



For Europe's Pro AV integrators in a Networked World

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Industry News

Samsung Scrambles a Task Force

According to local Korean newspapers, Samsung Group has established an emergency unit inside its strategic planning office after the recent Sony/Sharp deal.

If rumors are true, Samsung Group has a special unit studying the effects of the latest Sony-Sharp alliance on the group's display business.



The agenda focuses on three key points:

- possible effects on the Samsung Electronics business in Japan
- additional alliances in the LCD business apart from the Sony-Sharp deal
- and ways to strengthen ties with Sony.

Samsung is worried about its overall interests that transcend the mighty display business. It has been concentrating on its sales to Japanese markets in Japan since the company pulled out of consumer electronics business in Japan last year.

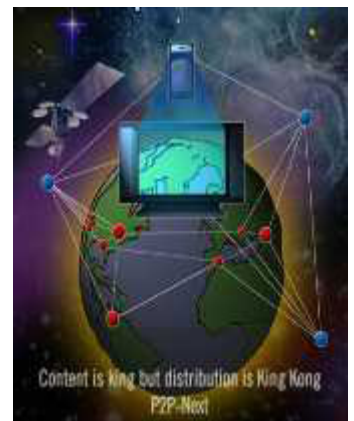
Korean experts think the most likely strategic response for Samsung is to attract new customers.

Go [Samsung Task Force](#)

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Euro Research Tackles Next Gen IPTV

P2P-Next, a pan-European consortium of 22 industrial partners, media content providers and research institutions wins a 19 million euro grant from EU to develop a Europe-wide next-gen internet TV distribution system based on P2P and social interaction



The partners include (among others) the BBC, Delft University of Technology, the European Broadcasting Union, Lancaster University, Markenfilm, Pioneer and VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland. Their web site reads, "If Content is King, then Distribution is King Kong."

The P2P-Next project will run over two years, and plans to conduct a large-scale technical trial of new media applications running on a wide range of consumer devices. "If successful," notes the organization, "... this ambitious project could create a platform that would enable audiences to stream and interact with live content via a PC or set top box. In addition, it is our intention to allow audiences to build communities around their favourite content via a fully personalized system."

This technology could be built into VOD services and plans to test the system for broadcasting the 2008 Eurovision Song Contest live online.

Go [Finally Could Be a Reason to Look Forward to Eurovision](#)

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Displays & Mounts

Samsung Shows OLED at CeBIT

As part of its technology display at CeBIT, Samsung is showing the public that it also has the OLED displays that earned Sony attention at CES this year.



But most of the public preferred to ogle the world's largest Ultra-High-Definition TV, with a screen diagonal of 82" or 2.08 meters with 3840 x 2160 pixels.

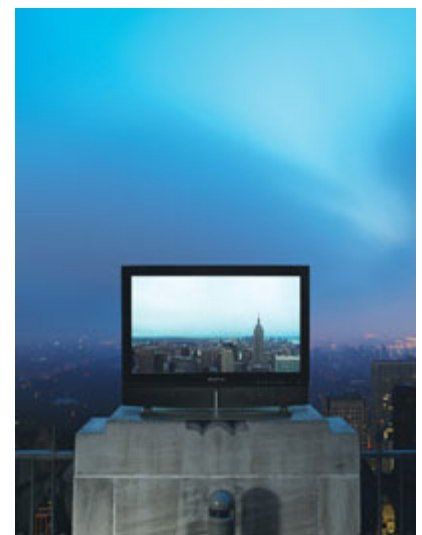
Samsung also exhibited a dual-display monitor (code-named "2263DX") targeting financial companies.

Go [Samsung at CeBIT](#)

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USA: Syntax-Brilliant in Trouble

Syntax-Brilliant, owners of the Olevia and Vivitar brands, is now in deep financial trouble.



When trouble rains, it pours. The stock has fallen about 78% from the beginning of the year and the most recent sell off was prompted by the company's creditors forcing the company to disclose they were in default over 19 covenants of their loan in an 8-K.

The company's line of credit has been reduced from \$250 million to \$120 million. The revised agreement also imposed many mandates onto Syntax-Brilliant. Many of them had a deadline of February 19, 2008, which the company failed to meet.

The creditors have cut off the company's credit, required the company to have their approval before using any cash, forced the company to submit weekly budgets, and assigned an "Operation Advisor" to oversee the operations for the company. The "Operation Advisor" of course looks out first for the interest of the creditors rather than the shareholders. On top of it all, the creditors took title to inventory purchased outside of the US and required Syntax-Brilliant to dissolve Vivitar Japan, pledge 65% of Vivitar France, Vivitar Asia, and either dissolve or pledge 65% of Vivitar UK as collateral.

It remains to be seen if the company can further renegotiate with their lenders, obtain other financing, find some other way to repay the loan, or be forced into Chapter

The company is also still unable to report their earnings for the quarter ended December 31, 2007 after issuing a delay on February 11, 2008. As a result, the company received a Notice of Delisting from Nasdaq on February 22.

Due to a delay in the build-out of the 2008 Beijing Olympic facilities, there are indications that a large number of LCD TVs already sold through distributors in China have not been deployed. As a result, Syntax-Brilliant is in talks to buy back the TVs for redistribution primarily into the No. American retail channel.

Go [Going for Broke](#)

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Canon Buys 25% of Hitachi LCD Panel Unit

Canon will pay \$403 million for 24.9% of Hitachi's LCD panel business.

Canon, the world's largest maker of digital cameras, currently buys LCD panels for its cameras, camcorders, copiers, and printers. Canon would like to buy all of Hitachi Displays' owner, Panasonic.

Hitachi Displays itself own 50% of large LCD maker IPS Alpha Technology.

Go [Canon Secures Panel Supply](#)

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Projection & Screens

"Spero Lucem," Light Art in Cologne Church

State-of-the-art technology in a church, "Spero Lucem" was created by the light artist Michael Bleyenbergh; using technology from G+B pronova GmbH.

"Spero Lucem" is a light design in the shape of a cross on a glass screen. This design was created using HoloSign, where pictures are not projected from a projector onto a screen but a predetermined motif is "embedded" in the HoloSign screen.

A homogenous light source (including the sun) makes this motif glow in intense colours: the white light is separated into its spectral components by holographic optical elements. The colours that result from this change when the light source or the

observer move. I

The light artist Michael Bleyenbergh has another example of his work is the outer façade of the Deutsche Forschungsgesellschaft in Bonn, which shines as a splendidly colourful, 10-metre-high work of art based on HoloSign.



Go [Light Art and HoloSign](#)

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Control & Integrator Solutions

D Color: Part Spot, Part Moving Head

Don't call it a moving head. Don't even call it just light spot. Studiodue's new D Color is something different. "Something so new we even lack the common word with which to name it," says Studiodue's marketing manager at their booth at ShowWay in Bergamo.



Sporting a total of 28 CREE XLamp XR LED ranging from red to green, blue and amber, the new D-Color can be a true colour palette in the hands of light designers. But don't be fooled by these little shining stars: the real breakthrough comes when D-Color starts moving. With sinuous and fast movement, this small, patent-pending device is already breaking conventional rules.

This unit is able to direct the light beam all round in virtually unlimited positions, with a stunning 540° tilt and 170° range. And, thanks to its built-in microprocessor, it is even easy to use.

A standard RS-485 interface, opto-couplet input, male and female 3 pin cannon connectors for DMX control complete the outfit of D-Color and make this unit eligible for architectural designers as well as small to mid-size installations.

Go ["What's-Its-Name?" at Studiodue](#)

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Digital Signage

Cisco Opens Academy of Digital Signage (ADS)

Cisco establishes an 'Academy of Digital Signage' to create a qualification for digital signage content creators in the USA.



The Cisco Academy of Digital Signage (ADS) will offer a specialised curriculum focusing on content creation, content management and content distribution.

Target 'enrollees' are expected to include media professionals looking to add a marketable credential to their skill set, staff members of companies interested in creating digital signage content, and employees of Cisco channel partners planning to expand their digital signage solution capabilities.

After completing a three-day training programme and passing the required tests, media professionals will receive a Cisco Qualified Digital Signage Media Professional (CQ DSMP) credential.

Go [Cisco's Academy for Digital Signage](#)

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Distributor & Installer News

Tech Data Buys Scribona in Scandinavia

Scribona, Scandinavia's broadline distributor with annual revenues of 873 million Euro, grows tired of cost-cutting, krona-pinching and closing offices ...and sells out to pan-European rival Tech Data.



Tech Data (the I.T. broadliner that bought what was left of Maverick AV) is one of the I.T. giants pushing slowly but resolutely into Pro AV and residential.

Scribona had 14,456,937 reasons to sell out as that matches their latest losses in Euro on their 2007 Annual Report. (Based on today's currency exchange.)

"Through this transaction, Tech Data will gain a talented team of highly experienced distribution employees that will help strengthen our operations and drive stronger relationships with our key vendor partners and customers," says Robert M. Dutkowsky, CEO, Tech Data Corporation.

Tech Data, driving a good bargain, will pay only the net asset value for inventory, some intellectual property, material contracts, office equipment and "certain other" assets, plus a premium for Scribona's operational assets (from €13.5m to €16.5m, depending upon performance criteria.) Note the word "plus" as many of the industry gossips think the premium is the total sale price.

Scribona had offices and operations in all Nordic countries (with more than 6000 resellers and systems integrators). To reverse losses, they downsized their Finnish organization, closed the Malmö regional office, and sold off their Danish operations to SMG Danmark (which itself filed for bankruptcy two weeks ago).

On one hand, Tech Data has just bought itself the leading position in Scandinavia. On the other hand, the way things are going in Scandinavia distribution, you might lose that hand.

Go [Tech Data Buys Scribona](#)

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Midwich Signs Optoma for UK

Midwich, UK's largest AV distributor, signs a UK distribution deal with Optoma, last quarter's number 1 UK projector brand, according to researchers.

Midwich is expected to deliver incremental growth for Optoma's B2B solutions in many of its existing channels, including corporate, Pro AV, education, SME and leisure.

Meanwhile, InVision UK, Midwich's sister company, will help target the Custom Install (CEDIA) market with Optoma's premium 'Themescene' brand. Midwich will leverage its strength in the entry-level consumer market to create additional opportunities for Optoma's own brand of consumer projectors.

Darren Lewitt, Divisional Director at Midwich, says, "We have actually been talking with Optoma for about six years now and both parties feel that the time is right to move forward. We are all very excited about this new development. Optoma has a strong portfolio of twenty-two B2B projectors and a number of impressive consumer solutions. Our 'Whichlamps' division will stock genuine UK sourced Optoma lamps."

Go [Midwich](#)

Icion Systems Installs 400th AMX Inspired Signage System

AMX Inspired Signage premium partner, Icion Systems, celebrates the installation of its 400th Inspired Signage digital signage system. This milestone earns Icion Systems the rank of number one Inspire Signage partner (in terms of product deployed) in the UK market.

Having been an Inspired Signage partner for just two years, Icion Systems' rate of progress has impressed and delighted both partner and distie.



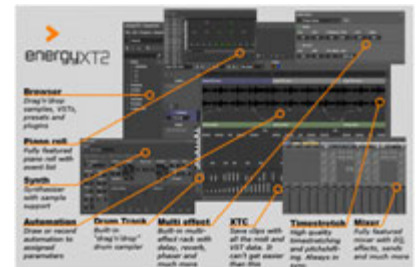
One of the most recent project completed by Icion Systems in achieving it's impressive total of installation successes was for 'Exclusively Surrey' estate agents in Oxshott, who are now able to present an impressive, eye-catching shopfront display of properties and services to passing high street traffic.

Go [Icion Systems](#)

Pro Audio

Isn't it Good, Norwegian Wood?

There's more than just electronics in the alliance announced by pro-audio Behringer Holdings Ltd and Oslo-based XT Software. The agreement that brings Behringer's renowned hardware expertise together with the fast-growing community-based music software developed in Norway by XT Software will lead the German manufacturer to bundle energyXT digital audio workstation with selected products.



Chairman Uli Behringer

"energyXT2 Compact Edition" will offer Behringer's customers a complete Digital Audio Workstation solution. As its parent application, it will load in less than two seconds and won't be locked to a single computer. Extremely small in size (less than 2 MB) thanks to a tightly coding and able to run on all operating systems, energyXT2 will be likely transferred from one computer to another via removable media.

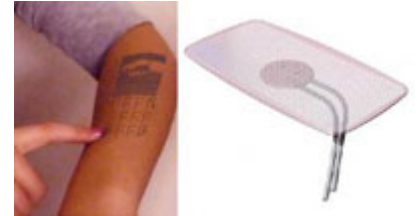
"energyXT2 Compact Edition is the perfect complement to our growing line of recording products." Chairman Uli Behringer says in a statement, "XT Software has created a superb DAW platform that adds significant value to our recording line. ..."

The software bundle is expected to ship worldwide in mid to late March 2008.

Residential & Digital Home

The Embedded (In You!) Monitor

Some people's genius is just frightening...



Engineer Jim Mielke demonstrated his invention at a Greener Gadgets Design Competition in USA: a wireless blood-fueled display implanted under your skin.

The 2x4-inch "Digital Tattoo Interface" Bluetooth device (made of thin, flexible silicon and silicone) is inserted through a small incision as a tightly rolled tube, and then it unfolds underneath the skin to skin and muscle.

Via the same incision, two small tubes allow blood to flow to a coin-sized blood fuel cell and it converts glucose and oxygen into electricity. After blood flows in (from an artery) to the fuel cell, it flows out again (via the vein).

On both surfaces of the display (top and bottom) is a matching matrix of field-producing pixels. The top enables touch-screen control through the skin. Instead of ink, the display uses tiny microscopic spheres, similar to tattoo ink (the spheres changes their color from clear to black, as aligned with the matrix fields).

Your skin becomes a touch-screen cover that can operate as a cell phone display with the potential for 3G video calls that are visible from underneath the skin. When the phone rings, you push to turn your implanted display on, and "the tattoo comes to life" with a digital video of the caller." When the call ends, the tattoo disappears.

The "tattoo" communicates like any other Bluetooth device. The display can be turned off and on by pushing a small dot on the skin. But unlike battery-powered devices... this device is the ultimate green concept and is always on as long as your blood flows.

Fortunately, as an engineer, Jim has no plans for commercialization. And not even a web site for you to go to in order to creep yourself out.

Special Feature

Converting the "Screen-Less"

by *Marco Adriaans*

Marketing & Communications, PROJECTA BV

Why would a business that invests a small fortune in beamers and laptops (and on people who spend days to create a PowerPoint or video presentation) then project their images onto a surface that would blur and distort viewing?



The answer is that, today, almost every corporate on the FT 500 list owns multiple screens, while many SMEs are still learning...and may (out of ignorance or because they think they are saving money) be trapped in that space known as "Screen-less."

The "Screen-less" don't know, don't recognize that any chain is only as good as its weakest link and-- in an AV chain--a blank wall used as a projection surface easily qualifies as the weakest link. A wall is simply not intended for projection.

Installers of screens must still spend time trying to educate the SME business customers to the fact that a good screen improves communication and enhances presentations. Maybe today, we should call the screen a "high definition fabric display."

If SMEs weren't enough of an educational challenge, now comes along a new version of an old problem: the emerging home theater market. Here's where installers have to ask their customers in Socratic fashion, "Why would you compile a fantastic film collection, buy an expensive high def DVD player-- only to break the chain of quality by adding a dumb wall where a quality fabric component should be?"

More and more people only discover how much more pleasant it is to watch something on a large screen when they visit a sports bar, pub or auditorium where the result of a completed quality chain is so apparent. Exposure to professional solutions is a driving force in the home market where the consumer can inspire to emulate (to his own budget limitation) the video quality that impresses him/her the most.

(In this same manner, (i.e., by exposure to quality systems in pro AV environments), more and more SMEs now also understand that a top-notch presentation calls for a top quality chain of projection components including a screen at least equal to the weakest component.)

The projection screen is an indispensable component of any presentation or Home Cinema set-up, just as important as the source media, player and beamer. A quick look at a screen might be deceptive but the factors that go into a good screen are numerous. The quality of the fabric (which is not a single quality but a multiplicity of qualities to achieve the right formula to build into the screen fabric the many characteristics it needs to display an image), the quality of the black border (which should be there to add to the perceived clarity), the control mechanism (to raise and lower the screen whether manually or electronically), the ease and durability of a mounting mechanism, and even the way to transport the screen to the installer and to the installer's customers (without tearing or degrading of the screen).

In the home, an image must be projected so several people can see it all at the same time. Each situation is unique and for the best possible projection quality (clarity of the image), the customers need to understand that light output of the projector, size of the projection screen and the reflection value of the screen fabric should be attuned to one another.

Projecta screens use a special black border (or frame) to improve the perceived clarity of the projected image. With certain Home Cinema models, there is even an extra high black border on the top and/or bottom of the screen, allowing the user to choose the ideal viewing height. That makes a difference when placement will be in high rooms and in home cinema viewing rooms.

Dealers, distributors and installers who want to look at the difference a good screen makes can look at web site or contact us.

But any way you look at it... you're better off looking at it with a good screen!



Go [Projecta Screens](#)

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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: rAVeurope@gmail.com

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

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A little about Gary Kayye, CTS, Chief Visionary, Kayye Consulting, Inc, and founder of rAVe Publications:

Gary Kayye, CTS is chief visionary at Kayye Consulting, a Chapel Hill, NC, USA-based firm specializing in marketing consulting and training development services to the ProAV and HomeAV markets. Recognized as InfoComm's Educator of the Year in 2004 and NSCA's Instructor of the Year in 2007. Gary is a columnist with Sound & Communications Magazine and founder of rAVe Publications, publisher of the premier HomeAV industry's eNewsletter (rAVe HomeAV Edition – published in conjunction with CEDIA), rAVe ProAV Edition, rAVe Rental [and Staging] and the newly launched Reviews By rAVe. Prior to forming Kayye Consulting, he spent 11 years at Extron and AMX as VP of Sales and Marketing and has previously served on the InfoComm Board of Governors, as the chairman of the Projection Shoot-Out and chairman of the AV industry's Professional Education and Training Committee.

Gary is currently serving on NSCA's Industry Advisory Board (IAB). In addition, he donates four weeks of his time a year as an active educational leader in the ProAV and HomeAV markets through free seminars and workshops at shows like NSCA, InfoComm, CES and CEDIA. He is a lively and fun speaker and every time he speaks, he mixes a visionary look into the future with a keen eye on how to get there. His clients have included Sony, InFocus, Crestron, Hewlett Packard, Steelcase, NEC, Da-Lite, Epson, Clarity, Apple, Scientific Atlanta, Cisco, JBL, Crown and Harman.

Finally, Gary's passion is a non-profit he co-founded called the Swim for Smiles Foundation (www.swimforsmiles.org). Swim for Smiles raises money for the North Carolina Children's Hospital through fun, active athletic events involving kids and swimming.

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