CRAVEONLINE

FILM | TV | LIFESTYLE | COMICS | GAMING | SPORTS | MUSIC | COMEDY | VIDEOS
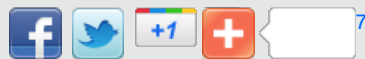
WHAT IS CRAVE ONLINE?

How 3ality Made Amazing Spider-Man's 3D Not Suck

The 3-D house explains why **Amazing Spider-Man**, **The Hobbit** and **The Great Gatsby** are going to stun you.

By Fred Topel
January 12, 2012

f | Facebook
Twitter
+1
More
7

Right by my home in Burbank, 3ality Technica is making 3D equipment for 3D movies to utilize. Their equipment is creating the 3D of **The Hobbit, The Amazing Spider-Man, Jack the Giant Killer** and **The Great Gatsby.** They recently acquired Element Technica who worked on **Prometheus** and **Oz.** 3ality Technica founder and CEO Steve Schklair sat down with me before the holidays to explain how these upcoming films are taking advantage of 3D.

The technical things that make 'The Amazing Spider-Man' sling in 3D.

"Most of the requests on **Spider-Man** came from the director of photography, not Marc Webb. The director of photography dealt with the specific tweaks of 'Well, we want to be able to hold this filter.
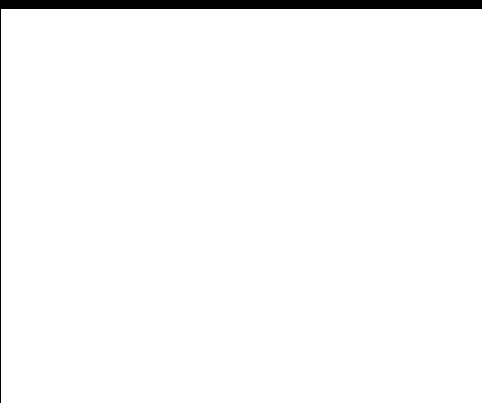
FOLLOW US:

LINKS OF THE DAY

ComingSoon

Shocktillyoudrop

FilmSchoolRejects

We want to be able to change these lenses in this amount of time. We want this rig for this and this rig for that. We want to go wireless on steadicam. What can we do?' It's the tools that their crew is going to be using. In other words, 'I want to do these driving shots but I don't want to put six people in the camera car because that's crazy. I want the same camera crew on the camera car that I always have. So how are we going to take 3D and make it wireless so that the director sitting at video village can see what the action is?' Or 'How are we going to untether the steadicam so that it doesn't have a cable following behind it and the steadicam is free to go where the steadicam is usually free to go?' Those are the technical tweaks that they always want. Then it gets deeper than that. 'If we're going wireless, how is the meta data flowing up and back so it can make it through the system of not just the recording on board but the dailies system that we're recording separately.' Everyone wants technology tweaks. There's less of that needed in **Gatsby**. By then, all these tweaks that were wanted on the other features had been put into the system as just standards."

'The Great Gatsby's' 3D driving shots.

"At the end of the day, even in **Gatsby**, there are driving scenes. So you're going to have a camera car with a gyro stabilized head on it and a camera rig that's going to want to go right next to the ground and up in the air. That's no different than an action movie which is doing driving scenes. Albeit in their driving scenes, they're crashing things and in this one, they're having dialogue."

Baz Luhrmann got artistic about 3D.

"Baz Luhrmann spent time here, we talked a lot about 3D and its applications, showed him stuff and talked about ways in which it could be used as a communication tool, to help better tell the story. Not the nuts and bolts of "if you set a camera at this interaxial distance and converge here…" The discussions weren't about that. The discussions were about how do you creatively use this medium to tell your stories, which is the right discussion to be having. The technology tweaks itself is really up to the crew, not so much the director, nor should he be worried about it. It should be transparent to him."

Selling out to Peter Jackson.

"Because they're remote down in New Zealand and because this is the way Peter likes to work, everybody else rents their equipment. All features rent and then they return, but Peter has an empire down in New Zealand and he owns his gear, so they actually wanted to purchase the gear. Then other things came up that wouldn't come into a normal feature discussion like equipment warranties, equipment service, all the things that normally are assumed would be handled by a Panavision as a rental house. Suddenly we're dealing with that. Peter likes to run a lot of units so they have a first unit, second unit, miniatures unit, motion control units, visual effects units. They run a lot of different units, which is the way Peter Jackson makes films so there were very specific needs on the different packages for each of these units. Different lens needs, different filtration needs, different wireless needs. This was the first time we had actually configured a wireless system because they wanted to be remote."

Fixing Peter Jackson's cable problem.

"We shot a test for Peter Jackson when he was looking at all the equipment available in the business before he chose to work with 3ality. The one thing he hated during our tests was the same thing everybody has to deal with, the tether between the camera system and the recording system. There's always this cable and when he wants to move the cameras for the next shot, you often had to shut everything down, uncable it, spool the cable up, recable it because the camera moved too far

away for the length of the cable. What he hated the most was the cables, not so much the process of 3D. We solved the cable problem. They are working wirelessly on the cameras that need to be wireless. Obviously, the motion control cameras don't need to be wireless. They're stuck on the end of jibs and heads anyway. The cameras that need to be more portable, more mobile are wireless. That's complete bidirectional wireless so the operator controls the camera over the same wireless channels. The meta data goes up and back between the cameras and the recordings because the visual effects teams need the meta data. It saves them an unbelievable amount of time. The accuracy of the system where things are registered down to the pixel in terms of the accuracy, that means the meta data actually means something because when you reposition everything in post, you're throwing your meta data out pretty much because it's no longer accurate."

How 3ality makes 3D productions shoot faster.

"At this point what [Jackson]'s found, and you can see it in the video blog he did, and this is true of every movie that we've gotten involved with, they're shooting on a schedule. **Spider-Man** was a 2D schedule because they were going to convert from 2D to 3D in post. With the technology we designed, they're all finishing on schedule and those are 2D schedules. That's the most critical thing because going over schedule just costs a fortune. And they're not having to fix shots in post. They don't have to do a lot of realignment so dailies are instant. You don't have to realign to get the dailies. Visual effects can be done pretty much right over the background plates that are being sent in from the set without having to do extensive repositioning of everything. That's really what sets 3ality apart and why all these features want to work with us. It's fast and accurate."

3ality made it possible for 'Amazing Spider-Man' to avoid post-converting!

"It was a last minute decision to originate in 3D as opposed to do post 3D, but it was very dependent on our systems because we'd worked with Sony technology long enough. We put the camera systems into the Sony technology center where they're doing all the training. That's all our equipment. They knew the equipment well enough to know that of everything that's out there in the field, we could shoot on the schedule that they needed. So when the last minute decision was made to not convert but to shoot, it was a given that it would be with our equipment because Sony said this is the only way we'll get through the picture and finish on schedule. It was designed for that, that and the accuracy so you don't have to do repositioning in post, that give you the instant dailies, the instant precomps on set where you can actually do rough composites on set to see where things lay out and actually be able to look at it. It's very hard to do that if the footage isn't accurate."

Comment using...

Facebook social plugin

RELATED ARTICLES

RECENT IN FILM

The Book Report Podcast #88: After Before Watchmen

Blu-Ray Review: In Time

Amazing Spider-Man #679: Killing Time

Free Film School #35: Every Damned Movie is a Romance

We've Seen the Amazing Spider-Man Preview!

Michael Bay Will Return for Transformers 4!

OTHER ENTERTAINMENT NEWS

Miley Cyrus Hot in 'Prestige'

What's in Store for X-Men Movie Universe?

Boom

Jessica Rabbit Art Collection

Batman 3 Pic Shows Bane Close Up

Battle of the Superchicks

MOST CRAVED

Michael returning for Beetlejuice 2?

The Best & Worst of 'Found Footage' Movies

Daniel Radcliffe Takes On 'The Woman in Black'