impact on Playout

The problem arises when trying to integrate this technology with your traffic and automation system. Since playout is all based on timecode and program durations received from traffic, a program that has been processed by Time Tailor will no longer match the original duration times.

Thus without special processing, a program will end before it is expected, and black will be played to air. Aveco has developed a custom interface for Time Tailor to avoid this problem.

- Full support for Closed Captioning
- No impact on traffic systems
- Easy to switch between normal and time reduced program playout

ASTRA Integration

Aveco not only wrote a custom device driver to control Time Tailor, it also developed a new workflow configuration for using this system.

The benefits of this workflow configuration are that it eliminates timing issues throughout the system so other devices operate without change. Graphics and logos are guaranteed to be in sync with breaks as they work today.

Commercials and other content that cannot be time reduced are maintained intact. Operators simply add the new spots into the playlist while ASTRA performs all the complex calculations for frame-accurate playout.

- Integrates with all brands of video servers and graphic systems
- Minimal user training required

ASTRA



Time Tailor



ASTRA Time Tailor Configuration

In the Aveco configuration (see Fig 1), Time Tailor is downstream of the switcher (MCR). It takes the normal program feed from the video server and routes it to Time Tailor. Additionally a video server port is allocated for playing the new spots made available by the compressed program. Together these two feeds fill the original time scheduled in the playlist.

This configuration makes it easy to switch between original programming and time reduced programming. No other aspects of the workflow need be aware of this new capability.

Traffic Interface

Another advantage of the ASTRA interface is that there is no impact on the traffic system. But since the ASTRA playlist gets its data from traffic, the playlist must reflect the new capability.

The MCR operators manually make the changes in the playlist. The operator simply pastes in the new ads (Fig 2) and highlights the whole sequence of events that must be adjusted to fit the new ads. ASTRA automatically calculates the necessary parameters for Time Tailor for all eligible programming content.

Time Tailor will then time reduce the program segments for the exact duration of the new spots (which, like all spots, are played out (not time reduced)). All the complex calculations are performed for the operator in the background.

Summary

The ASTRA Time Tailor interface is seamlessly integrated with any traffic system and fits into any existing infrastructure. Minimal training is required for the operators as all the hard work is done by ASTRA.

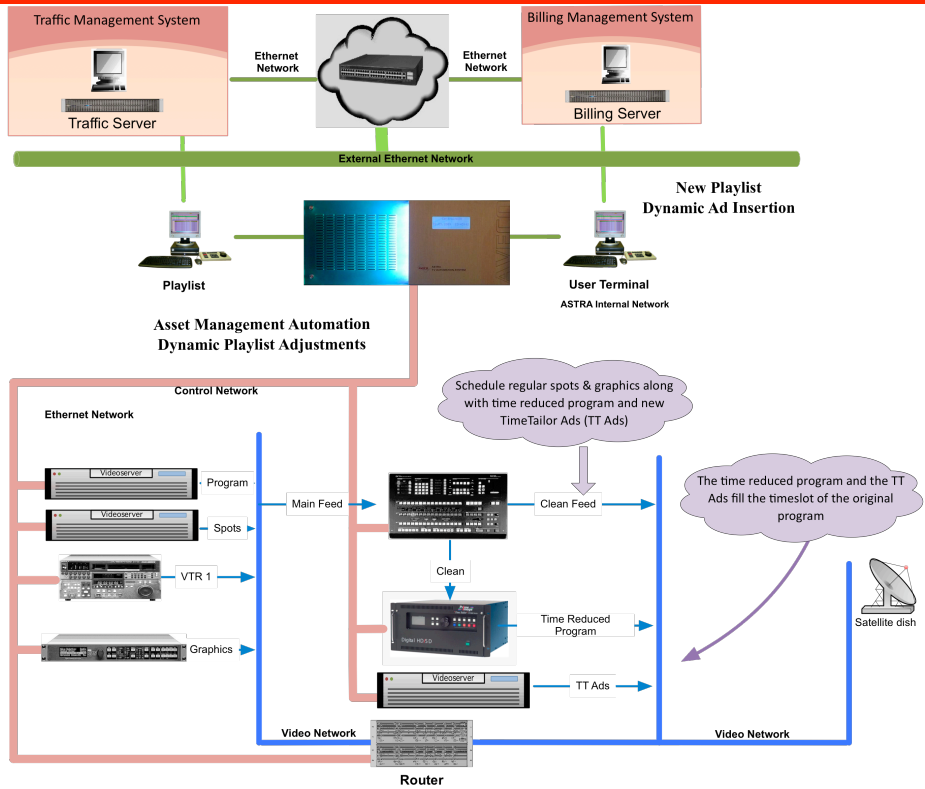


Figure 1 – Typical ASTRA configuration with Time Tailor downstream of MCR. The program signal is dynamically compressed as it streams through Time Tailor freeing up time for additional ads (TT ads). ASTRA switches the router between the Compressed Program and TT Ads to fill the original time scheduled for the program.

ASTRA Ingest and Time Tailor for Production Workflow

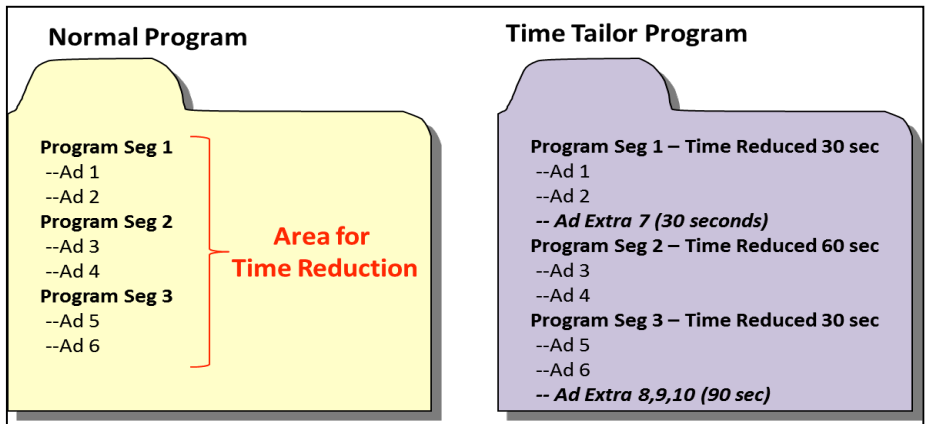


Figure 2 – The MCR operator simply highlights the section for Time Tailor ployout and adds the new commercials (Ad 7, 8, 9, 10). ASTRA will automatically calculate all the parameters for Time Tailor and adjust the playlist frame accurately for ployout. Items are tagged to not be compressed such as commercials or promos and will be played as normal.