



TVE, Televisión Española

Including virtual revellers in social distancing times

Brainstorm's latest technological innovations made it possible for TVE (Spanish Public Television) to integrate virtual revellers into the New Year event, allowing a coverage of the celebration simulating that of previous years despite 2020's social distancing requirements.

The New Year's Eve celebrations are one of the most popular in Spain, and RTVE, the country's national broadcaster, has traditionally been the most watched program for receiving the New Year, broadcasting the "twelve chimes" of the old clock at the Puerta del Sol in Madrid.

with a "live" broadcast that brought "magic" to their screens, by filling the Puerta del Sol with virtual revellers and personalities, as well as many healthcare and other public services' professionals who were honoured for their immense work and commitment during the pandemic.

In spite of the need to strictly comply with health and safety measures, the well-known celebrities, Ana Obregón and Anne Igartiburu, took part in this RTVE special program, which, thanks to Brainstorm's technological innovations, it was possible to celebrate in a simulated

Brainstorm has been key to assisting RTVE to resolve the main problem that threatened the broadcasting of their 'Twelve Chimes to welcome in the New Year' program. With pandemic restrictions forbidding the large gathering typically congregating in the Puerta del Sol on New Year's Eve, technology allowed the celebrations to go ahead for the enjoyment and entertainment of those virtually present as well as the large number of viewers who tuned in. So, with the help of Brainstorm, Spain's public broadcaster provided viewers



spectacular fashion to the usual event on New Year's Eve. Many individuals from the general public as well as some of the most recognised and popular television personalities were virtually present in the Puerta del Sol to welcome in the New Year with the viewers as well as share their dreams and hopes for 2021.

For security reasons the production of the Augmented Reality virtual audience shots was not done live. RTVE opted for a live-to-tape real-time post-production with InfinitySet, Brainstorm's virtual set and AR application, to be broadcast as simulated live content during the live coverage. Firstly, seven moving shots were filmed in Puerta del Sol, which were later tracked in order to overlay the video clips sent to RTVE from the homes of the celebrities, health professionals and general public who wished to be part of the celebration virtually. Thanks to Brainstorm's algorithm, some 150 video feeds of the virtual attendees were seamlessly integrated from three different sources, creating a compelling AR experience.

According to Enrique Cotillas, Deputy Director of Infographics and Graphics at TVE and director of the project, "it was a challenge for TVE to include our audience in a Puerta del Sol that would be empty this New Year's Eve. To do this we asked our viewers to send us their images to be



included in a virtual way in camera and crane movements in an empty space. The challenge was ambitious from a technical and logistical point of view for the Image Management and the technical team of TVE, but thanks to Brainstorm, who did the tracking and integration, allowing us to fill the Puerta del Sol with people as if it were a big meeting by videoconference, and Shots, who helped us in the creative part following the work of the Christmas campaign that they did for us before, the result was magnificent".

Thanks to technological innovation, among other factors, the broadcast of La 1 of RTVE topped the charts of all of Spain's national and regional channels with an average of more than 7 million viewers, and peaking at 13 million which was 38% of the entire viewing public on New Year's Eve.



"It has been a work against the clock and full of setbacks because the Puerta del Sol is never empty, only at certain times of the night before the cleaning services come in, but Brainstorm's technology allowed us to achieve a very real result of people celebrating The Twelve Chimes to welcome in the New Year with TVE in Puerta del Sol, which was the goal we had set ourselves"

Enrique Cotillas
Deputy Director of Graphics, TVE