

VIDEO TAPE RECORDING AREAS

INTRODUCTION

In current BBC practice the video tape machines in studio centres are centralised in one or more areas. This enables a more flexible use of the expensive equipment and a more reliable service to the programme makers.

This information sheet outlines the organisation of these areas and describes some of the equipment found in them.

1. Videotape Cubicles

In London Television Centre a separate section of Television Studios, Network and Recording Department handles all aspects of video tape operations, ie recording replaying, editing and maintenance. Network Production and Regional Centres also usually use specialist staff for video tape.

The video tape machines, often in pairs, are usually arranged in self contained cubicles with the extra equipment necessary for efficient operation. Normally these cubicles are general purpose ones, capable of recording from any source eg studio, OB, telecine etc. and replaying to any destination eg studios, continuity or network etc. or even to or from any other cubicle.

In Television Centre there are some special arrangements in the form of dedicated transmission and editing suites. Additionally some cubicles are earmarked for special types of programme, eg sport, and have additional specialised equipment.

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1.1 General Purpose Cubicles

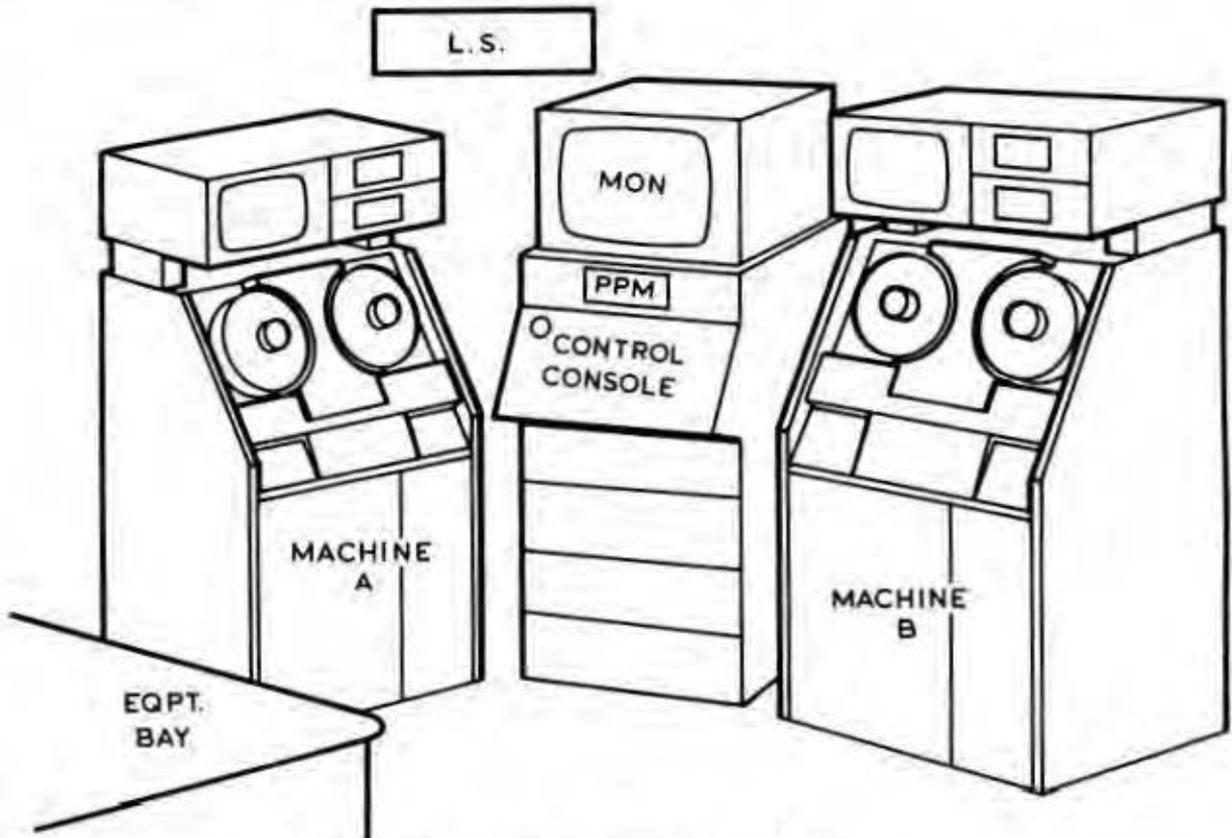


Figure 1 Typical VT Cubicle

A general purpose VT cubicle will contain, in addition to the machines, a monitoring console and a set of equipment bays.

The console contains a control panel to allow the operator to work near the VT machine and a high grade colour monitor. A loudspeaker is hung above the console.

The equipment bay and console contain:

1. Equalisers and amplifiers for the record and replay video lines.
2. Record selectors for sound and vision programme sources and test signals.
3. A replay routing system to allow machine change-over on a replay line.
4. Line up and identification systems.

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5. Sync pulse processing and synchronisation equipment.
6. Separate Sound and Vision monitoring systems.
7. Remote control systems for the machine transports.
8. Communication systems
eg EMX telephones, Intercom, Talkback etc.

1.2. Central Facilities

If the centre is large a separate recording area is often found. There will be central apparatus bays for common equipment such as routing, sync pulse distribution, and test signal generation and distribution. A monitoring area may be provided for viewing and listening away from the noise of the machines.

In Television Centre a separate control room and apparatus area exist solely to check VT signals in and out and to route cubicles to and from different studios etc. This is because about half of the BBC's video tape cubicles are in the Television Centre recording complex.

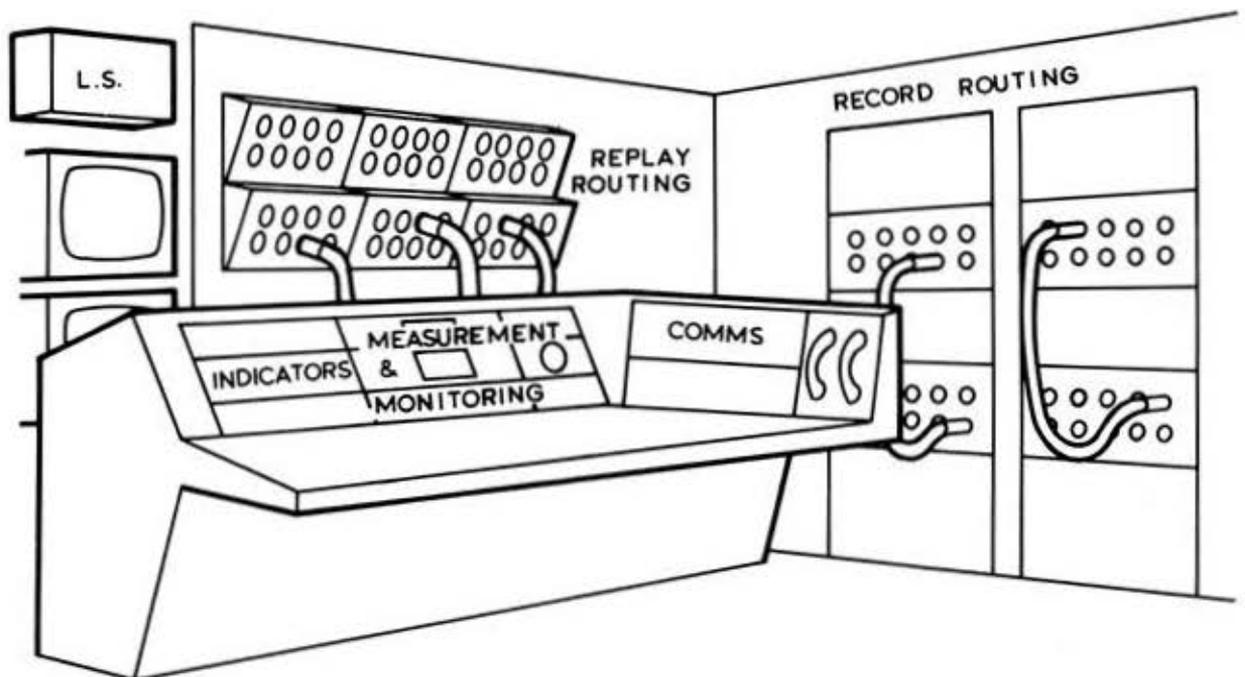


Figure 2 Television Centre Video Tape Control

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Other specialist VT areas are found in TV News at TVC and Topical Production Centre at Lime Grove.

Here a number of different tape formats have to be dealt with eg U Matic and domestic formats VHS and Betamax. The News VT area operates as a pre-switching point for tape contributions to reduce the load on the studio during busy bulletins.

1.3 Transmission Suites

A large number of programmes are broadcast from video tape either directly or after dubbing from other sources like film.

Two special transmission suites have been built in Television Centre to service both networks. They have pairs of C-Format and Quad machines in each and are able to provide a continuous output from tapes of either format. They primarily work directly to Network Control, but can be used for other purposes. Any general purpose cubicle can also be used for transmission if the need arises.

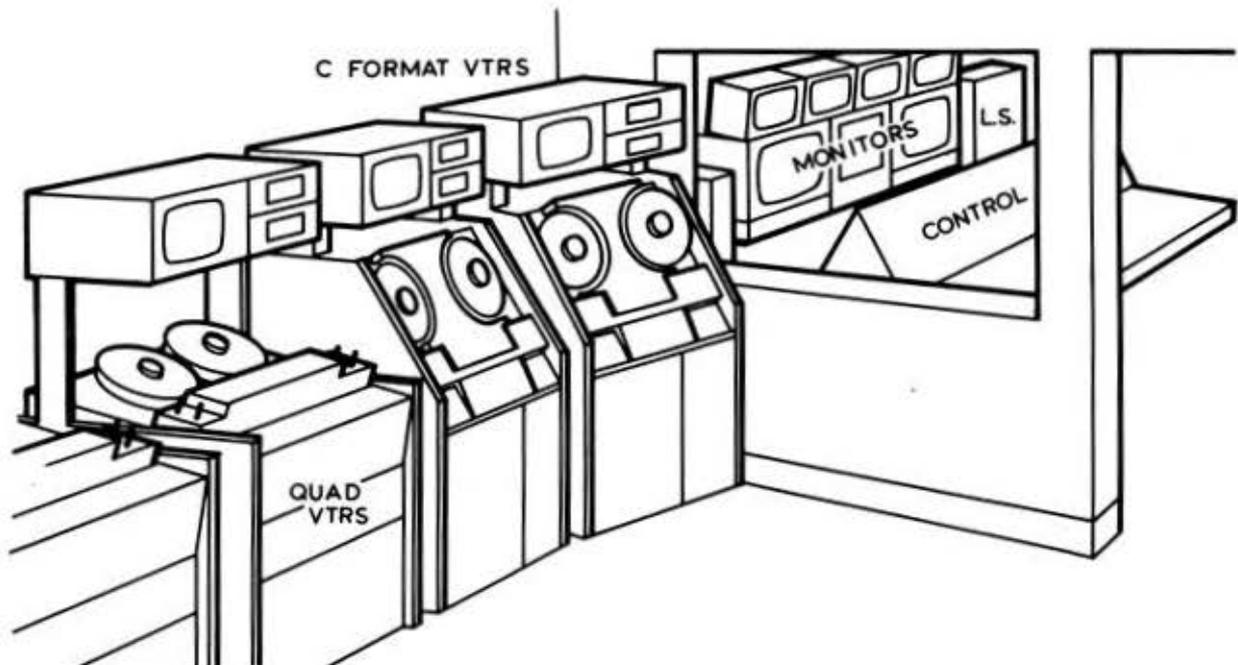


Figure 3 Television Centre Transmission Suite

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1.4 Editing Suites

Due to modern production methods a vast amount of tape editing is required. Simple editing can be done on a pair of general purpose machines either in one or two cubicles. The most complex forms of editing are done in special suites.

These have a control desk for the timing equipment used to accurately control the machines. In a separate room there are three or four machines, one of which is used to make the final copy. Other equipment such as audio recorders, sound and vision mixers and special effect units are also installed or, can be provided if needed.

These suites usually operate in a self contained mode, in fact some are unable to interface with other technical areas.

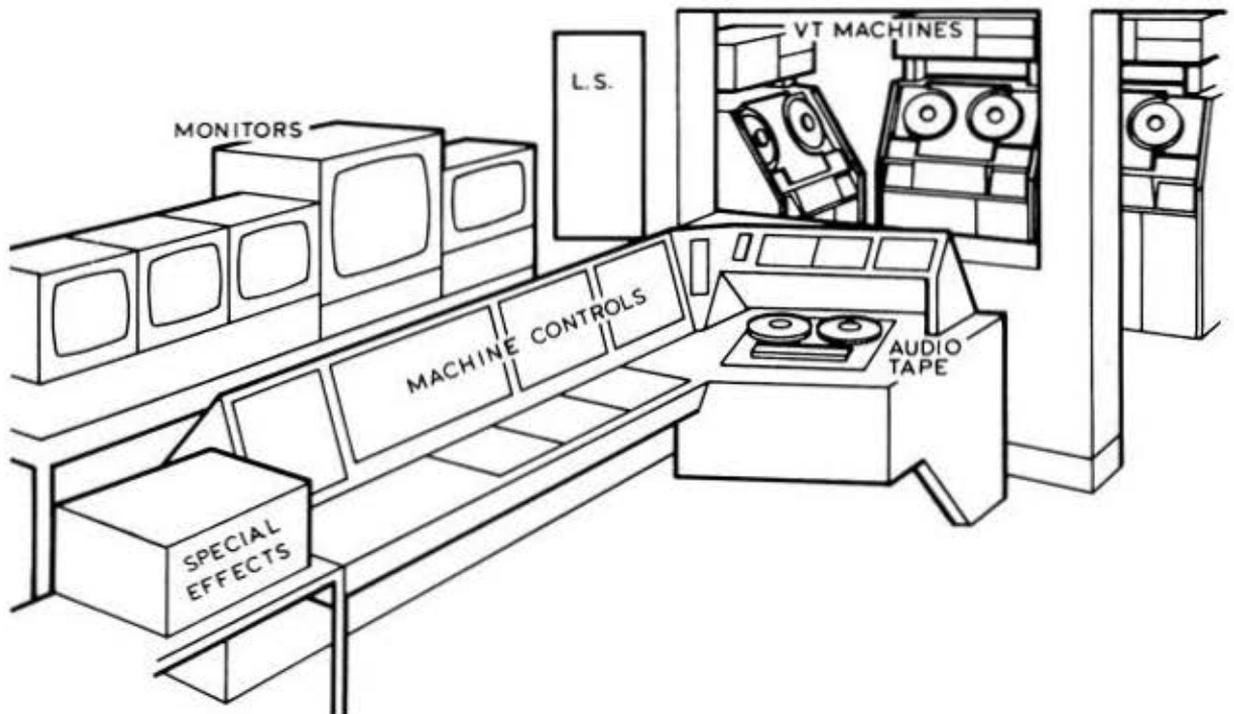


Figure 4 Editing Suite

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2. MOBILE VIDEO TAPE

A number of VT machines are fitted in vans which form part of the Outside Broadcast Fleet. These are similar to a cubicle, but specially designed to work closely with a Mobile Control Room. They can have one or two machines and can be used to do simple editing on site. They have extra power supply and air conditioning equipment for working on remote sites.

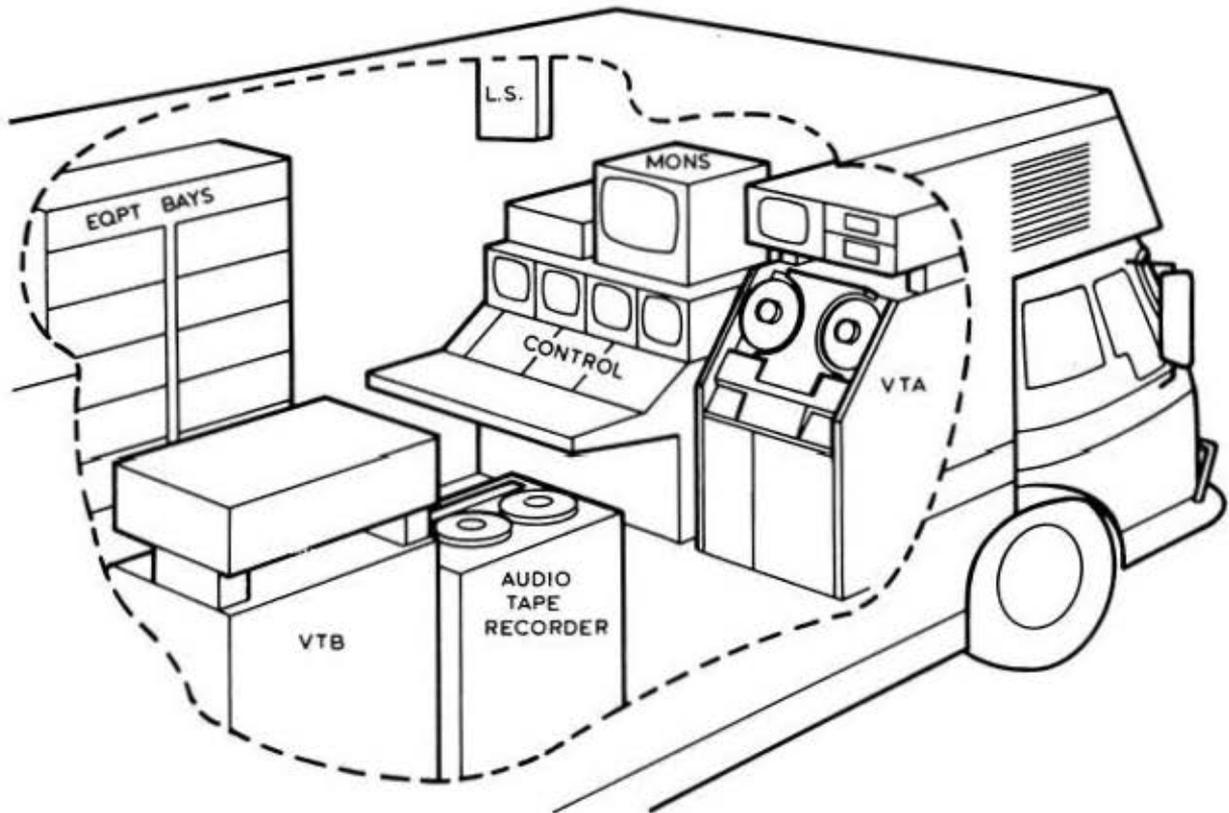


Figure 5 Mobile Video Tape Vehicle