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# CustomRetailer

A STRATEGIC APPROACH FOR THE CUSTOM ELECTRONICS PROFESSIONAL



## ISE SHOW REPORT

**From Amsterdam** The TRENDS The PEOPLE The PRODUCTS





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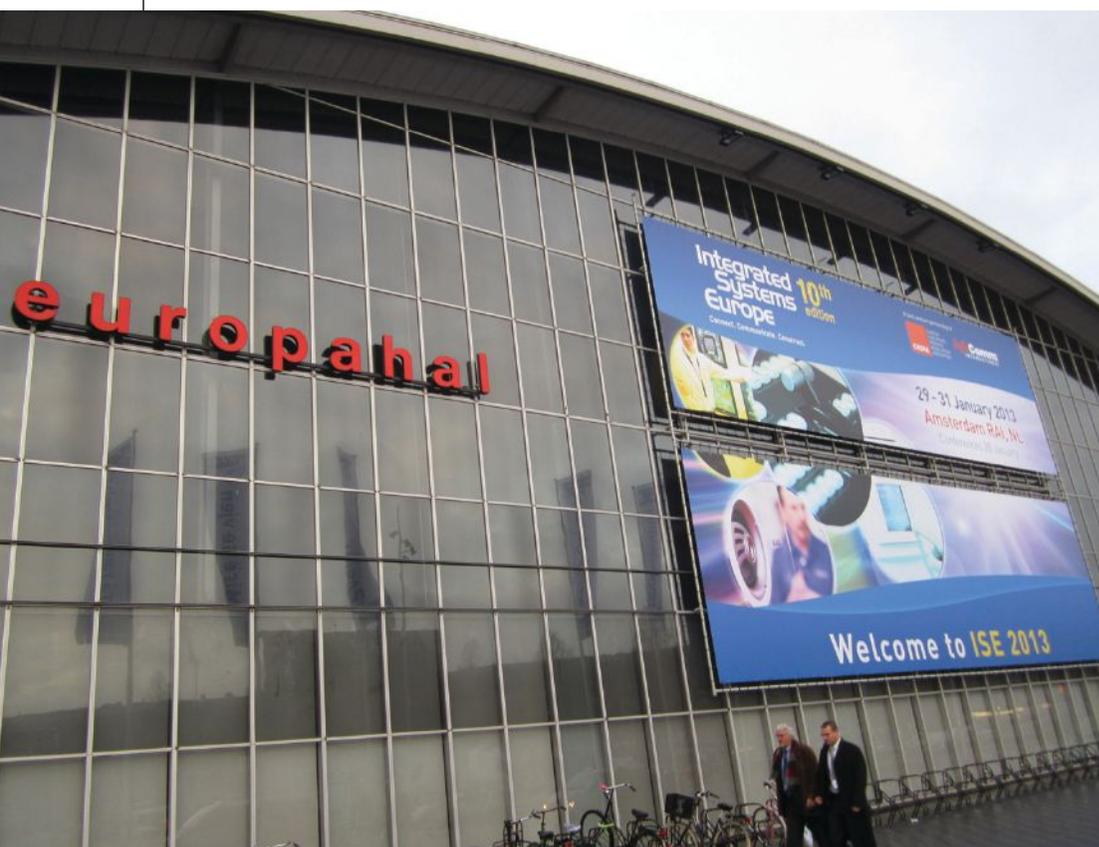


# Integrated Systems Europe

# 2013

More than just a tradeshow, ISE connects the world for the professional AV and electronic systems industry

By Maureen Jenson



The exterior of the massive RAI Conference Hall in Amsterdam, where ISE will be held until at least 2019.

Launched in 2004 for the expanding markets of professional AV and electronic systems integration worldwide, Integrated Systems Europe, or ISE, has quickly grown to become a must-attend event—definitely a show for business, but also for networking, education and technological innovation.

ISE is owned by not-for-profit trade associations, and since 2007 has been a joint venture between InfoComm International and the Custom Electronic Design & Installation Association (CEDIA). These associations act as the cornerstone of the event's education program, which grows year over year. According to one attendee I talked to, "This year's show had the most comprehensive program ever delivered by CEDIA at ISE. With a course structure designed around shorter courses—allowing attendees to still have lots of time on the show floor—attendances were the best ever for CEDIA."

As in the past six years, ISE was held at the Amsterdam RAI Convention Centre, occupying every hall with over 750 manufacturers and more than 44,000 attendees. The show attracts professionals from every link in the systems integration value-chain, from manufacturers and distributors to dealers, contractors and consultants. ISE also draws ever-growing numbers of end customers from fields as diverse as education, sports, corporate facilities, hospitality and live events.

"We've watched this show grow year after year," said John Benz of CORE Brands, "and it just keeps getting bigger and better. We've already had a full training class today; it's very exciting."

Benz demonstrated the BlueBOLT platform's remote monitoring and cloud-based control technology. From the show floor in Amsterdam, he accessed the CORE Brands office in Petaluma,



The RAI Conference Hall was packed with over 40,000 attendees for three days.



**CORE Brands' Bill Pollock:** "We've brought together our industry's best talent, and can pull from Silicon Valley and other tech areas. That, with having the industry's best products, provides winning solutions for all our business partners."



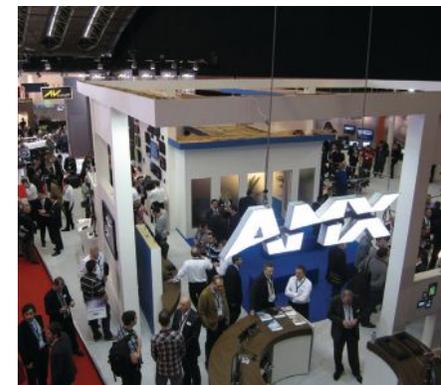
**URC's Mitchell Klein:** "We have multiple goals for exhibiting at ISE, and offer strong commercial solutions for the 500 people we expect to see at our booth."



**CEDIA's Debbie Antrim, holding CEDIA's *Electronic Lifestyles* publication at the entrance of the show.**



**Atlona's Ray Moore in front of the company's new and more descriptive self-explanatory signage:** "We have this signage to address our conference room, residential and all Atlona applications."



The enormous AMX booth.

Calif. During a live demo, Benz even used BlueBOLT to turn on the lights in the California office. "With BlueBOLT," he explained, "an integrator can do a hard reboot from anywhere in the world. This is just the tip of the iceberg [in terms] of what we can do with [the platform]. If there's any problem at a client's home or office, BlueBOLT can alert the integrator; [it] has reduced truck rolls for our dealers by up to 50 percent."

There's also room for newcomers at ISE as the show continues to expand. "This is our first year," said Olivia Dumanovsky, of Pakedge, "and our booth has been full the entire time. We've just hired a new international sales manager, and the buzz has been great."

And Dave Rodgers of the California-based Elite Screens explained that "in Europe, we have only been distributing for five years, so forming that distributor relationship is hugely important for us at ISE."

For many manufacturers, though, ISE is the most effective way to reconnect with their dealers who are located outside the United States. "ISE provides a great opportunity for us to reconnect with our dealers in the EMEA region," said Pete Baker, of RTI. "And this year we dazzled them with our latest handheld and in-wall touchpanel controllers; a new XP processor with on-screen control support; powerful and flexible multiroom audio solutions; and much more."

"In addition, integrators checked out RTI's expansion into video distribution with new HDMI video matrix switchers, as well as the introduction of our APEX control platform. Within the APEX platform," Baker explained, "the latest version of Integration Designer will offer a number of key enhancements to provide strong support for remote programming and cloud services. With the APEX Platform," he added, "we have really raised the bar to help our integrators."

Some manufacturers partnered with their distributors, such as Autonomic Controls, who was with Vivateq in one of the main halls. "We're showing the Mirage Audio System, [which is] comprised of our

award-winning digital audio media servers, the MMS-2 and MMS-5A," said Autonomic's Michael de Nigris. "[We're also showing] our new high-powered and IP controllable M-400 and M-800 amplifiers, which represent a complete solution for up to 96 zones of audio, featuring audiophile-grade playback of local music files and streaming services [such as] Pandora, Rhapsody, Spotify and Last.fm. The Mirage Audio System," he said, "works seamlessly with all of the popular automation systems with pre-programmed control modules, user interface templates and world-class integrator support. Other control options include our new in-wall keypads, the KP-1 and KP-iOS; any iOS or Android device; and any Web-enabled computer or tablet."

For many manufacturers, there was clearly a realization that ISE may be the only trade show some of their dealers might go to all year. For manufacturers like Crestron, that realization resulted in rolling out all the stops. The company brought more than 270 new products to ISE, including the significant additions in the DigitalMedia line: the new DMPS-300-C-AEC with acoustic echo canceling; and the powerful DM-MD64x64, which is the first 4K compatible switcher. "We also previewed the next-generation 3-Series control processors," said Crestron's Jeff Singer, "[along with] our mobile device-styled TSW touch screens, featuring Core 3 UI graphics and PoE connectivity; and the only in-wall dimmer that doubles as an integrated keypad available in Europe—our CLWI range."

Audio manufacturers were enjoying a stellar turnout of dealers and distributors as well. "We've had a great turnout," said Brem Verellen, a European distributor for Totem Acoustic. "Dealers are keen to see the Tribe Series on-wall speakers that come in a variety of sizes and colors to meet the custom integrators' custom needs. The Tribe III," he said, "is the company's first on-wall speaker that uses its Torrent Technology." That's the same technology, in fact, that's found in the Totem range of in-wall and in-ceiling speakers. The company also features a subwoofer ▶



Crestron's Jeff Singer demos the company's wide array of products to the crowd.



Cleerline's Robert D'Addario: "We're in the innovator stage with room for huge growth. If you're not using fiber, you should be."



Gefen's Randy Wilson demonstrated the company's easy to install, easy to use upgraded GAVA system.



Control4's Paul Williams: "Our new wireless music bridge offers a rare three technologies in one box; normally you would need several boxes."



Vvutec showed off its award-winning variety of projection screen and art screen solutions.



CAT's Alistair Levine & Brian Barr: "People from around the world in the yacht, aircraft, pro recording, home theater indoor & outdoor industries are here. We take audio to an entirely different level, using exotic materials such as aluminum, stainless steel and carbon fibers, and manufacture for superb audio reproduction with horsepower."



Simon Wehr, Dana Innovations: "The Sonance Landscape Series (SLS) High Output (HO) models are perfect for larger spaces requiring high volume and evenly dispersed sound, such as residential estates and resort grounds."

design for any custom integration solution.

Creative demos were in abundance as URC showcased its Total Control line of products, including the new in-wall keypad TKP7000, which controls lighting, thermostats, cameras, multiroom music systems and more. "Our goal at ISE is to scan 500 people [who] come through our booth," said URC's Mitchell Klein. "We have multiple goals, and are concentrating on both residential and commercial. We have a very strong commercial solution, and have so much more than just remotes. We offer full integration and automation, and full distributed music based on LAN that offers lots of flexibility. We can even stream a turntable if our customers want to go that little bit further and get better sound quality."

For ISE veterans AudioControl, the show has remarkable benefits. "We originally started coming to ISE about six years ago to establish more distributor relationships," said AudioControl's Chris Kane. "Starting last year, we really noticed that the distributors were bringing their dealers. We've had a lot of dealers through our booth who are keen to find more solutions. Of course, we scan every badge and break the leads down. It used to be just the principals of companies, but now we see they're bringing entire sales and design teams. We share distributors with Triad and Stealth so they're right beside us on the show floor to make it very easy one-stop shopping."

"We've been making great traction in the market," added AudioControl's Alex Camara. "The Rialto has been the star of the show for us." The company's Rialto 400 is a compact, high-powered amplifier with a built-in DAC (digital-to-analog converter) designed to provide greater performance and higher sound quality for analog and digital systems, including Sonos systems.

Control4 had an enormous presence at the show. "We've been maniacally focused on giving our dealers 'wow' solutions for their customers," said the company's Susan Cashen. And as Control4's Paul Williams added, "Our new wireless music bridge has pulled in lots of interest; it is so easy

to share and stream music with it. It's great for the dealer, because it's so easy. It's rare to have three technologies in a single device you'd usually have to have several boxes for," he said. "With the Control4 software it has worldwide capability."

Control4 was also proud to show off its lighting solutions. "We have everything the dealer needs," a company rep explained, "and [we're] offering our single SKU product profile, so that will really simplify the dealer's life."

The Gefen booth was so packed I had to stop by no less than three times to speak with Gefen's Randy Wilson. "I've lost my voice!" Wilson said. "I haven't stopped talking for three days, and the excitement is palatable. We've launched the updated version of GAVA; people are becoming more and more interested in control and automation systems that you don't need a programmer for. GAVA is a very clean system," he added. "We also have easy-to-install, reasonably priced conference room packages that come complete with speakers."

For Kai Rostcheck of ZV (ZeeVee.com), it's all about moving digital video. "ZeeVee HD/SD encoders and RF modulators convert video sources, such as satellite receivers and digital signage players, into digital cable channels that are broadcast over existing coax cabling to an unlimited number of HDTVs," Rostcheck said. "This is great for commercial usage as well. Think about it: sports bars; stores; assisted living facilities. The need is only going to grow."

Simon Wehr of Dana Innovations also had an expansive booth, and was eager to point out new additions to the Sonance brand. "At the show," Wehr said, "Sonance is set to present the Sonarray series—an all-weather outdoor speaker range with a friendly price tag. The package consists of eight satellites and an eight-inch dual voice-coil underground subwoofer, a combination capable of evenly distributed audio in outdoor spaces of almost 2,000 square feet with minimal sonic overspill. The Sonarray SR1 speakers," he said, "incorporate 3.5-inch anodized aluminum cones.



The vast Projection Design booth



Alex Camara and Chris Kane: "We've had great traction at this show, and we've had an amazing response to the Rialto 400."



Stewart Filmscreen's Joaquin Rivera: "This show is a huge success for us; we have an excellent mix of commercial and residential product here."



Olivia Dumanovsky, Pakedge: "It's our first year at ISE and the response has been incredible."



CORE Brands' Robert Ridenour discusses the ELAN g! system with dealers.



Polk's Al Baron with the company's new Woodbourne: "Our booth has been packed with dealers and distributors. We've seen many new distributors, and all are wowed by the Woodbourne's performance."



ZV's Kai Rostcheck talks to distributors about moving digital content.

Installation involves a simple daisy-chain configuration."

Also on-hand from Sonance—and designed specifically for larger residential and commercial installations—was the Sonance Landscape Series (SLS) High Output (HO) models, following the same sat/sub form factor but with upscaled audio. "This makes them perfect for large spaces requiring high volume and evenly dispersed sound, such as residential estates and resort grounds," Wehr explained. "The HO range comprises the 6.5" two-way LS87SAT satellite speaker, and the LS15SUB 15" dual voice coil subwoofer. The 70-volt designs allow for multiple speaker arrays again, in a simple daisy chain configuration. This is really big news for us!"

I also spent time with Joaquin Rivera of Stewart Filmscreen, who had back to back meetings the entire show. "This show is a huge benefit for us in both the commercial and residential areas," Rivera said. "If you're mainly a commercial dealer, this is great, [since] the executive boardroom you just did will want a screen like this in his home for entertaining. If you're a residential dealer, you now get to see how complicated and creative the commercial market can be. The more creative you become, the better chances you have as a dealer to get those dollars."

"By the first day," Rivera added, "we've seen all the distributors we've wanted to, and we've just introduced CIMA to the European market. This lets the dealer go to market with a lower-priced product. It's easy to install, [it's] durable, [it's] profitable, and [it's] a great performer."

For most of us, communication is key; Atlona's Ray Moore talked about the company's new signage, designed

to make communication significantly simpler. "Our signage," he said, "highlights the various ways Atlona products are used. It shows the connectivity, making it very easy for ISE attendees to comprehend immediately." Atlona was also highlighting products such as the AT-H2H-88M, [which] supports up to eight zones to accommodate larger AV installations, and the AT-H2H-44M, [which] supports distribution to four zones in more compact spaces.

Accessories seemed to be on a lot of peoples' minds as Draper showcased the company's Video Conferencing Camera Lift-Ceiling, which allows the placement of a video conferencing camera directly behind a motorized projection screen; the camera raises and lowers with the screen. As for Draper's Video Conferencing Camera Lift-Credenza, it hides your camera in virtually any conference room furnishing, while the Video Conferencing Camera Adapter Bracket allows a camera to be mounted in a Draper ceiling-recessed projector lift.

"[One] special video conferencing accessory is the new Draper Video Conferencing Backdrop," said Draper's Penny Sitler. "It provides a clean uniform surface behind the person doing the video conference. You can have your company logo or a plain background, and it can be applied to portable, manual or motorized screens. [We're] also introducing chromo-key fabrics in blue or green."

One of the most popular booths at ISE was the Home Cinema Europe booth. Manufacturers that teamed up for strength in numbers included Fortress Seating, DVDO, SI Screens, D-Tools, BitWise Controls, Audio Design Associates, RBH Loudspeakers, Tributaries, D-Box, Display ▶

## Overheard at ISE

"The ProLink ProPanel control app is big news for us. It's easy to use and dealers love it for its price. All of your devices can be programmed together with our software so there is no messing around with each device being programmed separately."

—Mike Everett, Pro Control

"The great thing about this show, is that we have very open and specific dialogues with our distributors and dealers about where we are and where we need to be for their specific markets; we work hard at our collaboration and really care about what they have to say. CORE Brands is working on a very high strategic level so that all the brands are positioned for max potential."

—Mitch Witten, CORE Brands

"Our booth has been packed with dealers and distributors and plenty of new distributors. We've been demoing our new Woodbourne and every one that has stopped by not only loves the superior sound quality, but they love the clean modern design."

—Al Baron, Polk

"We'll do double or triple our European business this year and will sign up at least 12 new dealers at the show. This is the top show that attracts dealers who do the very large projects."

—Brian Barr, CAT Audio

"Now that the UK CEDIA show is no more, I really hope to see ISE take over that show's mantle of being the event of the year for education."

—Anonymous

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**Integrated Systems Europe 2013**



**Draper's Penny Sittler:** "The new Draper Video Conferencing Backdrop is one of the company's latest accessories. It can be customized, or [it can] just provide a clean, uniform background when someone is video conferencing."



**CORE Brands' Mitch Witten,** with the new Niles DS Architectural speakers: "CORE Brands' product lines are being perfectly positioned for maximum potential."



ISE had an entire hall dedicated to digital signage products, such as this Ingram Micro booth.



**Draper's Joe Burke:** "When we pull together calculated room factors, we can ascertain the best screen for the space. With the ReAct 2.1 screen, you don't lose the contrast, color or brightness. [It's] perfect for home theater, and in areas where there's a lot of light."



**CORE Brands' Joe Lautner:** "With ELAN g! our interface devices provide the end-user with complete consistency. They are easy to learn, and [it's] easy to go from device to device—no matter what device you use."

Development and Schneider.

"This is smart one-stop shopping, said BitWise Controls' John Milton. "The products and solutions here are what integrators are asking for. We're showing off our new software and the BC2, a powerful automation controller that picks up where the BC1 leaves off. [It includes] 4-routed, adjustable IR ports; on-board IR library; 2-RS232 port; 2-SPDT relays; 2-signal sensing inputs; and multiple simultaneous two-way TCP. The BC2 packs plenty of horsepower," he added, "and is shipping now to authorized BitWise Controls dealers; [it's also] designed and manufactured in the U.S."

Ryan Gustafson of SI Screens, which was one of the brands represented in the Home Cinema Europe booth, showed several projection screen solutions in the expansive space. Screen Innovations aims to shift the way two-piece projection is thought of and utilized, pushing the category further into the mainstream. On hand were the Black Diamond Zero Edge G2, and Gamma Maestro 1.1 gain 4K (acoustically transparent) and Solar 1.3 gain 4K screen materials. Gustafson also demonstrated the brand new Black Diamond Motorized projection screen. "Unlike flat panel TVs," he said, "Black Diamond Motorized delivers zero glare and reflection when used in a bright environment. And by virtue of its Black Diamond ambient light rejection screen technology, light scatter is measurably reduced by over 75 percent."

Said fellow booth member Tim Bigoness, of D-Tools: "D-Tools SIX is an integration software solu-

tion that ties together the entire system integration process. Integrators using SIX generate faster, more accurate proposals and detailed system designs that help them win more jobs. SIX is a reporting tool that ensures projects are completed on time and on budget, increasing profitability—and who doesn't need that!"

Todd Beetcher and C.H. Chee of DVDO also partnered with the Home Cinema Europe group. "This is the perfect group of manufacturers to be associated with," Beetcher said, "and we're showcasing two of our award winning technologies—the DVDO Air WirelessHD system, and the Quick6 HDMI switch. The WirelessHD-compliant DVDO Air," he explained, "operates at 60GHz frequency band to deliver professional grade full 1080p video, and 7.1 surround sound audio for 2D and 3D HD content wirelessly. The Quick6 HDMI switch upgrades home theater installations to the latest video connectivity technologies—including six 300MHz HDMI inputs, MHL support, InstaPrevue, and InstaPort—without the need to replace existing AVRs. The product's dual HDMI outputs can also be used to drive two displays simultaneously."

"Custom installers," Beetcher added, "will find the Quick6 HDMI switch to be an ideal product for new and existing home theater setups with multiple HDMI sources and displays. Oh—and watch out for the flying monkeys!" he warned, referring to the howling plush toys that were flying around the booth. Yes, ISE is nothing if not a fun show! **CR**