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Industry News

EU Tries Again on Patents

Talks begin again at the European Commission as they make one more attempt to break a famous 20-year deadlock known to be harmful to Europe's performance as an innovator.

The Brussels vision on intellectual property rights in Europe underlines "a single community patent would be the most affordable and legally secure answer."

Part of the plan is to create a separate EU-wide court for patents. America did this back in the '80s and many Americans blame that special court structure for many of the problems with today's USA patent system.

Because the present system is too slow and too expensive, Europe lags far behind the US and Japan in patent activity. Today a company wishing to protect its invention in 13 out of 27 EU countries must use a bundle of national patents (translated into each official language). That company would end up paying 11X more than for an American patent and 13X more than for a Japanese one.

Litigation is also unaffordable for SMEs (a national court of first instance costs between 50,000 and 1.5 million euros.)

Brussels wants reform, but member nations block any progress as they fight to hold on to national interests. The Spring summit in 2008 might be the next time the EC can get it together.

It's a mess and it's all politics, of course.



For more info, go to [European Patent Office](#)

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French Library Answers Google with "Europeana"

French national library BNF launches its version of a European digital library to fight American digitalisation of books and documents.

Generously named "Europeana," the cyber library offers access to 12,000 full-text documents and hopes to have more than 6 million books, movies, photographs and other documents from across the European Union countries by 2010.

"We want to make it so that Europe is not entirely abandoned to an American search engine," says Jean-Noël Jeanneney, the head of BNF.

Europe isn't entirely abandoned because another European library project (also battling American galactic domination) already receives co-funding from the European Commission. This library is based on infrastructure of an already existing European network that allows access to digital resources held in national libraries.

But the Europe Library is in English and the Europeana is in French.



For more info, don't Google it, *s'il vous plait!* Just click [Europeana](#)

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Hollywood's "Secret Plan" for Europe?

Electronic Frontier Foundation says Hollywood studios want to take control of digital television in Europe.

In the EFF release, named "American Studios' Secret Plan to Lock Down European TV Devices," EFF tells how U.S. movie and television companies have convinced DVB to create new technical specifications that would build digital rights management technologies into televisions. These specifications are likely to take away consumers' rights, which will subsequently be sold back to them piecemeal -- so entertainment fans will have to pay again and again for legitimate uses of lawfully acquired digital television content.

According to the EFF report:

Hollywood bills the intent of CPCM as "protect[ing]" and "enab[ling] business models," but, more precisely, they want to be able to curtail personal uses of television content that may disrupt their current business models. They also want to make you pay again and again to make legitimate uses of lawfully-acquired digital television content. For example, you've already paid for your cable subscription, but instead of being able to "time-shift" your favorite show to watch it later on the device of your choice, content providers want the power to force you to buy that show again on DVD or through another delivery mechanism.



Ren Buchholz, an EFF policy coordinator, says these new restrictions could spark a fight in Europe similar to the fight in the US over the broadcast flag, a comparable system designed engineered to allow broadcasters greater control over what devices can do with their content.

The battle over DRM is far from over...

For more info, go to (if your hardware still lets you) [EFF](#)

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How Cool is Your Van?

Following up on last week's article on America's winning van, this week's winner is Vogel's. Thanks, Léon, for sending in that photo!

What's your van look like? Send a photo to rAveEurope@gmail.com

Want to see the USA winner? Go to [Crystal Clear AV](#)



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Control & Integrator Solutions

Choirs, Church Musicians Go Digital with SamePage

Corevalus Systems brought a very cool product to NSCA. SamePage is an LCD display coupled with the SamePage software that lets choir members and musicians ditch the paper music sheets and use digital files instead. As one user pointed out, it's rather unpleasant when the HVAC kicks in and blows sheet music all over the stage.

SamePage not only removes that messy problem, but it allows for central control. One person can program the displays so that each performer gets just the music



they need – a violinist gets the music for strings and an alto gets the music for vocals.

The company hopes that eventually, downloading new music sheets will be as easy as ordering from iTunes.

Another nice advantage, according to what the company told us at NSCA, is that once those delivering the sermons see what this can do for the performers, he or she wants to know what the dealer can do for them, too.

For more info, go to [SamePage](#)

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Gefen Plays Role in 3D Lab in Germany

The University of Applied Sciences at Furtwangen opens a virtual reality laboratory so Media Lab students can create real-world strategies in a 3D environment.

Implemented by SDI GmbH of Munich, the lab uses strategically placed HD video projection supplemented by wave field synthesis loudspeakers located around the circumference of the lab.

"The technical basis for the visual distribution is the use of 6 projectors located in a hinged installation, each beaming high definition images on a massive rear projection screen," explains Thorsten Goecke, SDI product manager. "By polarizing the various projections, the presentation appears absolutely three-dimensional as life-size imagery flashes across the screen."



To distribute the data required for high definition video, SDI relied on an assortment of Gefen HDTV extenders and splitters to deliver simultaneous imagery throughout the lab. Gefen's fiber optics cabling was also installed.

To complement the video, SDI installed loudspeakers in circumferential alignment.

For more info, go to [SDI](#)

For more info, go to [GEFEN](#)

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Updated Intelix VGA Balun Doesn't Require Shielded CAT5

Intelix announces the VGA-SR-F, a passive VGA balun which extends video signals up to 450 feet over standard, unshielded twisted pair cable, such as CAT5 or CAT6. Also, both the send and receive balun feature grounding screws and sync reset switches.



To use, you connect the VGA-SR-F send balun to your source device (typically a PC), connect standard unshielded twisted pair cabling, and connect the VGA-SR-F receive balun to the destination device (monitor or projector). The VGA-SR-F does not require a secondary power supply.

For more info, go to [Intellix](#)

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New Single-Gang Wall-Mount IR Button Panel from Calypso

Calypso has a new controller for AV gear. The CB-1000 is a single-gang, wall-mount IR panel with eight tactile, programmable buttons. It can be used as a stand-alone controller by wiring it directly to devices requiring control. Or the CB-1000's IR output can interface with Calypso's Pro I/O or ION controllers to increase the number and types of components being controlled.

It has an onboard serial programming port and on-board IR learning. Once an IR code is learned, it can be assigned to a button. Also, a complete, fully-programmed CB-1000 configuration can be automatically copied to additional units via the same serial port.

For more info, go to [Calypso Control](#)



Displays

Sony FET Splinter to Stay Pro

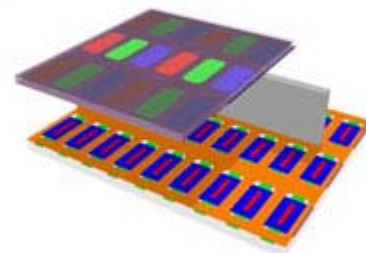
Sony split off its field emission display operations end of last year and now Field Emission Technologies will decide on the scale of commercial production and find business partners by mid-2008 (to put products on the market by 2009).

"We have a dream of eventually entering the TV market for general consumers. But we will steer clear of heavy capital investments up front," Field Emission Technologies' CEO, Shohei Hasegawa told a news conference

"Our products will be used by professional video creators and at broadcasting companies."

For more info, go to [FET Inc.](#)

Field Emission Technologies

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LG.Philips LCD Named Dell's "Supplier of the Year"

At the Dell Worldwide Supplier Conference in Austin, Texas, Michael Dell himself handed LG.Philips LCD the "Supplier of the Year" Award.

This good news probably balanced out the bad news: after posting nearly \$820 million in losses in 2006, LG.Philips LCD is expected to report its fourth straight quarterly loss. Analysts say the world's second-biggest maker of large-sized LCDs should turn profitable around the Q3, as demand picks up later in the year.

Last year, LG.Philips LCD reconfigured into IT, TV and Small and Medium Display business units to respond more effectively to differentiated customer needs. The company also launched its Customer Value Creation Team to spearhead its efforts to create customer value by interviewing clients around the world and forming a customer-oriented corporate culture.



LG.Philips LCD ranked first in 2006 LCD market share for notebook computers, accounting for 26.7 percent of total sales. The company also took the top spot in TVs with 23.5 percent market share, and was 3rd in terms of monitor LCD panels, according to analyst firm DisplaySearch.

For more info, go to [LG.Philips LCD](#)

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Could Be LCD Shortage in Second Half, Say Analysts

Analysts say average LCD selling prices likely dropped about 12% in the Q1, after falling only 1% in the fourth.

As weak profitability keeps LCD makers away from ramping up production, the market is expected to be extremely tight in H2, with some analysts even predicting a shortage.

Rival Samsung, No. 1 maker of large-sized LCD, is expected to kickstart its "eight-generation" LCD line in the third quarter, which will boost its control over the large LCD TV market.

LCD shipments in the 40-inch or bigger segment are expected to jump 150% this year to 15 million units, according to Lehman Brothers.

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McKinsey to LG: Turn Off the Plasma Displays

LG Electronics Co. Ltd may halt their Plasma Display Panel TV business: LG Electronics started in PDP TV in 2001 and currently operates three plants in Gumi, Korea and one plant in Nanjing, China.

For the past three months the company has waited for consultant McKinsey & Co's advice on its PDP business as a whole. Now it has it: ...bye-bye plasma.

"McKinsey tried to find ways for LG Electronics to improve the business management to boost the PDP sales but has opted instead to put an end to the PDP business," says LG Electronics.

Philips LCD Co. recently stopped PDP TV production in countries excluding Australia and North America.



For more info, go to [LG Plasma](#)

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INNOVATIVE SUPPORTS...



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Distributor & Installer News

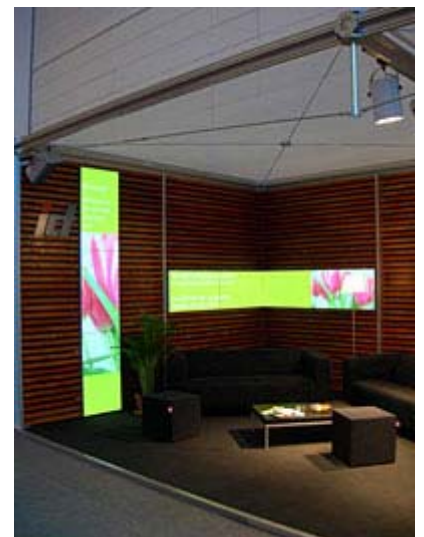
ict at ProLight & Sound: 21m LED Band, Curve Curtain & More

An impressive 21 meter long LED band (made from individual LED strands) and suspended from the ceiling in the hall was only one of the attractions ict presented at ProLight + Sound.

ict Innovative Communication Technologies AG showed how media elements can be used for implementation of communication visions.

Together with their partner Tennagels Medientechnik, ict AG realized a large format curveLED Curtain. The individual LED strands (6 mm SMD LEDs with 2,020 cd per pixel) were mounted above the ict booth and the strands continued as a multi-media band to the Tennagels booth.

With a diameter of 16 mm, the strands can be up to 7.7 meters high. The pixel pitch between the individual LED units is 40 mm. As a creative and extremely flexible system, these LED strands are ideally suited for configuring large light surfaces. Due to a connector system, the LED pixels can be adapted so that free shape formation is also possible in the horizontal axis.



Even double sided mounting of the curveLED Curtain can be realized without any problem. Because of the cascading mounting system, the curveLED Curtain can be mounted either hanging or standing in a very short time. Organic shapes such as waves or curves can be realized without problems, says ict.

More Than One World Cup Winner: Screen Visions

For Screen Visions of Stuttgart, a specialist in LED and giant video screen systems, the year of the World Cup in Germany closed with an impressive increase in billings of 157%.

“Over the last few years, the video wall medium has experienced an amazing increase in appeal. More and more event organisers, promoters and sponsors are using LED and video material to effectively communicate with their target groups, whether at a shareholders’ meeting or for mainstream football coverage” says Roger Rinke, MD at Screen Visions.



A major contributor was certainly the positive development of Public Viewing. With resounding levels of success during the FIFA World Cup, this type of large group event experienced a real boom.

Screen Visions had won exclusive rights to take on the installation and operation of all video screens used at the official Fan Fests in the twelve World Cup cities, on behalf of Philips Vidiwall, a FIFA partner.

As a result of this development, Screen Visions, with its Screen Visions Media marketing department, increased its full-time staff from six in 2005 to eight by the end of 2006.

Referring to the company’s remarkable growth, Rinke added: “Of course we are very much aware that 2006, with the Football World Cup and other large events such as the visit of the Pope, was a very unique year in Germany.”

For more info, go to [Screen Visions](#)



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Digital Signage

Sharp Brings New 46-Inch Digital Signage LCD to NSCA

Sharp introduced a 46-inch professional LCD display at NSCA. The PN-465U can be used in portrait or landscape mode. They also introduced the PN465UP, which adds a protective acrylic overlay to the same display.

The PN-465U monitor has a two-megapixel 1920 x 1080 HD resolution with more than six million pixels. Other specs include a 1700:1 contrast ratio and a 6ms response time.



The 65-inch that Sharp exhibited wasn’t new, but it looked really great and you could just see it in a number of retail/signage settings. It’s just a hugely tall display, very eye-catching.

For more info, go to [Sharp at NSCA](#)

Audio

K.M.E. Does Beijing

Opposite the famous workers stadium in Beijing, China, you can find two new enterprises: The Bank Club & Lounge and the Jasmine Restaurant & Lounge. Both are equipped with extensive K.M.E. installations.

The Jasmine, designed in Art-Deco offers innovative Chinese kitchen and more than 160 exclusive wines. The wine stock is up in high-rack storage and a waiter with climbing equipment takes it out and serves it. The entrance and bar area at the ground floor, the chill-out area in the middle as well as the VIP-rooms at the upper level—all require a sophisticated de-centralized reinforcement which fits the modern design. QS 1082 driven by K.M.E. SPA 450 S amplifiers were installed. The digital controller is programmed to customer requirements with different presets, with programs such as background reinforcements, for live acts and speeches but also the routing for the different levels. The music reproduction is made by pay-out servers but it is also a mixer Midas Venice 160 with wireless Shure microphones.



Next door is the new club The Bank: from the entrance area in the mid-level with a trihedral gallery you can view a 120sqm dance floor in the basement. Over a stairway you come to the club with central bar and adjacent lounge.

VIP-rooms are based in the basement and on the second floor. They are very popular in China and are rent for business and private meetings and events like karaoke. All VIP rooms have fix-installed K.M.E. PS 2 systems, plasma screens and karaoke technique.

For more info go to [Beijing Bank Club](#) or [Beijing Jasmine](#) or [KME](#)

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Residential Systems & Digital Home

Sega Homestar Adds PRO Planetarium

If Sega Homestar Home Planetarium has been a major hit since its original release, now it's the Homestar PRO Edition. The new Sega Toys Homestar PRO Planetarium comes in metallic black or metallic silver, and uses a new professional-grade lens and brighter LED light for more detailed projection of 10,000 stars and planets.

The latest Star Discs (one regular, one outlining the constellations) of the Homestar PRO now come in color, so you can view five of the planets in their true forms as designed by artist Kagaya. The random shooting star function adds even more action to the slow celestial rotation. Another innovative new feature is the included Full Moon disc.



For more info, go to [Homestar Planetarium PRO](#)

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Honest, My-IPTV & Cam Anywhere

How about an affordable package that allows TV viewing from almost any PC? Honest



Technology, with My-IPTV & Cam Anywhere, makes watching TV from a remote location more affordable-- and adds a Webcam for capturing video and still images.

An external USB 2.0-based TV tuner and Web camera package, My-IPTV & Cam Anywhere lets you link remote PCs to your home TV. Starting from any broadband-connected PC in the world, you can "place-shift" and view the video content playing on the My-IPTV device.

.My-IPTV sends MPEG-4 quality video over your home network and over the Internet. This hardware and software work only with Windows-based PCs.

For more info, go to [My-IPTV and Cam Anywhere](#)

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Don't Move: Still Images Top of HD Viewing

Creators of expensive high-def video and TV channels will be dismayed to learn the second most popular HD channel on the Comcast cable network is made up entirely of still pictures.

GalleryPlayer offers a new category, which Kevin Akeroyd, CEO, labels "HD Lifestyle Imagery" and it's second only to the famous ESPN sports channel in the Comcast ratings.



Consumers seem to want to have some kind of visual "muzak" to show on their big-screen HDTVs when they host parties rather than have the equivalent of a black hole in their wall.

GalleryPlayer negotiated rights with picture libraries and museums to create tasteful high-definition slideshows from the Art of Claude Monet to pictures of great golf course and 1,000 Places To See Before You Die.

It is exploiting numerous distribution methods – PC screensavers distributed through Google Pack and Windows Media Center, DVD sales of images, channels on HD providers such as Comcast and hotel channels. Moving images will be next. Don't expect any live sports action, said Mr Akeroyd, but burning log fires, aquaria and spectacular waterfalls are expected to be just as popular with his big-screen customers.

For more info, go to [Gallery Player](#)

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A little about Gary Kaye, CTS, founder of Kaye Consulting: Gary Kaye, an audiovisual veteran and columnist,

began the widely-read KNews, a premier industry newsletter, in the late 1990s, and created the model for and was co-founder of AV Avenue - which later became InfoComm IQ. Kayye Consulting is a company that is committed to furthering the interests and success of dealers, manufacturers, and other companies within the professional audiovisual industry. Gary Kayye's rAVe was first launched in America in February 2003.