

Star Thrower Distribution Relies on Rimage for Content Protection and On-Demand Production



Star Thrower Distribution Corp. produces and distributes more than two-dozen training and development films for a diverse list of clients, including Fortune 500 companies like Verizon and government entities like the U.S. Army. With many of Star Thrower's high-powered training DVDs selling for \$800 or more, copy protection is an essential component of the production process, not only to protect the company's work product, but to assure content authors that their valuable work will not be diminished by unauthorized duplication. Star Thrower wanted to eliminate its physical inventory of titles and begin producing CDs and DVDs on demand.

THE CHALLENGE

Prior to implementing its Rimage solution, Star Thrower relied on third-party replication companies to produce its CDs and DVDs. These replication companies used content-scrambling CSS encryption to protect against unauthorized duplication.

"Piracy is always an area of concern for us," said Jeff Andrews, operations manager for Star Thrower. "We act as asset managers for our content authors, so we need to protect their investment." Replicating discs required Star Thrower to buy at least 1,000 copies of a title in order to be cost-efficient.

"Some of our titles might not sell more than 500, so we've always been interested in the ability to copy protect burned copies," Andrews said.

Another downside to mass-replication was a large inventory. "Working with a third-party vendor slows our entire production process, and leaves us with excess inventory for programs that don't sell as well as we've anticipated," Andrews said. "Plus, once we've ordered copies from a vendor, we don't have the flexibility to go back and edit a program — we're stuck with the inventory we already paid for, yet can't sell in a timely manner."

"80 percent of our sales in any given year are to customers who have purchased from us before. One bad experience with playback and chances are they won't buy again, so Rimage Video Protect gives us peace of mind. We know our content authors want the protection, and we know the protection will be transparent to our customers."

Jeff Andrews,
Operations Manager,
Star Thrower Distribution Corp.

CUSTOMER

Star Thrower Distribution Corp.

CHALLENGE

Managing Excess Inventory
Improving Copy Protection

SOLUTION

Rimage Producer 8100N with
Rimage Video Protect™



R I M A G E™

ON-DEMAND DIGITAL PUBLISHING™

“RVP not only has an easy-to-use interface, but it’s the most secure copy protection software I’ve ever seen. With most copy protection programs, you can protect most, but not all of the content.”

James Drake,
Information Technology
Manager,
Star Thrower Distribution
Corp.

Virtual Inventory Boosts Profits, Maintains Flexibility

With a “just in time” production model, Star Thrower avoids large inventories and enjoys unparalleled flexibility. The company can produce any number of discs, depending on demand, with personalized imprints, foreign language subtitles, unique barcodes, etc.

Rimage Video Protect Secures Content, Preserves Playback Compatibility

Rimage Video Protect is a “win-win” for Star Thrower, with its tough copy protection capabilities and playback compatibility that’s superior to mass-replicated DVDs.

RIMAGE SOLUTION.

– Rimage Producer III 8100N system with embedded computer and Everest thermal-retransfer direct-to-disc printer.

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THE SOLUTION

Star Thrower purchased a Rimage Producer 8100N system with an Everest thermal-retransfer printer and Rimage Video Protect. Today, the company produces 13 of its 24 titles on demand using the Rimage system. “With Rimage, we can turn around a project faster than any other producer out there,” Andrews said. “As the word gets out about our capabilities, it gives us a distinct advantage in our industry.”

Rimage Video Protect (RVP) prevents the valuable content on the DVDs from being copied. This helps differentiate Star Thrower from other companies providing training and development video production and distribution, thanks to RVP’s unmatched playback compatibility. “When a customer pays \$800 or more for a set of DVDs, they expect them to work in just about any computer or DVD player,” Andrews said. “80 percent of our sales are to customers who have purchased from us before. One bad experience with playback and chances are they won’t buy again, so Rimage Video Protect gives us peace of mind.”

Using the Rimage Everest thermal-retransfer printer, the discs Star Thrower creates in-house feature durable, permanent full-color imprinting with variable data, such as barcodes and personalized text that rivals anything available from a mass-replication vendor. “The quality of the Rimage discs are superior,” Andrews said. “The variable data capabilities allow us to do things we couldn’t do before and add tangible value to our products.”

Looking Forward

Star Thrower considers its Rimage systems so innovative and reliable that the company will soon begin soliciting disc-publishing work from other companies. “We just love the speed and efficiency,” Andrews said, “and now, we can make discs faster than we can take orders.” Andrews plans to further streamline Star Thrower’s workflow by using the Rimage Rapid Application Programming Interface (API) to integrate disc publishing with the company’s inventory control system, so the Rimage system automatically produces discs in real-time as orders are placed.

“To our end-users, the DVD itself should be completely transparent — they are paying for the content on the disc, not the medium,” Andrews said. “The DVD should be beautiful to look at, yet when our customers watch it, they should forget about the medium.”

Star Thrower relies on Rimage at every stage of the production process — from workflow improvement to copy protection to full-color imprinting — to ensure the company is delivering the highest quality training and development video products available. Star Thrower’s mission has always been to control its own destiny. With help from on-demand digital publishing by Rimage, the company now holds the key to controlling its pricing, inventory, production deadlines and finished products.



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