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Visual Effects Society goes online to increase its voter turnout

By Sheigh Crabtree

The Visual Effects Society has 1,300 members from 16 countries, which means that when it comes time to vote on the year's best effects, it's tough to get everyone together in the same room.

So the Los Angeles-based group came up with a comprehensive online view-and-vote system that enables VES members to screen nominated clips, before-and-after sequences and written material.

The ensuing votes will be tallied and winners announced Feb. 15 at the fourth annual VES Awards at the Hollywood Palladium.

"Not only is it inclusionary for all of our members around the world, but they can vote in an informed way," Visual Effects Society executive director Eric Roth said. "Having seen the material in real time, they can then vote in real time 24/7 when they have the time."

The site went live Wednesday thanks in no small part to consultant Marty Shindler, who tapped One to One Ratio to design the site, Technicolor Creative Services to encode the video clips and Synccast to deliver the content. The Quicktime and Windows Media Player clips can be viewed on Windows or Mac systems in Explorer, Safari or Firefox.

"We've gotten no feedback since we went live, which is great," Roth said.

Added Shindler: "(The VES members) who are accessing the site are sending and receiving video files from FTP sites as a part of their regular work. And with work being done in so many locations these days, VES' view-and-vote online setup was a logical step."