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Inviato: giovedì 27 marzo 2008 3.38

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Oggetto: eNEWSLETTER Vol. 4 Issue 12 Public Spat over Matrix Switches

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For Europe's Pro AV integrators in a Networked World

Volume 4, Issue 12 - 27th March 2008

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Industry News

What is the New NSCA TechWeek?

NSCA and InfoComm execs announces the new event, NSCA TechWeek, sponsored by InfoComm. The event will take place October 20-24 at Hilton Anatole Hotel in Dallas, Texas.

TechWeek will provide educational opportunities in popular apps, including pro audiovisual, fire and life safety, access control, closed-circuit television, and more. The event will feature education programs and teachers from both NSCA University and the InfoComm Academy, manufacturer training, certification testing, networking opportunities and tabletop exhibits.

Classes will run throughout the week and will vary in length from 2 hours to 4 days depending on the subject matter. Table top exhibits will begin on the night of the 21st and end at 4 p.m. on the 23rd and will be closed during the morning class sessions.

Go to [NSCA Tech Week](#)



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Public Spat over Matrix Switches: Extron and Crestron

From RAVE USA

We came across this on the Extron website last week, and had to add it to this week's rAVE. Before you read it, here's some background:

Apparently, according to Extron, Crestron is OEM'ing matrix switchers from Kramer. Obviously, they aren't using Kramer's control protocol as that's Crestron's expertise -- so they added their own control board, but everything else is the same. Crestron won't confirm this, but, if you look at the photos that Extron provided (we added them below), both the Kramer and Crestron switchers look almost identical.

The letter, written by Extron's president is very creative and certainly kicks off a war between Crestron and Extron in the market of matrix switching.

We've also included the response from Crestron's Senior VP, Randy Klein.

So, read them both!

EXTRON's LETTER

A Kramer with a Crestron badge is still a Kramer...

I am writing you to set the record straight. As you can imagine, with 25 years of manufacturing history and so many products, there's always some company making a claim or taking aim against one or more of our product lines. Most of the time, A/V integrators and consultants see through the veil of misinformation written by many marketing departments. Sometimes, however, claims are made that cannot be ignored. In this particular case, these claims are from a reputable company that is maneuvering their "new" matrix switchers to gain traction in the market. In this case, I feel I must set the record straight.



We may not have invented the matrix switcher, but we re-engineered them for our market, developed and patented better technologies, and set a new standard for engineering excellence that cannot be overlooked. And, that means our specs aren't written by our marketing department and our engineering isn't done by someone else. Extron is Extron. I

stand by this every day.

A Kramer matrix switcher disguised as a Crestron matrix switcher is still a Kramer matrix switcher. Sure, Crestron may have a better way to control it, but it's still a Kramer product. We cracked one open for you to see for yourself - check out these photos. These two products aren't just similar, they're virtually identical.

Claims are being made that Kramer, a.k.a. Crestron, switchers are equal to ours. Well, we have tested them and this is simply not true. Extron CrossPoint switchers are in their 4th generation and reflect a mature state of design and technological development. When we looked at their matrix switcher in comparison to ours, we did so knowing that even though our bandwidth continues to measure higher, all of us have more than enough. Our customers are now telling us they are also selecting products based on power consumption, efficiency, the amount of heat generated, reliability, and control flexibility.

To read the rest of the letter from **Andrew C. Edwards**, *President, Extron Electronics*, click here: [Andrew's Online](#)

Now read CRESTRON's RESPONSE

CRESTRON... More Than A Badge

By now, many of you have probably received an email from Andrew Edwards, President of Extron Electronics targeting our line of analog switchers. Rather than respond to Mr. Edwards claims, we would rather focus on Crestron's technology and our commitment to the industry.



Crestron was first in the industry, more than 25 years ago, to deliver an AV switcher to our industry. Since then, we have focused and committed to engineering a product line that creates a total integrated solution, rather than individual, non-integrated disparate products. Today, contrary to Mr. Edwards claims and own business model, we engineer, manufacture, and support everything we make. Our newly completed 100,000 square foot Research and Development facility is home to over 300 design engineers dedicated solely to developing future technology. This, combined with our 3 state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities, 53 worldwide offices, and a distribution warehouse with every product in stock for immediate delivery, only further confirms Crestron's commitment to our customers and our industry.

Besides commitment, any successful business today requires partnerships. Our partnership with Microsoft is a great example. Today, our two companies are co-developing digital media technology that will have a tremendous impact on the future of our industry. We are proud of our partnership with Sierra Video. They make a fine and reliable product. Combined with our technology ("Crestron Inside"), our switchers are unmatched, and highly successful. In less than 60 days since their release, we have received customer orders for over 1000 Crestron switchers.

We truly thank you for your past and future support. We will continue to deliver opportunity and growth to our dealers through state-of-the-art technology, support and commitment to be your partner, both now and in the future.

Sincerely,

Randy Klein

Senior Vice President, Crestron Electronics

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Projection & Screens

Sony Gears Up 4K Digital Cinema

While DLP projectors with 2048 x 1080 resolution are the mainstream in Digital Cinema, Sony spoke up at ShoWest about its 4K (4096 x 2160) SXRD projector for "next generation" digital cinema.

In USA, for example, Sony formed a new business unit in LA to sell and market 4K CineAlta digital projection systems. So far, they've sold 4K solutions to about 100 screen locations (some AMC theaters and Landmark theaters, plus some Chicago sites). In Japan, Sony is using its digital content to spur 4K sales.

IMAX Goes DLP

Each IMAX digital projection system to be deployed to commercial exhibitors around the world, scheduled to begin mid-2008, will be powered by DLP Cinema projectors.

"We are proud to work with IMAX in its development and rollout of the best digital cinema experience in the market," says Nancy Fares, business manager for DLP Cinema Products Group. "DLP Cinema projectors are the heart of every digital 2D and 3D movie experience for traditional and now large format venues. We look forward to participating in their move to digital in the months ahead."

The 3D movie format is now a revenue driver for the film industry overall, and IMAX has been a leader in 3D content, especially since the overwhelming box office success of The Polar Express (the IMAX 3D Experience that made US\$65 million in IMAX theaters since 2005). More recently, the IMAX Beowulf grossed US\$25 million, representing a per screen average of more than US\$185,000.



Go [IMAX DLP](#)



[Click above for more information](#)

Control & Integrator Solutions

All-in-1 Portable Surveillance Unit

Forensics Visions makes the only portable, multi-channel wireless CCTV Windows-based digital recording system that we know. Their new Corporate Executive Model uses simultaneous 8-camera (4-wireless) capabilities in addition to 1-4 channels of audio. Housed in a carrying case, the unit contains a LCD, 1 Terabyte HDD, writeable DVD drive, keyboard controls.



Go [Portable Surveillance](#)

Mediatech's New Room Controller

Mediatech announces the affordable Starfish Room Controller, especially suited for classrooms. This keypad has RS-232 and IR control capability, a built-in IR learner, scheduling features, security lockout, user-configurable backlit buttons with more than 240 button labels and a Windows-based configuration.



Displays & Mounts

\$72 Million to Expand LED Business

Luminus Devices raised \$72 million in its latest round of funding. The company, which grew from research at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, makes the Phlatlight LED (light-emitting diode), a type of LED that combines some of the qualities of both LEDs and lasers.

The Phlat in Phlatlight stands for "photonic lattice structures." Basically, the lattice creates a situation where light can be precisely controlled (like a laser). The Phlatlight also can extract large amounts of light per watt, like an LED.

"Luminus has expanded beyond projection TV with products for the entire display market," says Christian Hoepfner, VP products at Luminus Devices.

At CES, iNNOSWELL introduced a 3LCD pocket projector illuminated by Luminus' patented PhlatLight™ technology.

Go [Luminus Devices](#)

Mitsubishi Electric at Audi Alpine FIS Ski World Cup

Sub-zero temperatures, icy roads and remote mountains...all in a day's work at the Audi Alpine FIS Ski World Cup tour. Mitsubishi Electric Diamond Vision provides LED screens for all the European Audi Alpine World Cup events, following the tour as it wends its way from Norway, through northern, central and southern Europe before reaching the Italian ski resort of Bormio.

The competition will visit 32 resorts across Europe, Canada and the USA before reaching the final this month at Bormio, Italy.



Due to its very nature, just getting access to each race venue provides a major logistical challenge, as Diamond Vision Operations Manager Steve Wood relates; "We operate truck-mounted mobile 44 m² LED screens for most of the venues, but access for the 40' articulated units is sometimes a little tricky on icy mountain roads. Frequently the mobile rigs need to be towed into position. However even that's not an option in several of the venues. In these cases, we use modular screens of between 30m² and 70m², flown into position by helicopter."

Once in position, the screens are expected to operate reliably under extremely harsh conditions. Temperatures of -20 degrees Celsius, ice storms and blizzards are not unusual. While the crews generally work on two-week rotations, most of the hardware stays on the road for the whole duration of the tour.

Mitsubishi Electric's Diamond Vision screen system is operated by many of Europe's top screen hire companies: available in mobile, modular and fixed installation versions, and in a variety of pitches from 3mm to 25mm, this ski sponsorship demonstrates it is also one of the most versatile.

Go [Diamond Vision](#)

Digital Signage

Silex Upgrades Signage Solution

Silex Technology adds real-time content selection capability for its MVDS video distribution system. This capability allows an MVDS user to immediately switch the content that is displayed on a digital sign without having to use switching hardware. For example, the user could interrupt a movie that is being shown on a digital sign in order to provide a public service announcement.

MVDS real-time source selection supports multiple video sources that are connected using either 802.11 wireless or Ethernet hardwired networking technology. Each digital sign can display the content from any of these sources, and the

user can, on the fly, change the content on a given digital sign using a software switch.

MVDS, introduced at last year's Digital Signage Expo tradeshow, uses a unique digital multicast technology to support up to 1000 wired displays and/or 32 wireless displays.

Go [Silex Technology MVDS](#)

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I.C.G. Goes Wireless

I.C.G. says the company has a complete end-to-end wireless digital signage solution. The system is a combination of its MobileMedia System and ViFi Adapter (video over WiFi).

The turnkey MobileMedia System bundles a 3G/4G wireless network module, a WiFi router, an integrated media player and hard drive. It also allows cached content to be streamed over wireless links. The ViFi Adapter receives the audio and video content over WiFi from the MobileMedia System and connects via a variety of video outputs to any display. The company says it supports all media and content formats and any Windows or Linux-based content software.

Go to [ICG Wireless](#)

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Pro Audio

Media Numerics Adds to RockNet 300 system

At ProLight & Sound, Media Numerics presented several new members of the RockNet 300 family. RockNet is a real-time, low latency audio distribution network tailored to tour and installed sound applications. RockNet behaves very much like a traditional analog active split system. It conveys 160 24bit audio channels based on CAT5 and supports various topologies.

The new remotely powered Inline Repeater (RN.362.IR) allows the length of the CAT5 between two RockNet300 devices to be extended from 150m to a maximum of 450m.

Distances of several kilometers within redundant ring networks can be enabled by using the new Fiber Optic Converters (RN.351.FI / 352.FO) on single-mode glass fiber transfer networks. These converters can also be used in multi-mode infrastructures.

Added to the 19 inch/1ru family, the new RN.331.DD provides four digital inputs and outputs (AES / EBU) in one device.

All of the new products fit into the existing product portfolio and incorporate the RockNet product philosophy of easy installation, intuitive operation, maximum system security and excellent audio circuit technology.



Go [Rocket Net](#)

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Varizone in the White House

For press conferences at the White House, the press use the Press Briefing Room (named after James S. Brady.) To handle the complex audio routing, Varizone, a digital audio distribution solution from Klotz Digital was installed.

VARIZONE



The installed Varizone matrix controller handles all analog and digital audio inputs and

outputs, as well as DSP and mix functionality requirements. It accommodates all required audio sources, including the audio feed from the presidential podium, ceiling microphones for journalist questions.

It also facilitates an outdoor press location just outside the West Wing of the White House, an event feed from an off-site presidential event and the central control at the rear of the press briefing room receiving external audio feeds. Pick-up microphones and new loudspeakers over the press seats balance the sound and eliminate the need for boom microphones. All incoming audio sources are processed, if applicable, mixed and routed to various destinations.

The White House Varizone infrastructure interfaces with destinations relevant for media and broadcasting, such as satellite uplinks, recording feeds and press booths.

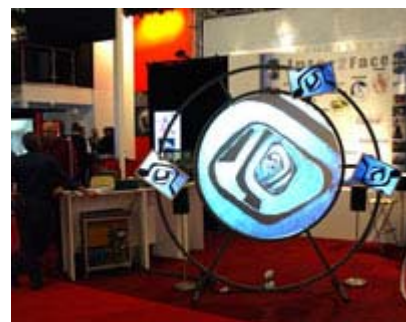
Go [Klotz Digital](#)

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Rich Media & Content Distribution

I2F MediaController

Maybe you remember their “eye-catcher” at ISE? (see photo here) Some passers-by thought it was simply a work of art or a gadget. But actually it was a demonstration of I2F’s MediaBrick an affordable key software for the display of diverse media (still images, HD moving images, sound, web-content, live video capture) simultaneously and in layers.



Three flat screens, each with a small footprint computer running on I2F MediaDisplay (a passive version of MediaBrick) were being rotated by motors. The screens were fixed to a metal frame with a plexi projection screen in the middle. A standard projector sends images to this screen.

All the installations on the stand were controlled by I2F MediaController, central manager, installed on a standard pc. That MediaController could over-rule the pre-programmed Media Brick.

You can ask this Belgian company for a demo version of I2F MediaBrick 4.0.0.0 to install on your computer or visit them for a demonstration without obligation.

Go [MediaBrick](#)

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SPECIAL FEATURE: What Keeps Us up at Night?

Decent Proposals

How to use proposals to identify client needs and win the bid

By Chuck Wilson, Executive Director, NSCA

NSCA has been busy preparing educational courses, events and activities for NSCA at InfoComm 08 and the new NSCA TechWeek, sponsored by InfoComm, set to debut this fall. As we were working on the course lineup for NSCA University™ at the InfoComm show, I began thinking about the importance of proposals in our industry.

Just as a network is the backbone of an electronic system, a proposal is the basis of a project. Proposals provide internal guidelines on a system’s design and execution as well as communicate to customers how project goals will be met.

Every systems integration firm should have a proposal template as a starting point. Templates are available through NSCA Essentials online. Documents, like those found in Essentials, should be easy to modify based on each client’s unique requirements. A proposal template is much like an insurance policy: everyone starts out with the same basic elements, but components change depending on the customer’s specific situation and variables.

To determine these variables, it’s important to conduct a thorough needs analysis to understand the functionality customers want in their new system. Systems contractors then have the information necessary to devise a workable solution. The operative word here is “solution.” In the past, we may have offered clients too many specifics; today’s

customers, while more technologically savvy, don't want to hear every detail about every device. Rather, they are interested in what overall solutions we can offer and how these solutions will help their company be more profitable.

Consequently, proposals should not list specific products by brand name and model number; this gives clients a list for comparison shopping. Instead, proposals should break down the entire system, subsystem by subsystem, and answer the following questions:

1. What will this subsystem do?
2. What problems will it solve?
3. How will it make the customer's life easier?

By clearly explaining the overall system and how it will form an integrated solution, systems contractors demonstrate that installed technology is much more sophisticated than simple, plug-and-play commodities. It's a great opportunity to emphasize that specialized expertise is critical for a successful installation.

Systems contractors may shortchange themselves when they create their own value proposition — the part of the proposal that explains why the customer should do business with them. Following is a common example:

"We have been in business for 25 years, and during that time, have gathered a wealth of experience."

While this value statement may be meaningful to those working in the company, bland and generic facts about years of service or particular brands likely means little to customers who want technology to help streamline their operations.

Value propositions must state how systems contractors can help customers. The best way to do this is to ask direct questions: How can I save you time and money? What can I do to help your company succeed?

As systems contractors analyze their clients' needs; they must also have a firm grasp on their own businesses. One way to do this is to perform a SWOT analysis for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. This exercise might include an examination of SG&A (sales, general and administrative expenses). If your SG&A is 18 to 20% and a salesman proposes selling product at 15 percent above cost, you must recuperate somewhere else in the proposal the 3-5% lost on the sale of the product. If you receive net 30-day financing from suppliers, but invoice the project on a 60-day basis, you need to factor in the cost of the credit that will carry you for the additional 30 days. Expenses should appear in the line item dedicated to design and engineering. Contractors could draft a separate preliminary agreement with potential customers to cover a thorough needs analysis.

Many projects could potentially incorporate items that might be overlooked, such as digital signage. A comprehensive needs analysis and value proposition allows systems contractors to offer a relevant proposal that boosts their chances of winning the bid...and getting the project started off on the right foot.

Get more business- and industry-specific knowledge by attending NSCA University educational programs at InfoComm 08 in June and NSCA TechWeek this autumn.

Go to [NSCA Tech Week](#)

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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

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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.

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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