MAKING THE SWITCH

Crestron Anticipates Content Management Needs As The World Turns To Digital

by Karen Mitchell

Learn to adapt to the new AV standards or risk being left behind. That’s the word to the industry from Josh Stene, product line manager for commercial AV, Crestron Electronics.

“There is no doubt that digital content is here,” he said. “Like it or not we live in a world that includes HDMI, DVI, DisplayPort, and the dreaded content protection. Crestron has been hard at work for a few years now in anticipation of these changes, and thanks to our dealers, consultants, and industry partners our new DigitalMedia technology is a huge success.”

Stene said Crestron’s DigitalMedia product family allows dealers to distribute and manage just about every audiovisual signal available today, from composite video to DisplayPort and HDMI with content protection. “This technology allows dealers to easily manage both EDID information and CEC control data,” he said. “The great news is DigitalMedia is here and shipping today.”

Crestron’s new DigitalMedia DM-MD6X1 digital AV switcher extends the MPS’s capabilities, making it possible to add multiple digital AV sources to existing MPS systems.

As to where that leaves customers who have Crestron analog AV systems, Stene said the company’s in-house solutions can handle the issue. “To start, we have a solution for our MPS products in which we have enjoyed great success. These products were really game changers for our industry as we were the first to incorporate professional audio DSP technology, control, AV switching, routing, mixing, and amplification all in an easy-to-install 2RU form factor. “To expand these capabilities, we are introducing our DigitalMedia DM-MD6X1 digital AV switcher at InfoComm,” he added. “Although it can be used stand-alone, this product was really intended to extend the MPS’s capabilities by simply routing the VGA output from MPS to DM. You can now add multiple digital AV sources to any of your existing MPS systems, so new digital PCs, laptops, and Blu-ray players are no longer out of reach. This switcher has both HDMI and DM inputs and outputs as well as accommodations for digital and analog audio.”

Crestron’s engineering department is working actively on more than 170 products, Stene said. “The 6X1 switcher is one of 53 new babies for InfoComm and will be one of our primary products for showing and shipping at the show, both as a stand-alone and as the expansion unit for our MPS product line.”

To tackle the challenges of the current economic climate, Crestron is providing more solutions for dealers and analyzing the marketplace to ascertain which solutions will be of most benefit for dealers and partners, pumping technical resources into those areas, he said. “One area is in digital video and audio content distribution. Major laptop manufacturers are abandoning traditional standards and replacing them with newer HDMI and DisplayPort connectivity.”

Because Crestron’s many partnerships provide what Stene called “inside stories,” Crestron was able to anticipate the shift to digital and get a head start with its DigitalMedia product line early on. “From an engineering perspective,” he said, “we look at how customers truly use the products. Instead of a ‘me too,’ we see what problems customers might encounter, such as controlling the CEC within the switcher. Since we control the data through our switchers, we’ll actually monitor, manage, and control that data.”

QUICK BIO

COMPANY: Crestron Electronics
STRATEGY: In a world now filled with digital content, Crestron feels its DigitalMedia technology will allow users to distribute and manage just about every AV signal available.
OVERTIME: Crestron’s engineering department is working actively on more than 170 products.