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Industry News

Microsoft Buys into Chinese TV Maker

Microsoft will pay \$12.3 million to a Chinese TV maker to solidify a deal to jointly develop products to link television and the Internet.



Microsoft becomes a strategic investor in Sichuan Changhong Electric, buying just less than 1% of its shares, to secure the Chinese supplier's attention on Microsoft's in-home network digital entertainment strategy.

Established in 1958, Sichuan Changhong Electric Co.Ltd. (better known by its ChangHong brand) is a electronic appliances manufacturer with net assets of USD 2.5 billion and 35,000 staff. The company has joint labs with Toshiba, Philips, Sanyo, Microsoft and ST.

The company likes to refer to itself as "The Television King of the World." Changhong is ranked 49th out of all Chinese brands and among the Top 5 in Chinese consumer electronics by *Hunrun Report*. You may have noticed their huge stand in Hall 2 of CeBIT this year (see our photo): famous on their home ground, they were largely ignored by European buyers last March in Hannover.

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

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evenTech Scotland Launched

Designed specifically for the north of the UK (Scotland, Northern England and Northern Ireland), evenTech Scotland hopes to become a forum for the region's key decision-makers to keep up-to-date with technology and industry developments.



Starting in Feb 2008 in Glasgow, says organizer Scattered Media, "evenTech Scotland will provide manufacturers, suppliers and installers with a regional platform to make face-to-face contact with a quality audience involved in the North's major entertainment and installation projects."

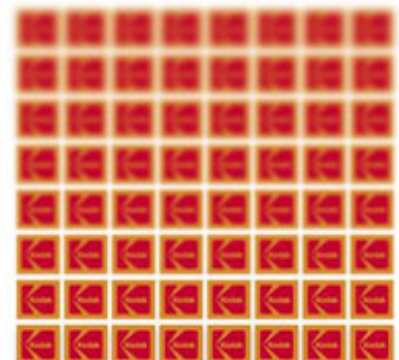
Begun in January 2007, Scattered Media was created by Darren Brechin and Iain McLean who both formerly worked for IIR Exhibitions and successfully launched the PALME Middle East and PALME India (and managed IIR's Entertainment and Installation Technologies Group of events, including the PALME Asia Exhibition.)

For more info, go to [evenTECH Scotland](#)

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New Kodak Tech Redefines Digital Image Capture

Eastman Kodak announces a groundbreaking advancement in image sensor technology that provides a 2x - 4x increase in sensitivity to light (from one to two photographic stops) compared to today's sensor designs.



Kodak is now developing CMOS sensors using this technology for consumer markets such as digital still cameras and camera phones. As the technology is appropriate for use with both CCD and CMOS image sensors, its use will be expanded across Kodak's full portfolio of image sensors, including products targeted to applied imaging markets such

as industrial and scientific imaging. The first Kodak sensor to use this technology is expected to be available in Q1 2008.

This breakthrough advances an existing Kodak technology: the design of almost all color image sensors is based on the "Bayer Pattern," an arrangement of red, green, and blue pixels first developed by Kodak scientist Dr. Bryce Bayer in 1976. In his design, half of the pixels on the sensor collect green light, with the remaining pixels split evenly between sensitivity to red and blue light. After exposure, software reconstructs a full color signal for each pixel in the final image.

Kodak's new proprietary technology adds panchromatic (or "clear" pixels) to the red, green, and blue that form the image sensor array. Since these pixels are sensitive to all wavelengths of visible light, they collect a significantly higher proportion of the light striking the sensor.

"This represents a new generation of image sensor technology and addresses one of the great challenges facing our industry – how to capture crisp, clear digital images in a poorly lit environment," says Chris McNiffe, General Manager of Kodak's Image Sensor Solutions group.

Kodak is working with a number of companies to implement this new technology in system-wide solutions and to streamline the design-in process.

For more information, go to [Kodak's New Image Sensor Tech](#)

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PROJECTA

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Projection & Screens

New Projecta Fabric Adds to "Fast-Fold" Concept

For many years Fast-Fold has been a widely used solution for portable projection. Now Projecta gives its Fast-Fold portable projection concept a new screen fabric: a special black backing that reduces diffused light behind the screen and improves image quality.



Projecta says the new Fast-Fold projection screen fabric is the first and only fully foldable fabric with black backing. This new projection screen fabric is available in seamless sections up to a height of 488 cm. The new fabric is supplied **at no extra cost** when ordering a complete Fast-Fold screen with Matte White fabric or separate Matte White projection screen fabric.

To review the Fast-Fold concept itself: Once fully folded, each Fast-Fold screen fits into a sturdy travel case on wheels. The collapsible frame is light in weight and easy to set up without the use of tools, making it quick and easy to set up at any indoor or outdoor location. Fast-Fold has also proved to be a favorite for hire/rental companies due to the outstanding durability of the screens.

And Projecta's Heavy Duty Fast-Fold Deluxe screens feature new, extra-strong frame tubes and hinges, making them extremely durable.

The screens perform well with large-scale projection, making them exceptionally suitable for use at large events, such as exhibitions, festivals and conferences.

Toshiba LCD Projector with Integrated Document Camera

In USA, Toshiba's new TLP-XC2500AU promises educators, corporate trainers with a versatile presentation tool for delivering on-the-spot information—at an affordable price. The TLP-XC2500AU projector will sell in USA for under \$1500.



Designed for education and business use, the TLP-XC2500AU projector with integrated advanced, document camera empowers presenters with the ability to incorporate live hands-on demonstrations, three-dimensional objects or microscopic items into their presentations.

The TLP-XC2500AU projector's integrated, advanced CMOS document camera has 3-mega pixel resolution, allowing users to create a comprehensive presentation without the need to purchase additional equipment. Users simply extend the document camera from the projector, and position it almost anywhere to add photo samples, printed documents, microscopic images and live hands-on demonstrations.

At just 8.8 pounds, the TLP-XC2500AU projector features Toshiba's latest enhanced Natural Color Enhancer3 (NCE3) which makes LCD images exceptionally sharp and vivid. Packaged in a compact form factor, the projector features an impressive 2,500 ANSI lumens, XGA 1024 x 768 resolution and 400:1 contrast ratio to deliver bright, captivating images for the classroom or conference room. The projector is HDTV/DTV compatible and the lamp life can be extended up to 3000 hours in Eco-Mode.

The projector features a sophisticated approach to security, a removable palm-sized control panel. When the panel is removed, the projector is no longer operable unless the password is entered on the remote control or when the removable panel is replaced.

The TLP-XC2500AU also includes other features.

For more info, go to [TLP-XC2500AU](#)

Joint Reference Design for Personal Projector: Epson and Philips

Seiko Epson (Epson) and Philips announce their cooperation in projection key modules and the immediate availability of their first joint reference design for a small and cost effective personal projector.

Unlike projector designs that focus on brightness performance, the new joint reference design aims at emerging segments of personal projection: gaming, digital cameras and personal multimedia players, and powers ultra-compact projectors with stylish designs.

The interaction between the Philips Ujoy lamp-system and the Epson HTPS 3LCD panel provides the compromise between performance in both brightness and color-saturation and the compactness required for the personal projection segment.

For more info, go to [EPSON/PHILIPS Joint Reference](#)

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Displays

Philips 3D Solutions Intros New 20-inch 3D Display

Philips 3D Solutions introduces its new 20-inch 3D display designed to increase brand awareness and attention at point-of-sale locations by using 3D images.



Philips' 20-inch 3D display is the latest addition to the Philips 3D WOWvx professional display range. The Philips 3D displays deliver 3D experience without the need for special viewing glasses. The frame-mount display (20-3D2W01) is a 4:3 intended for integration in shop interiors or kiosks. A desktop version with bezel and stand (20-3D2W04) is also available.

According to research, 3D imaging is a valuable tool in raising brand or product awareness. 3D images hold a consumer's attention far longer than ordinary print images. In addition, shoppers have said a 3D image display not only makes them "feel like buying" but also makes them "want to purchase again."

The Philips 20" 3D display is being sold through Philips 3D Solutions distribution partners from August 2007 onwards.

For more info, go to [Philips 3D](#)

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Control & Integrator Solutions

Handheld Motorized Cable Coiler at InfoComm

Kaltman Creations shows its new KCC50-5 handheld motorized cable coiler at InfoComm. This coils up to 50 feet of medium duty cable in less than five seconds, says the company. Once the cable is on the coiler spool, the coiled cable simply slides off for storage.





Kaltman claims that besides the ten-to-one speed advantage over hand coiling, the "perfect coil" also means no stress on the cable's internal conductors and no twisted tangles when uncoiling the cable for the next use.

Originally designed for any environment where microphone, light-weight speaker, lighting control, and electrical power cables are used, the Kaltman Cable Coiler will also work for CAT5, fiber optic, coax and video cables as well as rope.

Kaltman will also show its patent pending Cable Slap Ties which literally, in one motion, slap onto the cable, eliminating Velcro straps, tie line, taping, or cable knot tying.

For more information, go to [Kaltman Cable Coiler](#)

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Bosch IP Video Solution Earns Frost & Sullivan Award

Frost & Sullivan awards Bosch its 2007 Video Surveillance Emerging Technology of the Year Award.



Bosch's Direct-to-iSCSI RAID recording solution received the award because of its perceived value to I.T. personnel (and its competitiveness against the networked video recorder.)

Bosch is a pioneer in iSCSI-based recording technology, which uses the IP-based storage standard – Internet Small Computer System Interface (iSCSI) – to enable cameras and encoders to stream directly to a disk array without the need for an NVR .

According to Frost & Sullivan, the iSCSI-based solution is likely to receive high acceptance from IT personnel involved in implementing IP-based video surveillance systems. The main benefit is that the solution reduces the burden of managing PC-based NVR solutions and updating their operating systems and anti-virus software.

Multiple Bosch cameras and encoders can share iSCSI storage disk arrays on a local area network, while the user's larger network or WAN remains unaffected. Customers are using this technology to address IT personnel's concerns about bandwidth and security staff's worries about reliability in IP video installations.

For more info, go to [Frost & Sullivan's Best Practices Awards](#)

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

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Gefen Brings Three Wireless Solutions to InfoComm

At InfoComm, Gefen shows three wireless products that allow component and HDMI displays as well as USB peripherals to be extended without connector cables.



The Component Audio Extender uses small sender and receiver units to deliver high definition video in resolutions from 480i to 720p up to 60 feet. It supports two channels of RCA stereo audio to accompany the video for a true HDTV experience using the IEEE 802.11a/g/e protocol.

The Wireless for HDMI Extender uses ultra wideband technology to deliver high definition resolutions up to 1080i to any HDMI display or projector located 60 feet from the source. Sender and receiver are HDCP-compliant and operate with a high-speed transmission rate so there is no delay or signal loss.

The Wireless USB Extender supports the connection of hi-speed USB 2.0 devices up to 100 feet from the computer. It

works with Apple (OSX) and PC (Windows, Linux, Unix) systems using Icron Technologies' ExtremeUSB based on 802.11g technologies. The receiver is a four-port USB 2.0 hub that can support additional devices by adding additional hubs. It boasts a high transfer rate of video, audio and data streams wirelessly.

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

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Distribution & Installer News

New EU Corporate Identity for BMB Electronics

BMB Electronics BV, European custom integration and “whole house solutions” distributor, announces their new BMB Corporate Identity which will be used across their Pan European distribution businesses.



Although Martek UK Limited in Suffolk UK and BMB Scandinavia in Gothenburg Sweden have been part of the BMB Group for some time, this new marketing initiative brands the three companies under a common BMB banner to reflect the growing Pan-European nature of the company (and of the custom integration marketplace that they service.)

“As our business continues to grow by leaps and bounds every year, it is important that all our customers understand and benefit from the strength of our company across the region, and can make effective use of the great facilities we offer and the large inventory we carry. We feel that the new logo and one simple company name carried across all our companies will make it easier to identify us as our industry and business grows” says Willem Bok, Founder of the company.

BMB Electronics group is a pan-Euro distributor representing *Xantech, Niles, X10, ReQuest, Universal Remote Control, Channel Plus, NuVo, Luxom, Xperinet, TruAudio, Atlantic Technology, TRIAD, Terra, Amina, Tributaries, Planet Waves, Key Digital, CLO systems, Sherbourn, Lumagen and Convergent Living*. (For some of these brands, distribution is limited to specific countries.)

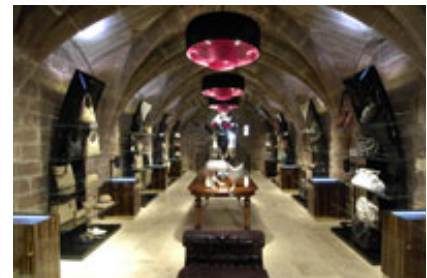
For more info, go to [BMB EU](#)

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Audio

tsg Installs Audica MICROseries at Cruise Footwear

UK media programming & system design company, tsg, has installed an Audica Professional MICROseries audio system in the new Cruise Footwear, Accessory and Bag store in Chester, UK.



Established in 1984, Cruise is one of the UK's leading luxury retailers, with a reputation for designer brands and as a showcase for fresh fashion.

The timber-framed building developed for the new store in Chester dates from 1664 and incorporates original features including an Elizabethan façade and a beautifully preserved 13th century crypt-- included as a focal point of the store's retail area

Cruise Retail Director, Stuart Margetts, wanted an audio system to not only meet this store's criteria for style and audio quality, also scaleable for future premises. Music content was also a key factor.

A number of loudspeaker systems were short listed, based on a high element of style (included high-end hi-fi brands not normally associated with retail installation, but which met the design criteria.) After a demo of the short listed products by tsg, a unanimous decision was made in favour of the Audio Professional MICROseries, favoured for both design and audio quality.

With four separate zones, MICROseries also offered a complete electronics and control solution. The main equipment rack in the fourth-floor office also houses the tsg promedia hard disk system. This feeds five rack-mounted Audica MICROzone controller/amplifiers. A single MICROzone is used for each of the four retail zones with a fifth operating as a slave to one of the primary units for driving the larger number of loudspeakers used in the crypt zone.

Each zone required access to volume control from within its own area and has initially been supplied by Audica remote RIR receivers controlling the MICROzones. These will be upgraded to Audica's new CAT5-wired wall plates to give direct manual control as well as IR facility.

Although the system is primarily designed for background music, events have involved the system being DJ driven and it has proved capable of reliably "rocking" the store.

For more info go to [Audica](#) or [tsg](#)

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Special Feature

Cash Flow: Likely The Biggest Issue Facing Your Business **By Chuck Wilson, NSCA Executive Director**

In the systems integration business, we seem to spend an inordinate amount of our time focused on technology. This is only natural; true passion for technology is what led many of us to pursue this career path, and there's something satisfying about forming technology and components into a system that meets a need, or improves production values, or helps save lives—and so much more. Plus, we actually get paid for it!



Chuck Wilson

But there's also another reality. The vast majority of systems integrators operate as small businesses and one of the biggest—if not the biggest—issues facing a small business is cash flow. And it's of particular concern in light of the aforementioned passion for systems and technology, where "more mundane" business matters can get pushed to the side. Sadly, I've seen this trip up far too many smart people in our industry.

Do you understand how your business's cash comes and goes? Sure, cash comes in via payment for your services, and hopefully, this happens at a relatively steady level. If not, you're probably experiencing cash flow problems, because cash outflow is constant: payroll, payments for large shipments of inventory, facilities, transportation, a seemingly endless list of "minor" expenses, taxes, travel - the list goes on and on.

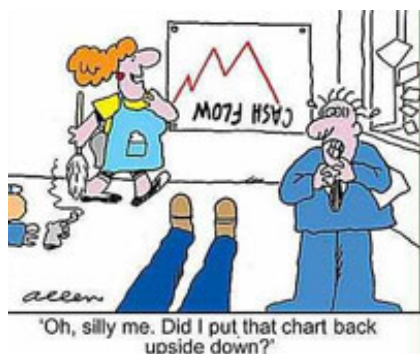
The best advice on the subject is to work with a qualified financial professional, usually an accountant. Sure, you're adding another expense, but a good accountant (or bookkeeper) will save the business more money in the long run, in addition to helping it operate as smoothly from a financial standpoint as possible. And this leaves you free to focus on the actual productive work of successful systems projects and serving your customers.

Still, it's wise to develop a working understanding of your business finances so that you can speak intelligently with your accountant and also make appropriate decisions on your own. After all, no one should be more interested in your money than you!

There are a wide range of factors in play when it comes to cash flow, with an equally wide range of educational materials accessible in print form and online (often free). Therefore, my goal here is not to get into the specifics better left to business experts, but rather, to point out that your livelihood is at risk if this issue is ignored.

As an overview, the essence of good cash flow management comes down to cash forecasting (also called budgeting). As the name implies, this is simply a forecast of cash results based upon assumptions about conditions and actions you expect during a set period of time. Usually these time periods are defined as long-term (a year or longer), medium-term (a month to a year), and short-term (a week to a month).

To set up a forecast, you'll need your financial statements—an income statement and a balance sheet. The most important thing is that these statements be accurate, whether prepared internally by you/someone at your business or by an outside resource such as an accountant. Get comfortable with reading and understanding these statements—it might be painful at first, but it's the only real way to understand your finances.



One of the biggest problems I've seen with systems integration firms (and other small businesses as well) is what's called a cash flow "gap"—simply, this is when the money that's coming in versus the money that's going out don't match up, leading to shortfalls. All kinds of expenses, from purchasing materials necessary to do the work, through all sorts of fees, often must be paid before you get paid.

This is where you must keep a close eye on cash flow, forecast potential problems, and be prepared to deal with them. An easy way to do this, on a monthly basis, is comparing unpaid purchases to your sales that are due at the end of each month. If purchases are greater than sales due, you're probably looking at a cash flow problem.

Therefore, money needs to come in faster. There are a lot of ways to help this along; for example, don't wait to invoice at the end of the month, rather, send customer invoices immediately after delivery of your work. Think about it—you might save as much as 30 days in your cash flow process.

Another tactic that's often effective is to offer customers a discount for early payment of invoices. It doesn't have to be a huge amount, say, one to two percent for payment within two weeks. (And if you're offered these types of deals by your suppliers, by all means, take advantage. The savings can add up pretty quickly.)

Further, while most of us tend to be sensitive to our customers, we can't afford to be too sensitive. Don't be too generous in allowing credit, and keep a particularly close eye on customer credit issues and terms.

Something particularly valuable to deploy for systems projects that are going to span a decent length of time is to arrange for the customer to make payments along the way. And, you can also set up a policy where the customer pays a certain percentage of the total invoice up front, before work even starts.

Finally, you must actively pursue collections of past-due invoices. This cannot slip! Stay on top of it, and don't let the prospect of collecting what you're rightly owed be intimidating. After all, you're the good guy in the scenario, presumably providing work, products and services of high quality, and the least that should happen is to be paid the amount as agreed.

Many business software programs help in tracking past-due accounts, and it's also vital to have a strategy for collections in place. This might include regularly sending letters to the customer regarding account status, phone calls to the people responsible for accounts payable, and if all efforts of this type fail, identifying and employing the services of a collection agency.

This is just a brief overview of a critical aspect of your business. Again, I urge you to take cash flow seriously and devote the necessary time and effort in becoming educated on the issue. The bottom line? It's your bottom line that's at stake.

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Do you have a special topic you would like to address industry-wide? We're open for **Guest Editorial** comments on the industry from Europe... Sorry, no commercials...this is just for industry issues. Contact: rAveEurope@gmail.com



Well, that's it for this edition of rAVe Europe! Thank you for spending time with us as we follow the industry happenings.

A little about Gary Kayye, CTS, founder of Kayye Consulting: Gary Kayye, 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.

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