



Logic INFERNO Helped Digital Domain Raise *Titanic*

Discreet Logic visual effects used extensively to create the highest grossing film in motion picture history

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Discreet Logic Inc. announced that Inferno, the company's pinnacle visual-effects system, was used extensively on many of the approximately 550 digital-effects shots used in the making of James Cameron's *Titanic*.

As reported in the film-industry trade magazine *Variety* on Feb. 24, *Titanic* is currently the highest grossing film in motion-picture history, with worldwide box-office receipts in excess of \$919.8 million. *Titanic* has also been nominated for 14 of this year's Academy Awards®, including Best Picture, Best Director (Cameron) and Best Visual Effects (Robert Legato, Mark Lasoff, Thomas L Fisher and Michael Kanfer).

Digital Domain, the Venice, CA-based digital studio, with 10 Inferno and 20 Flint systems, also provided the effects for such notable projects as *True Lies*, *Apollo 13*, *The Fifth Element* and a host of Super Bowl spots, found the making of *Titanic* to be a challenge unlike anything before encountered.

"It was definitely a big job," said Carey Villegas, compositing supervisor and lead compositor on *Titanic*. "When there was a complex shot in *Titanic*, you can pretty much count on the fact that Inferno was used. We had well over 50 compositors working on this project, and we were going around the clock."

According to Villegas, Inferno was very important in the most spectacular appearance of the doomed ship. The shot, known as "TD 35" to Villegas and the Digital Domain crew, was just one of the film's staggeringly ambitious shots. Leaving the Southampton harbor for her fateful maiden voyage, *Titanic* steams into the Atlantic and toward its destiny. At the bow is Jack Dawson (Leonardo di Caprio), arms raised in exaltation, defiantly bellowing "I'm the king of the world!" From a close-up of Jack, the camera tracks over his head and along the full length of the ship, revealing its awesome size, many computer-generated passengers and full majesty.

Villegas continued, "TD 35' was by far the trickiest and toughest shot in the show. It involved over 200 elements—by far the biggest number of elements we've ever encountered.

"Also, the shot had to be changed from a sunset to an early morning shot, and the ship's direction had to be reversed. So we had to change the time of day, then flip the shot and make it look natural. We used INFERNO for all the tracking, paint and finishing work."

Inferno's tracking and stabilizing also proved to be a valuable asset: "There were tons of Inferno tracking work on that shot," claimed Villegas. "When you see Jack at the front of the ship, all those shots had to be tracked in by hand and were done in Inferno. That was some of the most intensive Inferno work we did."

In the final analysis, however, Villegas' appraisal of Inferno's contribution is succinct: "There were a lot of complex shots in *Titanic*, and if there was a complex shot, you can pretty much count on the fact that we used Inferno."