



## Kinepolis, Studio 100 and Alfacam go digital with EVS servers, October 2003

Kinepolis Group, exhibition innovators and pioneers, are continually on the lookout for new ways of treating moviegoers to the ultimate cinema experience. In collaboration with two other major Belgian entertainment companies, Studio 100 and Alfacam, the group has been developing a project which should place digital cinema finally and firmly on the map.

The project? Projection! Digital projection. Gilbert Deley, Chief Operations Officer of Kinepolis Group, explains: "We live in an age in which technology evolves at an incredible rate. Digital is no longer a mere buzzword, but a moniker for technical quality products such as High Definition recording, DMR prints (Digital re-Mastered, Refined and Re-sized), etc. It goes without saying that Kinepolis Group has not been watching these crucial developments from the sideline."

After conducting some careful tests, Kinepolis Group decided, by mid 2003, to actively seek out the potential of 'alternative content' to add to traditional 35mm product. Deley continues: "First we talked to Studio 100. They had been making some test recordings of live shows for future dvd release with another Belgian company, Alfacam, who are one of the major European players in the field of HD recording."

### Digital synergy

Studio 100 is an extremely successful provider of children's tv-series and stage shows in Belgium and the Netherlands. And while Kinepolis Group and Studio 100 had already worked together in the past, the time seemed more than ripe for a large-scale collaboration that would make the most of the digital synergy and potential of such diverse media as dvd and the cinema.

Gilbert Deley: "With Studio 100 we laid down the basis of a large-scale project with the next Kabouter Plop movie (Kabouter = gnome, ed.). In essence, Plop and the Magic Wand is a film destined for retail on dvd and broadcasting on television. With one crucial difference, however! No expense was spared to record and edit the movie in high definition, resulting in an optimal, virtually unseen image quality. A quality fit to be screened in movie theatres, in fact."

The suppliers of those state-of-the-art recorded digital images are Antwerp-based Alfacam. Alfacam has been Studio 100's technical supplier of choice for 10 years. This reputed company is also the driving power behind Euro1080, Europe's first HD broadcaster. Gabriel Fehervari, MD of Alfacam and Euro1080, explains: "From January 1st onwards, Euro1080 will be broadcasting digitally to the whole of Europe. Every year, our station will be delivering over 100 major events to European homes and cinemas via satellite. The Athens Olympics in 2004, Euro 2004 in Portugal, Elton John from Covent Garden, the New Year's Concert from Vienna, the opera La Bohème, live or recorded... the offer is limitless. Moviegoers, for instance, will be able to enjoy alternative, high def content in their local movie theatre. Sold-out concerts, expensive tickets and long drives to the venue will become a thing of the past from the 1st of January 2004 onwards. The Plop movie is merely an appetizer to the extensive menu Euro1080 will be serving up soon, but it's an achievement we take a lot of pride in."

"Of course, state-of-the-art recording techniques would be fairly pointless without projection methods to match them", states Gilbert Deley of Kinepolis Group about their quest for the Holy Grail of digital projection: "Even as the movie was being made, Kinepolis' technical experts searched high and low for the projectors that could guarantee flawless reproduction. Our quest for perfection in projection ultimately resulted in a valuable collaboration with Barco and EVS!"

### Testcase

All will be revealed on 24 October. On that day, Plop and the Magic Wand will unspool digitally in Metropolis Antwerp for the first time. For ten days afterwards, the movie will be shown daily and exclusively in Kinepolis Brussels and the Flemish Kinepolis theatres. Showtimes are scheduled at 11.00, 12.30, 14.00, 15.30 and 17.00. Admission prices are 5

euro. On Sunday, 2 November, and Wednesday, 5 November, initial screenings will start at 12.30 and 14.00 respectively. From 6 November onwards the dvd will be available to purchase from stores. Asked whether that timing would not create overlap problems, Gilbert Deley replies: "Not at all, we have thought of a perfect solution for that as well: visitors to the movie will receive a product plus for when they purchase the dvd."

"In the long term, we are looking to create a formula which not only gives 'straight to dvd' product its unique and only chance to be seen on the big screen, but which also allows for the broadcasting of cultural or sporting events, concerts... Whether traditional or digital, the future is looking bright at Kinopolis!", concludes Gilbert Deley.

#### Creative with limited means

Meanwhile, in a local movie production climate which can hardly be dubbed favourable, Studio 100, too, is hopefully looking forward to the digital testcase. Managing director Hans Bourlon: "Plop and the Magic Wand has a duration of 50 minutes and was originally intended for direct-to-video release only, for sale from retail outlets from 6 November. The idea for this movie came about when subsidies for the third Plop movie, a full-length feature film, were pulled and we had to deliver an alternative. This not only proved a creative challenge, but a productional and financial exploit as well. Still, in the end everybody's hard work paid off. Here is a family film which deserves to be seen, both on the small and the big screen."

Between recording and projecting Plop and the Magic Wand, Studio 100 called on two of its trusted partners, Alfacam and Kinopolis. "The experts at Alfacam recorded the movie in high definition. More pixels, more lines, more colours... the movie will absolutely leap off the screen," according to Bourlon. "We are planning a digital roll-out of the movie for the Fall school holidays with the people at Kinopolis. In the mean time, we are still in talks with the Flemish Audio-visual Fund (VAF). Our ambition to make another full feature is still very much alive, but that requires money, a lot of money. Without the fund's aid, however, such a project is almost entirely out of the question. So we are quietly hoping for a change on that level some time soon, too."

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#### PLOP EN DE TOVERSTAF (Plop and the Magic Wand)

##### Synopsis

Plop and the Magic Wand is a magical movie. Plop, the gnome, is expecting the annual visit of the Christmas gnome. Only, this year, things are taking a turn for the worse. Mik and Mak, two gnomes whom the Christmas gnome has been forgetting year after year, are bent on revenge. They steal the Christmas gnome's sleigh, which not only holds all of his presents, but his all-important magic wand, too. Double trouble, for in addition to conjuring up presents, the wand, wielded by the wrong hands, can wreak havoc as well. Time for Plop and his sidekick, Klus, to hit the road, retrieve the magic wand and give it back to the Christmas gnome. An exciting and adventurous undertaking, if ever there was one! Will their enterprise be a success or will the forest of the gnomes never celebrate Christmas again? Discover the answer in a Kinopolis theatre near you, from 24 October until 5 November, or, from 6 November, on dvd...

##### Cast and collaborators

Walter De Donder (Kabouter Plop),  
Aimé Anthoni (Kabouter Klus),  
Chris Cauwenberghs (Kabouter Lui),  
Agnes De Nul (Kabouter Kwebbel),  
Hilde Vanhulle (Kabouter Smal),  
Luc Caals (Kabouter Smul),  
Fred Van Kuijk (The Christmas Gnome),  
David Cantens (Kabouter Mik) and  
Esther Lybeert (Kabouter Mak)

Producers: Studio 100, in collaboration with VTM

Screenplay: Gert Verhulst, Danny Verbiest, Hans Bourlon and Sander De Regt

Director: Matthias Temmermans

Production manager: Kathleen Vander Velde

Executive producer: Michel Verlinden

Art Director: Piet De Koninck

Special effects supervisor: Jan Goossen (Piranha)

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Contact Alfacam : Gabriel Fehervari – +32 (0)3/460 39 30

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