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Snell & Wilcox Creates File-Focused Spinoff AmberFin

New Company to Market iCR Software-Based System for Content Repurposing

By Glen Dickson -- Broadcasting & Cable, 4/24/2008 9:26:00 PM

Snell & Wilcox was at the 2008 NAB Show last week not only to hawk its video-processing and switcher products, but also to make a pitch for [AmberFin](#), a new company that will market iCR, Snell's software-based system for content repurposing, and other new software products aimed at file-based work flows.

AmberFin (the name has no special meaning) will be run by Snell CEO Simon Derry and will remain part of the Snell & Wilcox Group, which is based in Basingstoke, United Kingdom, and owned by European venture capital firm Advent Venture Partners.

The intellectual property behind iCR will also be available to both companies. But AmberFin will have a dedicated engineering team, including Snell principal research-and-development engineer and MXF (material-exchange format) expert Bruce Devlin, and soon a dedicated sales force, as well.

Given the success of iCR -- which is used by large customers such as Warner Bros., Sony Pictures, Ascent Media, Technicolor and British Telecommunications to repurpose content for distribution on multiple platforms -- it may seem strange to separate a growth segment from the main Snell & Wilcox business unless plans for a outright sale or initial public offering are underway.

But according to Derry, no such plans are in place for AmberFin. Instead, he said, creating a separate company was the most efficient way to market and develop file-based software systems, which have a different development cycle and business model than the real-time video hardware Snell has been selling for decades.

"The software and services business model is different from the rest of the Snell & Wilcox product line," Derry added. "We're working with companies like HP [Hewlett-Packard] and IBM. There are different price strategies, and we need to appeal to a broader audience than our existing customers."