INTEGRATE ANNOUNCES RECORD ATTENDANCE

Ultra high definition screens, holographic displays and the latest in unified communications, control systems and advanced building automation, pro AV, audio and lighting were just some of the technologies on show at Integrate 2015, as the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre became a hub of the latest AV technology.

Held over three days and reportedly attended by more than 5,300 key industry professionals, Integrate 2015 has been called the most successful show in the event's seven-year history, reinforced by two thirds of this year's exhibitors already committing to returning in 2016.

Integrate event manager Soren Norgaard says the broad mix of new and innovative products on the show floor combined with education and training programs was what made Integrate the must-attend annual event for the AV and systems integration industry.

"Our vision for Integrate has been to create a one-stop-shop for key industry professionals where they can stay on top of the latest products and solutions across a broad range of areas while also enabling them to up-skill and stay ahead of industry trends, network with industry colleagues and customers," Soren says.

"Our partnership with InfoComm International, which we have secured for another five years, is testament to the fact that Integrate is an important event for the AV industry both locally and internationally."

More than 100 products were launched to the Australian market at this year's show, generating strong interest from visitors in several new products, including holographic displays, compressed signal distribution, touch screen interactive solutions and digital content creation.

Integrate 2015 was also used to pilot the latest in exhibition technology, the Konduko Reader, a wireless chip based communication device, at the show.

"Integrate 2015 attracted a high calibre of brands that used this event as an opportunity to launch new products and network, in addition to lead generation," Soren says.

"The calibre and steady flow of industry attendees through the door is testament to the fact that Integrate is a key annual event and we are certain it will be an even stronger event in 2016 and beyond."

Integrate will return to the Sydney Showground, Sydney Olympic Park in 2016 from 23 to 25 August.

INTEGRATE in association with **infoComm INTERNATIONAL** CEDIA CUSTOM ELECTRONIC DESIGN & INSTALLATION ASSOCIATION

INFOCOMM SIGNS FIVE YEAR DEAL WITH INTEGRATE

Diversified Communications – the organiser of the Integrate Expo – has announced that the existing partnership between Australia's largest AV and systems integration event and InfoComm International will continue for another five years.

Announced on the first day of Integrate 2015, Diversified Communications Australia managing director Matt Pearce says the partnership shows the importance of trade events like Integrate for not only the local AV industry but also the wider international community and the need for training and education in the Asia Pacific region.

"Developing these international relationships helps Integrate to provide the local industry with up-to-date training and knowledge in addition to the latest AV products," Matt says.

"In just seven years, Integrate has grown to become the most established commercial event dedicated to the Australian AV and systems integration market place and extending our partnership with InfoComm cements its position as the must attend industry event."

InfoComm International Asia Pacific senior director Jonathan Seller says trade shows are an ideal space to offer its members education and training and that its partnership with Integrate was crucial in extending InfoComm's reach in to the Australian marketplace.

"This partnership with Integrate means InfoComm's Australian members have one annual event that provides them with the opportunity to see the latest AV and systems integration products and also maintain and enhance their skills through InfoComm's education programs," Jonathan says.

CEDIA ASIA PACIFIC AWARD WINNERS REVEALED

The results of the annual CEDIA Asia Pacific Awards were announced at a function on Wednesday 26 August, highlighting the pinnacle of the region's custom installation industry. Held at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI), the residential integration industry's night of nights played host to around 70 of the industry's brightest and best known identities, who came together to celebrate everything that makes the region great.

For the first time, in 2015 award entrants had to pay a fee for submitting a project into the awards; however, that didn't appear to put a damper on the event or affect the quality of the submissions. Instead, the judges commented on the high calibre of the projects they had to evaluate.

In 2015, the CEDIA Awards judges included:
- Ian Bryant of Simplified Concepts.
- Christopher Wright of WrightWorks.
- Joel Silver of Imaging Science Foundation, Inc.
- Dave Tkachuk of Symbol Logic.
- Gerry Lemay of the Home Acoustics Alliance.
- John Bishop of Bishop Audio Services.
- Eric Lee of Integrated Control Experts, Inc.
- Michael Pope of Audio Video Interiors.
- Dennis Erskine of Erskine Group Inc (Awards chairman).

THE WINNERS OF THE 2015 CEDIA AWARDS
BEST WIRING DOCUMENTATION
Winner: Liquid Automation
BEST AUDIO VIDEO DOCUMENTATION
Winner: Home Control & Audio
BEST MEDIA ROOM UNDER $25,000
Winner: Smart Home Solutions
Finalist: The Digital Picture
BEST PERSONAL CRAFT
Winner: Liquid Automation
HOME THEATRE, LEVEL ONE ($150,000 AND UNDER)
Winner: Automation Associates
Winner: Beijing Tian Hai Bei Fang System-Integration Tech
Finalist: Zene Private Theater
HOME THEATRE, LEVEL TWO ($150,000 AND OVER)
Winner: Home Control and Audio
Finalist: Wavetrain Cinemas
Finalist: Zene Private Theater
INTEGRATED HOME, LEVEL ONE ($150,000 AND UNDER)
Winner: Digital Residence
Finalist: Zentec
INTEGRATED HOME, LEVEL TWO ($150,000 AND OVER)
Winner: Electronic Living
Finalist: Automation Associates
Finalist: Liquid Automation

CEDIA: BUILDING A COMMUNITY, ONE INTEGRATOR AT A TIME

Members of the residential systems integration sector will undoubtedly be familiar with the Custom Electronic Design and Installation Association (CEDIA). With more than 3,500 member companies globally, the association serves an estimated 22,000+ industry professionals that manufacture, design, and integrate goods and services for the connected home.

Lately, the association has had a rough trot in Australia and New Zealand, undergoing a number of changes to the way it services the region. Now, the association wants you to know that it is here and ready to work with local industry members to continue to build the local market.

Laura Hockstra is the global senior director of membership for CEDIA. She says the association is busy building a worldwide community for its members to better enable networking, training and troubleshooting opportunities.

"The cool thing to come out of Integrate is confirmation that people love the CEDIA brand. They get excited about it and they want the best for the organisation, and that's been pretty exciting for us," she says.

"We're now looking to continue the build in Asia Pacific, but as the industry changes we've had to adjust the association to meet the needs of members.

"The whole organisation is now taking a different approach to building a global community, to help our members to make connections – from the manufacturing community to the distribution community, right through to integrators. That's what we do well.

"A lot of our integrator members tell us that they want an opportunity to reach out and connect with other integrators and talk shop, in particular about business and operations.

We've got the technical training and it's as strong as ever, but we are definitely focusing more on building a more complete community."

In the past two months, CEDIA has launched 'CEDIA Groups', which offer like-minded business owners a platform for discussing business opportunities and challenges – all with the goal of improving their businesses.

Each CEDIA Group is made up of five to seven CEDIA member integrator executives who meet monthly via phone or webinar to network, discuss key business issues, share best practices and have candid conversations about operational challenges.

Every CEDIA Group has a team leader to provide organisational support and groups have access to advisors, integrators who have demonstrated operational excellence during their years of experience within the industry.

To date, the association already hosts nine groups in the US and one is getting formed in the UK.

"We are dedicated to creating network platforms, that are cost effective, that can be accessed any time our members need assistance," Laura says.

"As an industry association, we need to build opportunities for our members day in and day out, and that's where we will spend a lot of effort moving forward."

In addition to CEDIA Groups, the association also has plans to launch online forums before the year is over, allowing members to share in an environment that is safe.

Further, in 2016, the organisation plans to launch a job board/career centre.

Paul Skelton

Left to right: CEDIA EMEA chairman Kris Hogg, senior director of membership and governance Laura Hockstra, Connection Magazines general manager Jeremy Sweet and CEDIA director of emerging markets Tom Owens.

EXTRON UNVEILS CAVALCADE OF NEW PRODUCTS

The team at Extron has clearly been busy, releasing a raft of new products into the Australian market. In fact, some products were so new that the company didn't actually allocate space on its stand for them, thinking they wouldn't be ready in time.

In particular, the CCI Pro 700 – a control system user interface optimised for conferencing, collaboration and AV control – ended up sitting alone on a table with no signage. But that didn't stop people gathering around to have a look at what is fundamentally different from what Extron is best known.

The CCI Pro 700 supports many of the critical functions needed in a conferencing environment, while providing a powerful and intuitive room control user interface. The compact design includes a 3.5" colour information display, a numeric keypad and backlit buttons. The information display may be used to show contact information, call directories and call status. Buttons directly below the display may be used to navigate custom lists and menus. The CCI Pro 700 supports popular software communications platforms, including Microsoft Lync, Skype for Business and Skype. This additional flexibility affords countless conferencing and control possibilities.

Perhaps the biggest drawcard on the Extron stand, though, was directly behind the CC1 Pro 700. The XTP II CrossPoint 6400 matrix switcher with a 50Gbps digital switching backplane represents a significant leap in engineering and product design.

CCI Pro 700.

The XTP II enables the deployment of an AV system infrastructure with a switching bandwidth that exceeds the data rate required to distribute 4K/60 video with 4:4:4 chroma sampling at 16 bits per colour. These matrix switchers can be configured with a variety of boards, including any of the existing products in the XTP Systems family and the new series of XTP 4K fibre optic boards and endpoints.

Personally, my highlight of the Extron stand was the SM 28 SpeedMount surface mount speaker, a two-way speaker with a patent pending, concealed wall mounting system.

This 8Ω speaker features an 8" (20.3cm) woofer with dual tuned ports and a 1.1" (2.8cm) tweeter. The SM 28 provides a frequency range from 59Hz to 22kHz, and a power rating of 90W continuous pink noise, 180W continuous program capacity.

But what makes it a standout is the mounting system, which is designed to accommodate division-of-labour installations and save costs.

To meet a variety of installation needs, the extremely flexible mounting system includes a 0° mounting plate and a 10° mounting adapter. The 0° mounting plate provides the electrical connections and allows the SM 28 to be oriented vertically or horizontally, flush with the wall. When the versatile 10° mounting adapter is added to the mounting plate, the SM 28 can be positioned with a 10° tilt downward, upward, left or right.

During rough-in, a low-voltage contractor installs the mounting system on the wall and terminates the speaker cable to the mount's integrated wiring contacts. Later, the AV system contractor completes the installation by sliding the SM 28 onto the mount.

XTP II CrossPoint 6400 matrix switcher with a 50Gbps digital switching backplane.

Paul Skelton

BEALE STREET AUDIO COMES TO A/NZ

It seems like every year it's a case of 'another show, another architectural speaker brand'. In 2015, though, things were different: there were two new architectural speaker brands. But where other new brands have failed, both of these new brands – Beale Street Audio and Origin Acoustics (see page 27) – are properly funded ventures that are touting quite interesting technologies.

For Beale Street Audio, that technology is called 'Sonic Vortex' and features in the company's range of architectural loudspeakers and subwoofers.

Put simply, Sonic Vortex combines proven design methods with what would traditionally be a very long port and wraps it around the internal cavity of the enclosure. This produces bass that far exceeds what you would expect from a small cabinet.

The main port is separated into multiple ports containing what the company calls 'fins'. The fins can be designed and adjusted to maximise the sound in enclosures of various sizes and depths, even very shallow ones.

The fins compress and move air at a high rate of speed without port noise and also add to the cabinet's rigidity for further acoustical reinforcement. Compared to sealed models, the Sonic Vortex design reportedly provides a 6db to 9db boost in the mid-lower bass ranges and a flatter frequency response across the audio spectrum.

Beale Street Audio executive director Mark Cichowski – who is well known to the Australian market thanks to his prior involvement with TruAudio and Sonance, and helping to launch CEDIA in the APAC region – says his new brand marks the first real technological development in loudspeaker design for two decades.

"There haven't been any real developments in speaker design for 20 years," he says.

"That's not to knock pivoting tweeters. We use those, too. We also use edgeless grilles, but that's not technology; that's aesthetics.

"Our Sonic Vortex technology is based on a ported transmission line. That forces air through the speaker at very high velocity, which means you achieve great levels of bass from a very small enclosure.

"Jim Murray, who founded Beale Street Audio, took that concept and put it into an architectural speaker by wrapping it around the internal cavity of the enclosure.

"We don't use backboxes like other manufacturers. Backboxes have a purpose but that is typically to keep debris out, or to keep sound from bleeding into adjoining rooms, but they actually make speakers sound worse. An open back speaker is meant to be in an open cavity and if you put a backbox on it, it hurts it sonically."

The challenge for in-ceiling and in-wall subwoofers has always been to produce deep, articulate low frequency effects without damaging walls and creating sonic artifacts in the room. Sonic Vortex technology re-imagines the traditional ported subwoofer enclosure to deliver significantly more bass and a flatter frequency response from an in-ceiling design. By moving air more efficiently and at higher speeds

through multiple ports in the specially designed, vortex-shaped enclosure, Beale Street Audio has created an architectural subwoofer that delivers "sonic slam" and an expansive soundstage from a driver that barely moves the enclosure.

These new subwoofers are engineered with an extremely rigid Kevlar woofer material and a butyl rubber surround that delivers balanced performance, even when listeners are off-axis. Both the 6" and 8" models offer deceptively strong bass for their compact size and work with existing in-ceiling and in-wall speaker systems or Beale Street Audio's own series of in-ceiling and in-wall speakers.

"When it comes to in-ceiling subs, you obviously have to brace them so they don't crack the dry wall," Mark says.

"A big benefit of Sonic Vortex is that it doesn't give you energy transfer from the driver to the enclosure. At the 2014 CEDIA Expo in Denver, Colorado, we hung our (operational) subwoofers from fishing wire and they didn't move.

"It's all about balanced air flow."

Beale Street Audio in-ceiling subwoofers are also highly scalable. Infinite variable designs for both cabinet air volume and port dimensions allows for flexible industrial design options. The depth and width of the integrated enclosure can vary based on the models, while still providing enhanced bass and better overall performance compared to similar products. The new subwoofers are also amplifier-friendly since they sound and perform like a sealed subwoofer cabinet with the same impedance curve.

Paul Skelton

CRESTRON'S PP-100 PINPOINT PROXIMITY BEACON ENHANCES PERSONALISED CONTROL

The Crestron PP-100 PinPoint Proximity Beacon works in conjunction with the Crestron App for iOS and enables a smart device to know what room it's in and deliver room-specific, personalised control by activating scenes and displaying the appropriate GUI for a given location. This negates the need for the user to manually select their location and settings from a menu.

A Bluetooth device that is powered by USB, the PP-100 also enables a user's personal settings to follow them from room to room. So as the user moves around the home with their smart device, their music selection, preferred lighting and temperature scenes will move with them.

The low profile beacons can be plugged into any USB port and will support up to 100 rooms with one beacon per room. Applications for the technology range from residential to commercial, with strong potential for usage in the education, aged care and disability sectors.

Jacob Harris

LUXUL PROMOTES THE IMPORTANCE OF IP NETWORKING

As more and more devices start to feature network capabilities, it's increasingly important to provide your customers with stable, secure and useable WiFi networks in their homes and businesses. And they need it in increasingly larger spaces and under more challenging conditions.

Determining the best wireless solutions will require a little homework on top of considering customer requirements and budgets. Some controllers are only meant for network configuration and can't help with roaming at all. Some controllers are designed for the enterprise market and have prices and features to match. Finally, some controllers are designed just for the home and small office and the integrators who serve those markets.

As an integrator, what you really care about is simple installation, high-quality and cost-effective hardware, good support when you need it and happy customers that won't need expensive follow-up service calls. The right wireless controller can help you meet those needs.

According to Luxul president and chief executive Jeff Curtis, his brand offers you all you need and more.

"The IP network has really become a critical component of home automation," he says.

"If integrators get the network right then everything can be built on top of it, but if they get it wrong then the rest of the install just isn't going to work.

"Now, every dealer out there is looking at networking not just as something they need to do but also as a revenue-making opportunity. At Luxul, we have really focused on supplying an entire line of networking gear that is simple to install, reliable, supported and priced right for the market."

To coincide with a raft of new product being released in 2015, Luxul is pushing dealers towards its extensive (and free) database of online education webinars, including the popular *How to setup a kickass network in 30 minutes or less*.

To check out the online library, visit http://luxul.com/educational-webinars.

Luxul is distributed in Australia and New Zealand by Avation.

Paul Skelton

HOLOGRAPHIC DISPLAYS DESCEND ON INTEGRATE

In the ultra-competitive world of in-store retail, companies are always looking for something new to attract customers to their displays and encourage them to buy. Jason Bell of RealVision thinks he has the solution: holographic displays.

"We call these things foot magnets: people are attracted to the visual display," Jason says.

The holographic displays come in a range of designs with sizes from 433mm to 1,778mm wide, but the basic set up remains the same. A small LCD screen at the top of the stand is reflected by four planes of patented glass that then creates a 3D image in the space below using the Pepper's Ghost effect.

The graphics can work by themselves or be designed to interact with a real life product.

"The beauty of this product is that you can put a physical product inside the glass enclosure and then the graphics will bring the product to life. That gets people's attention," Jason says.

The holographic projectors are made by Danish company RealFiction. RealVision is the exclusive distributor of RealFiction in Australia and New Zealand.

"RealVision offers an end-to-end process. We do the hardware, strategy, content, logistics and then we quantify the return on investment," Jason explains.

Return on investment can be measured by a camera built into the display, which tracks eye movement of passers-by.

Jason is confident about the implementation of hologram displays in Australia.

"This technology has been working really well in the US, UK and Europe. Now, Australia's starting to catch up and grasp it."

Kate Jordan

SENNHEISER MOBILECONNECT PROVIDES LOW LATENCY STREAMING AUDIO

Sennheiser MobileConnect is an audio streaming product that takes analogue or digital audio streams and packetises them so they can be distributed over a system's secure wireless network to an iOS or Android smart device.

"The MobileConnect device and algorithm manage the scaling of the bit rate and sample rate in conjunction with other variables to ensure audio is received by the user's device in a very low latency form. On iOS it's almost imperceptible in terms of lip sync – around the 40 millisecond mark and that will improve with time," says product channel manager of Sennheiser's Integrated Systems Division, Australia and New Zealand, Jason Grebvski.

The system assesses the way it sends traffic over the network. It looks at the amount of congestion on the network as well as variables within the audio stream itself to ensure a seamless experience for the listener.

"We employ a very high quality codec to maintain audio quality. Because it can be used at very high sample rates and high dynamic range, it lends itself well to applications such as cinema where audiences are more discerning in terms of the quality of material," says Jason.

But there is scope for the product to be used in a multitude of applications. It can provide hearing assistance, enabling people with a hearing impairment to enjoy a broadcast without the use of specialist equipment such as inferred or a receiver based systems. And in settings where multiple AV streams are being broadcast, such food courts, airport lounges and sporting stadiums, audiences are able to select a stream and listen in on their smart devices.

Jacob Harris

2015 INTEGRATE WRAP-UP

EXTERITY DOUBLES DOWN IN THE A/NZ MARKET

Exterity has been on the market in Australia for six years now but is perhaps not as well known as it should be. As a result, founder and chief executive Colin Farquhar came down from Edinburgh, Scotland to connect with local customers and ensure that Exterity is front of mind.

"Exterity is an IP video company and the core of what we do is deliver video around an organisation's IP network," Colin explains.

"We take free-to-air content from a television, or we work with broadcasters like Foxtel and take its content, protect it appropriately and then deliver it securely around a network."

This year, Exterity has added to its LAN-based offerings with video-streaming for mobile devices. The system incorporates multiple devices including encoders, receivers, TV gateways, transcoders and the new AvediaStream Origin Server to help installers make video content consistently available on any screen.

Centrally controlled from the AvediaServer, the system allows organisations to stream content across their HQ and regional offices, give staff access to multiple news channels to inform decision making and enable visitors and guests to receive high quality information and entertainment on their mobile devices.

"Exterity is well-known for its LAN-based video-streaming capabilities. But we're seeing an increased demand for streaming to mobile devices in the context of commercial organisations," Colin says.

"Companies want their staff to be able to access different content on a mobile device, both in the office building and where they might be remotely. So this year we've been introducing a range of products that allow us to take very high quality, high bitrate content and transform it with our transcoder products to bitrates and formats relevant for streaming to mobile devices.

"We then combine that with a web services platform, the AvediaStream Origin Server, to take that content and deliver that effectively to individual devices. It's the core of a web-streaming technology product, but when combined with our middleware called Artio, we get a nice consistent presentation of the video service too."

Exterity products are available throughout Australia and New Zealand via Midwich.

Kate Jordan

ATDEC INTRODUCES ABOVE-DESK POWER MODULE SOLUTION

In the 'so-simple-yet-really-cool' category, Australian manufacturer Atdec has introduced a new above-desk USB power module accessory that fully integrates into its monitor arm ranges.

The Atdec Power Module is a USB charging station with two USB power outlets and two electrical (GPO) outlets. It is designed to offer uninterrupted access to power without wasting electricity. Its internal electronic chip determines if a device is connected, what device it is and how much power is needed to deliver the optimal amount of power required by the device (up to 2.3A), no matter what the brand. This funky solution integrates seamlessly at the base of Atdec's SYSTEMA and VISIDEC Focus desk-mounted monitor arms and improves work place ergonomics by moving power sources above the desk providing easy access to the latest universal fast charge technology.

Paul Skelton

JUST ADD POWER: "BUILT TO LAST"

As a member of a technological industry, you've undoubtedly heard of 'planned obsolescence' – the process of designing and building a product with a limited lifespan, forcing users to regularly upgrade.

Of course, very few companies will admit to the practice, but whether they call it planned obsolescence or not, it is increasingly a fact of modern life.

Just Add Power president and founder Ed Qualls, however, doesn't subscribe to that school of thought.

"These days it seems like most technology companies are coming out with 'revolutionary' new products every 90 days. The message to the user is 'throw out the old one you bought from us not too long ago and get our latest and greatest today'," he says.

"This message is delivered by a sales force that fully intends to tell you to do the same thing again in the not too distant future. In our eyes, this dedication to revolutionary product design just doesn't make sense when you are trying to build a video distribution infrastructure.

"At Just Add Power, our philosophy is evolutionary, not revolutionary. For example, customers who invested in our 1G HDIP solution in 2009 can still purchase new transmitters and receivers in 2014 to expand and maintain their system.

"Most companies would be embarrassed to be selling the exact same hardware several years in a row, but not us. We take pride in having designed an infrastructure that can be sustained and manufactured reliably for many years. While our 2G solution does more today than it did when we launched the line in 2010, the exact same 2G transmitters and receivers can be bought today. We just keep making them better through free firmware updates."

Most recently, the company released its third-generation 3G Ultra HD over IP transmitters and receivers, which work in conjunction with a standard gigabit managed Ethernet switch to distribute 4K/UHD and HDCP 2.2 encrypted content, as well as 1080p and lower content, from any number of source devices to any number of displays over a local area network.

The comprehensive feature set has been tailored for custom installers to include HDCP 2.2 support, a built-in 4K/1K up/down scaler on the receiver for the distribution of HDMI 2.0 sources to non-HDMI 2.0 screens and vice versa, enhanced support for video walls, support of uncompressed lossless multichannel audio formats including Dolby Atmos, USB over IP and Dolby down-mixing to stereo analogue audio.

"With our product design, 4K is an evolution not a revolution. We just don't believe in telling people to toss out what they bought last year, or four years ago. Same switch, same cabling, same control system drivers, more features and better performance," Ed says.

Unlike other IP-based video distribution products, with 3G there is no mandatory upgrade to 10Gbps managed switches and costly fibre optic cabling, though fibre can be used if desired. Otherwise, use standard Cat 5e/6 cabling and a gigabit managed switch with the 3G Ultra HD over IP transmitters and receivers to create an HDCP 2.2-compliant, UltraHD video matrix of any size, from 2×2 to 4,000x65,000 with support for video walls (up to 16x16) and a built-in 4K scaler (on 3G receivers) that facilitates the distribution of HDMI 1.4 devices and HDMI 2.0 displays and vice versa.

"We also recently released a video wall app. Overnight, we sent out a firmware update and everyone who owned one of our systems had a video wall app. For free," Ed says.

Paul Skelton

FLEXICAST LISTENS TO LOCAL MARKET

Flexicast's Listen is an Australian product – written and developed on the Gold Coast - that enables customers to hear any sound source via their iOS or Android smart phone or tablet.

This sound would generally be a TV, in an area where either no audio is played or where ambient noise or distance make listening difficult. Some great examples of this would be an airport departure gate, hospital waiting room, pub or sports bar, or even your local fitness centre.

Customers are able to choose from a range of channels that are being shown and select which to listen to, and all this via their own phone and ear buds. Listen achieves all of this, without any perceptible latency and offers a great service that is easy to use.

Customers simply download the free app from the Play Store or App Store and connect to the venue's Wi-Fi. Listen then takes over and delivers great sound at a touch of the screen.

JANDS OUTLINES NEW SHURE WIRELESS OFFERING

Another distributor that launched a slew of new product was Jands, with new offerings from the popular Ampetronic, Shure and JBL Professional brands.

Perhaps best known for its microphones, Shure has expanded its wireless offering to include the MXWNCS – a four- or eight-port networked charging station that is compatible with Microflex wireless microphone systems.

The new networked charging stations easily connect between conference room credenzas and AV rack closets over Ethernet via a single Cat5e cable. The front panel displays battery charge in five-segment LEDs, while remaining runtime and charge levels in hours and minutes can be monitored from any networked computer via the control software.

To complement the charging stations, Shure has also launched the MXWAPT4 and MXWAPT8 access point transceivers.

These transceivers use automated frequency coordination to assign clean frequencies to wireless microphones and

manages two-way wireless transmission of encrypted audio and control signals. Power to the unit (via PoE) and Dante digital networked audio are both supplied over a single Ethernet cable to simplify installation, and the supplied mounting plate and paintable cover allow discreet placement in boardrooms and conference rooms where low visibility is preferred.

Paul Skelton

ORIGIN ON SHOW FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A/NZ

"The first eight months after I left SpeakerCraft were amazing. I did everything I could think of. But I got bored; I missed the industry, I missed my friends and I missed doing what I loved doing," Jeremy Burkhardt says.

"To be in your 30s and have all that money but nothing to do is painful.

"If you plan to retire, you better have a plan of what you're going to do. I lost all my personality and got bored."

For those Connected Home readers who know the former SpeakerCraft CEO, you'll recognise that there is no big-noting in what he is saying. Jeremy Burkhardt genuinely loves the custom audio market and it's this passion that led to the creation of Origin Acoustics.

"Industries stagnate, products become commodities and innovation dies, and I think that has been happening in this industry," he says.

"When we entered the market we set a new benchmark in quality and now everyone else has to work harder and think about making better product."

When Jeremy and his business partners – SpeakerCraft co-founders Ed Haase and Ken Humphreys – decided to launch

Origin Acoustics, they were very much insistent on rethinking every aspect of loudspeaker design from the ground up. The resultant product is now available in Australia through Synergy Custom – the new custom arm of Synergy AV.

Throughout Integrate, installers were finally able to look at the company's offering to size up the competition and decide if they would make the switch. Early feedback has been entirely positive.

Shortly before the expo, the company announced IPX6 Weatherproof rating on all speakers in its Director Collection.

The entire Director Collection graduated at the top of their class in extreme salt water spray testing. In order to pass the test, all models were sprayed as installed with a high-pressure water hose for minutes on end and left to dry over an extended period of time. This test sends water at all angles through a 12.5mm nozzle at a rate of 100l/min at a pressure of 100kN/m2 for 3 minutes from a distance of 3m. Each model must not fail or show water seepage.

Sure it's overkill, but the IPX6 rating ensures that these high-performance speakers are safe from the corrosion and internal damage commonly posed by ocean water and rainstorms.

"Not only is the build quality superior with vertically integrated parts designed specifically for each system, but the materials and our IPX6 weatherproof rating make owning Origin Acoustics the better value and choice," Jeremy says.

Paul Skelton

YAMAHA LAUNCHES MUSICCAST TECHNOLOGY

Home audio systems have been gaining popularity in recent years with the advent of music streaming services, whole-home solutions and the resurgence of high-resolution formats sparking the appetites of next-generation audiophiles.

The latest offering from Yamaha introduces a series of cutting-edge technologies to transform this audio landscape yet again. MusicCast, a multi-room technology that was launched to market on the Radio Parts stand, allows users to share any audio source to any room. Whether listening to your favourite music streaming service, TV programs, CDs or even vinyl records, MusicCast makes it possible to enjoy all content in any room.

The notion of streaming music to multiple rooms is not new; however, the ability to do so from any audio device via HDMI, digital, USB, network or analogue connection is a distinct advantage. The ability to tailor an audio system to meet every household's entertainment needs continues with an extensive selection of MusicCast-enabled products. Altogether, 30 models will be on offer before Christmas in Australia, including three new wireless speaker variations, soundbars (and sound base), hi-fi components, AV receivers and home theatre packages.

A new Wi-Fi Xtend network has also been custom-built to transform each MusicCast product into a Wi-Fi extender, delivering maximum network strength throughout larger homes. In addition, Airplay and Bluetooth connectivity is included with the ability to also send music to existing Bluetooth devices – regardless of the brand. Any Bluetooth speaker (or headphones) in turn has the ability to join the MusicCast network.

The heart of MusicCast is an intuitive app which can be customised with room names and even photos to represent different areas of the home. Playback options that aren't connected or required can be hidden as well for a sleek and simplified control interface.

ON CONTROLS DEBUTS CLOUD-BASED AUTOMATION SYSTEM IN A/NZ

Developed in Detroit, Michigan, in 2011, On Controls is a cloud-enabled automation system for integrators in both the residential and commercial channels. It was born as an integrator-focussed, white label partner to the DIY, software-based control solution, iRule.

Like iRule, the system operates via an app on the end user's smart phone or tablet with OEM by Global Caché. It is fully scalable and suitable for applications from a single room to large scale commercial projects.

On Controls was developed as a dealer-centric system and as such offers a concierge service for dealers, allowing them to upload details of a job and be walked through the installation in real time.

The system features a customisable GUI enabling integrators to personalise the remote for different users, and because it is software based as opposed to hardware based, it can be installed at a fraction of the price of traditional automation systems.

Jacob Harris

ZIPATO BRINGS SECURITY TO INTEGRATE

Zipato is a next generation security solution providing extensive monitoring and alerting services in case of fire, burglary, flood or gas leakage, as well as custom child and senior care solutions.

Further, Zipato can monitor energy consumption and allows home owners to remotely control and automate lights, temperature and other power devices in their home. Custom reports and alerts will let them understand where their energy goes away in order to stop wasting it.

Zipato system will be offered in Australia by Digital Home Systems later this year.

LIGHTWARE TARGETS MEETING ROOMS AND CLASSROOMS

Lightware's newest development, the MMX6x2-HT220, responds to a need for a practical standalone matrix switcher specifically designed for meeting room and classroom environments.

The compact MMX6x2-HT220 has six video inputs and two video outputs (four HDMI 1.4 and two TPS inputs, and two independent HDMI outputs which are also mirrored as TPS ports). The unit handles 4K at 30Hz and 3D signals, and is fully HDCP compliant. The device has four audio input connectors for audio insertion and two audio outputs for de-embedding.

MMX6x2-HT220 is able to power any power over Ethernet (PoE)-capable remote device on all its TPS input and output ports. Lightware's MMX6x2-HT220 receives and transmits digital video, audio and control up to 170m distance over a single CatX cable. Using factory, custom or transparent EDID emulation the user can fix and lock EDID data on each input connector. Advanced EDID Management forces the required resolution from any video source and fixes the output format to conform to the system requirements.

The unit offers IR and RS-232 command injection capabilities, providing the ability to send any IR or RS-232 control command directly from the LAN connection to remote end points. The MMX6x2-HT220 is also compatible with both HDBaseT extenders and HDBaseT compliant displays.

CHOWMAIN UNVEILS KODI FULL

At the 2014 CEDIA Expo in Denver, Colorado, control system supplier Control4 announced a new Sonos driver that greatly improved the way dealers installed music on their clients' systems. Unfortunately, other media – for example TV and YouTube content – was still difficult to browse and control.

Local driver developer Chowmain, which has offices in Auckland and Melbourne, has now changed things for the better. Previously, the company has developed Control4 drivers for lighting, thermostats and power monitoring applications, in addition to media. It has now released an update to a previous media driver that has been dubbed 'Kodi Full'.

"In the past, Control4 really only had the capability to browse movies on its user interface and that was a limitation of the software," Chowmain co-founder Alan Chow says.

"So we spent a lot of time thinking about how we could get around that limitation, because a lot of dealers have been telling us that they've got customers who want to browse TV shows and access other online services. This year, we finally cracked the code."

Kodi Full gives the end user the ability to browse media content by season, genre or 'all video', as well as search via title, actor, genre and other variables. It's also possible to resume TV shows from the latest played moment.

"Kodi Full is smart enough to know when you copy a new movie or TV show onto your NAS drive, so it'll scan it, find the cover image and import the metadata, so the customer doesn't need to do anything else," Alan explains.

In addition to offering a great media player experience, the driver has other neat stuff built in. The user can program the system to turn the system on upon detection of Airplay or UPnP AV playback, turn it off upon detection of a screensaver, or automatically setup screen masking.

The driver is available for purchase via the Houselogix.com website.

Kate Jordan