

ITV/ITN TRUCK BUILDS

SIS LIVE'S long-running relationship with ITV and ITN as their preferred satellite newsgathering (SNG) provider was cemented during 2014 with its delivery of a new fleet of 18 bespoke HD SNG vehicles.

The highly-specified trucks, entirely designed and integrated by SIS LIVE's in house project team, have unrivalled uplink facilities to facilitate all of ITV and ITN's satellite newsgathering requirements in the UK.

Fitted with highly specified vision and audio equipment, the modified Mercedes Sprinter and Vito vans act as news bureaux on wheels, keeping ITN at the cutting edge of newsgathering operations, no matter where they are deployed.

Each truck represents SIS LIVE's signature innovative use of technology to simplify the broadcasting process from the most remote locations, and to maximise quality while remaining cost-efficient. They are the first major SNG fleet operating in

Ka Band, which delivers high resolution, high bandwidth communications.

Paul Stevenson, director of technology for ITV News, said: "We sought an agile and capable new fleet which was capable of bringing live coverage from anywhere in the country.

"The trucks had to support both DVB and IP based workflows, with unsurpassed IP and HD capabilities, utilising the very latest in satellite newsgathering technology. We value our long relationship with SIS LIVE and trusted them to deliver on our wish list."

SIS LIVE, which has worked with ITN and ITV for 20 years, held several sessions with the



broadcasters to establish a blueprint for SNG vehicles which met their exact requirements.

David Meynell, managing director, SIS LIVE, said: "We did a lot of research and development and then testing in order to demonstrate the high quality live broadcast footage the trucks could deliver.

"We drove a prototype model to remote places within the British Isles, for example, and chased all the bad weather, in order to test its consistency of performance."



He added: "There were a lot of workshops and client demonstrations, comparing footage from various settings, because it was important to us to get the specifications right before we began to build. It was a very collaborative, cooperative and reiterative process."

Once ITV and ITN were happy with the design, SIS LIVE's expert and highly experienced teams, including engineers, developers,

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wiremen, assemblers, logistics and bookings staff, operations and maintenance managers and network architects all worked together to bring the plans to fruition.

There was enough inbuilt flexibility to take into account new technology or revisions made for commercial reasons during the build period.

One of ITV and ITN's priorities was that the trucks should be lightweight and streamlined enough to allow the swiftest response to breaking news stories.

On each van, SIS LIVE installed

high stability lightweight DriveForce antennas, the lightest, most flexible vehicle mounted satellite system in the world.

The reduced weight, compared to competing antennas, allows for a higher spec system to be installed in a smaller 3.5T vehicle, thus avoiding the 56mph speed restriction of the 5T vehicles and allowing the swiftest response to breaking news stories.

The DriveForce antennas link directly to SIS LIVE's iDirect satellite hubs at Salford's MediaCityUK and Milton Keynes, which provide greater resilience. The fleet can also access SIS LIVE's upgraded uBook system which dynamically allocates bandwidth between DVB and IP carriers, ensuring that the satellite capacity usage is maximised at all times.

The twelve Vito vans for ITV and six Sprinters for ITN all have HD, SDI, fibre and wireless camera inputs as well as vision and audio mixers. Each ITN truck is dual path capable with redundant transmit chains and features a generator plus battery backup.

An enhanced dual modem system ensures the most efficient and reliable use of bandwidth for IP over satellite.

SIS LIVE provides all truck support and maintenance for the term of the lease agreement, as well as exclusive satellite space, leaving

the broadcaster free to concentrate on delivering top quality live broadcasts from breaking news locations.

David Meynell, managing director, SIS LIVE, said "We set out to revolutionise the operational capability of SNG trucks, from the moment they set out to reach the scene of a breaking story.

"By developing, delivering and operating our own technology we have been able to create a seamless solution which includes market-leading satellite antennae; an integrated online booking system; downlink services; and satellite and fibre distribution services.

"The deployment of this new truck signifies the delivery of the first major SNG fleet operating in Ka Band, enabling us to continue to deliver the excellence that has enabled ITV and ITN's award-winning news coverage."

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Steve Gore Smith, head of field operations at ITN, said "This is the third generation of SNG vehicles that we have leased from SIS LIVE and each generation has been marked by an advance in operational capability through the latest technology.

"The trucks are the first hybrids combining HD video over satellite with IP connectivity. This combines the essential reason for SNG vehicles which is the provision of reliable live inserts to programmes from anywhere in the UK, while the IP facilitates our move to an integrated file based newsgathering workflow using the latest solid state memory ENG cameras."

