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MOVIEZ compression

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United Film Organizers (UFO) Moviez, India, has acquired worldwide rights to the MPEG4 digital cinema system from Singapore-based DG2L Technologies. It has bought a 51 per cent stake in a subsidiary owned by DG2L, (now renamed UFO International). "We began our association with DG2L as a licensing agreement for MPEG4 in India, but ended up buying the technology," says Kapil Agarwal, director, UFO Moviez.

The MPEG4 standard is an open standard for media delivery to any playback environment. This high-definition

digital cinema video system, based on MPEG4, compresses digital files (MPEG stands for Motion Pictures Expert Group that develops platform-independent standards for video compression) so that they can be delivered more efficiently over IP networks, notes Ankur K Sheth, CEO, DG2L Technologies.

Pioneers of digital cinema in India, UFO Moviez was launched by Valuable Media in November 2005. Ten months later, the company has converted 350 analog theatres to digital and is now eyeing markets like Europe, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, UAE and Mauritius. It has set its eyes on 2,000 digital movie

halls by March 2008, at a total investment of Rs 300 crore. Along with the Indian language films, UFO is also looking at the local language film industry in the various countries to provide them our digital cinema solution. "Essentially, it is the theatre owners in the B and C towns that benefit the most. If a movie reaches them on the first day of its launch, it also helps in curbing piracy," says Kanwar. He claims UFO will soon roll out digital networks for multiplexes like Fame and Inox.

"We are also talking to a few cinemas in Maharashtra like Roxy and Central Plaza," explains Raaja Kanwar, VC & director, UFO Moviez.