

Panasonic 85-inch public launch

Panasonic chose the IBC broadcast show in Amsterdam as the venue for the European public introduction of its 85-inch plasma.

Previously announced to the trade in June, the announcement at IBC was designed to drive home the point that the 85-inch is equivalent to both four 42-inch panels and, perhaps more importantly for the out-of-home advertising community, a standard six-sheet poster.

Chris McIntyre-Brown, head of professional IT and imaging for Futuresource, said:

"The introduction of larger than 80-inch displays are attractive for digital signage networks offering images that match traditional 6 sheet poster sites and in attracting the attention of large outdoor players such as CBS and JC Decaux."

Shipping in November, the 85-inch plasma has seen 133 orders placed since its trade announcement.

PSCo expands to UAE

Value added distributor and trade rental specialist PSCo has announced the opening of its new rental office in the United Arab Emirates.

Based in Dubai, PSCo will bring its trade-only pricing structure to customers working across the UAE.

The new office will hold a large fleet of new Infinite Plasma screens (see AV News last month), the only Sharp 108" LCD in the region, a fleet of Panasonic 103" plasmas on screen-lifters and a full range of Panasonic plasmas and touch-

screens. Mike Nield, global rental director of PSCo commented: "Having a PSCo UAE team located in Dubai, we can bring some new and exciting products to the rental market in the region."

"We invest in the latest visual technologies, making them available for our clients to constantly innovate for this fast moving space."

"We are looking forward to working with international clients travelling to Dubai for events, as well as local clients based in the region fulltime."

Genee Vision takes UK lead

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distributor partners throughout the UK and Ireland. The popularity of the visualiser is reported as being on the increase as one in thirty UK school classrooms now have one. Genee World is predicting an increase to one in ten by the end of 2010. In an evaluation produced by MirandaNet for Genee World it is reported that Genee Vision visualisers are used across the curriculum in Key Stages 1 to 4. The predominant use of visualisers was in science teaching (at 64%) but all other subject areas are seeing significant use.

Signage boosts screen sales

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Consulting said that: "Our research shows the public display application has enjoyed strong year-on-year growth of nearly 40%, with digital signage driving flat panel display penetration in almost every application and vertical market."

"Retail signage has long been heralded as the main vertical for flat panel displays, currently

around 45% of total public display application sales, with the obvious attraction of funding the network via advertising revenue. There has been some doubt how this vertical will perform through the harsh economic conditions but it appears to be the networks and installations that fail to provide, or even offer, a clear ROI that have suffered, such as point-of-information or wayfinding installations."

In terms of the impact of demand on competing technologies, McIntyre-Brown went on to say that: "In terms of the physi-

cal display, demand for larger screen sizes shows no sign of slowing in the B2B space and has helped plasma technology survive with 32% share in Q2 2009. This jumps to nearly 50% in the greater than 42-inch categories."

"Futuresource expects the latent demand built over 2009 to drive strong growth in 2010 reaching 2.4 million units. Systems integration will continue its ascendancy as the lines between AV and IT continue to blur and more emphasis is placed on total solutions."

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Home installer news

Phillip Warris, a director of St Albans-based integrators FAB, has become one of just four people in the UK to hold the CEDIA Home Cinema Design Specialist (HCDS) certification. Introduced in the UK at the CEDIA Expo 2008, the CEDIA Home Cinema Design Specialist is the highest level of certification offered by the industry body.

"As a company we are very focussed on ensuring all our work is of the highest possible standard and we recognise that industry-specific qualifications, like the HCDS, are a fantastic way of demonstrating this to potential customers," said Warris. Members of FAB's staff already hold qualifications from CEDIA, THX, the ISF and the HAA.

Exclusive Xantech distributor AWE has announced new additions to the control system developer's range of discrete IR solutions. Both the new receivers and emitters having been redesigned and can be distinguished from early products by the D (for Designer) product code. The idea is to make them both more aesthetically pleasing when visible and less obtrusive when installed in the home. A larger surface contact area is said to improve adhesion in warm AV racks. The 291D and 480D receivers are supplied in black, silver or white finishes, while the 480D recessed in-cabinet receiver is available in a brass finish with black and white caps to fit the bezel. Colour coded plugs have been added to the 291D Hidden Link, 480D Dinky Link and 490D Micro Link receivers. These match the coloured jacks on the connecting blocks to assist with installation.

Elite Screens has announced that its CineTension2 electric tab-tensioned projection screens are now available in 2.35:1 aspect ratios for use with anamorphic projectors. The CineTension2 has a 95 watt, 14 rpm tubular motor and a low voltage regulator. It is controlled through internal IR and RF receivers in addition to an RJ45 cable port (that will link to a hard-wired wall switch or 5 to 12 volt trigger).

The CineTension2's White Tension PVC screen fabric has a 1.1 gain and a black-backing to eliminate light penetration to support image brightness. Elite's marketing manager Dave Rodgers sees an opportunity emerging as anamorphic projectors are now available below the \$5000 price point.

As **AV News** was going to press, standards authorities were set to choose between the competing IEEE P1901 and ITU-T G.hn standards for powerline networking. The lobbyists were out in force. Chano Gomez, vice president of marketing for silicon developer DS2, argued that the ITU-T G.hn standard offers the consumer the best and fastest solution.

He further argues that IEEE P1901 is not a standard, it is two standards with one based on OFDM (Orthogonal frequency-division multiplexing) modulation and the other on Wavelet modulation. These are said to be mutually incompatible.

Supporters of ITU-T G.hn say that its advantage is that it offers the potential to consolidate all wired networking, including power lines, phone lines and coaxial cable, under the same unified umbrella. As usual, these standards



Phillip Warris of St Albans-based integrators FAB, one of just four people in the UK to hold the CEDIA Home Cinema Design Specialist (HCDS) certification.



Sean Cleary, Northern Regional manager at Crestron: "This new facility is really going to benefit us and our growing network of systems integrators, custom installers and dealers in the region."

issues come down to one industry alliance of vested interests challenging another. G.hn supporters include Intel, Panasonic, Infineon, Sigma Designs and British Telecom.

They argue that if the IEEE P1901 standard is approved a consumer buying, for example, a TV with embedded powerline technology based on Wavelet P1901 might find that it does not interoperate with a powerline-enabled router based on OFDM P1901.

IEEE P1901 supporters include the HomePlug Powerline Alliance, IBM, Mitsubishi Electric, Siemens, Sony Corporation, Toshiba and Panasonic (with a foot in both camps). Who will win? On past performance we would usually advise avoiding the camp with Toshiba in it, but on this occasion they might just have jumped the right way.

Integrated TV standard imminent
The International MHEG Promotion Alliance (IMPALA) has announced that the latest version of the MHEG open standard iTV middleware has now been submitted to ETSI for approval. MHEG is the standard that brings together broadcast-delivered content with con-

tent and functionality delivered over IP as an extension of the channel or network.

Version 2.0 of ETSI 202 184 includes support for HD graphics with increased colour depth and screen resolutions, as well as the IP-based MHEG Interaction Channel. The latter facilitates hybrid broadcast broadband receiver operation through an IP connection. There is also support within version 2.0 for PVR extensions enabling an EPG to be delivered as an MHEG application.

Giri Valliappan, director of market development at IMPALA explained that: "These developments are a step change in the capabilities of the globally deployed technology providing broadcasters with a cost-effective route into a new world of interactive service provision and revenue growth."

Crestron has opened a new training facility at its Doncaster office. The new expansion gives the Northern office capacity to train up to twelve programmers at a time.



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