

INSIDE CI



It was the issue before Christmas, and all through the smarthouse, not a creature was stirring, except for DAVE 'Santa's Little Helper' SLATER who never seems to stop...

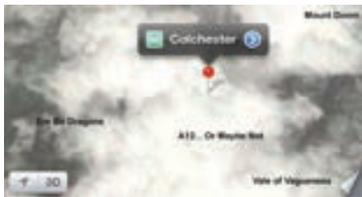
Well, I feel like a proper installer now – not only have I been on the Demopad training and on the Habitech IT training, I'm now also installing a great little cinema at St. Oswald's Hospice in Newcastle under the SeeHearTouch program headed up by Ian Morrish. This is a great program and we have been following the installs via releases from the team at Wildwood PR for some time, but I have to say that it's not until you get involved in a project of this nature that you really understand what goes on behind the scenes to pull such an assignment together. So with a list of manufacturer's and distributor's to thank for their help on this project namely – Lutron, Demopad, Redline, Epson, Habitech and Current Audio – it is up to me and a few colleagues, Gary Chapman from Creative Install for help with the Lutron, Mike Cain from Demopad for help on the programming and Andy Collings, the expert sparky on the job, to see the job done. You will be able to see just how the project turned out in the next couple of months when the press, including the top team at SVI, will have the final install story.

In the Habitech

With the new Habitech North West showroom opening, and my inability to resist a free lunch, I went along to see what all the fuss was about. But, as Murphy's Law would have it, come the morning of the course 'technology' was already starting to fall down around me! The onboard computer on my Virgin train was not working and, provoking a hearty chuckle from myself, the woman announced over the PA system: "Everything will be fine; we are about to re-boot the computer..." Yes the answer to all our tech problems: Switch it off and then switch it back on again! Where have I heard this before?

Based in the North West Design Centre, the first of the Habitech training courses kicked off lead by Justin Lawrence, a great technical hand in the industry who is now involved in Habitech tech support. Looking at the training, it is structured around small bits of info at a time – a clever way of training that gets the installers involved and thinking about it rather than just going through death by PowerPoint. It also allows all those involved to, well, be involved, which is perfect as installers have lots of trouble- shooting knowledge available to share with others and I've always found that the best knowledge comes from the field.

This distributor shared resource centre is not a new concept, but it is a tried and tested way to help your dealer. What is new about this centre is the ability to share platforms – the NWDC is not just design and digital, it is a whole lot more, with celebrity chefs running evening events and the ability to hand-make furniture from doors to full blow bars. Think about it, if you have a wealthy client who wants a cinema, wants



Apple Map's view of Colchester...



LANWAN – Not, as it transpires, a Giant Panda...



The alternate A-Team build an automated Fool-Pitier.

a bar, wants a night club, wants the best in carpets and wall coverings, would it not be a good thing for you to help sell it all and make some money on the way. If the answer to this is 'yes' (and it really should be) then I would heartily recommend giving Winston Williams a ring at Habitech to find out more.

Core of the Matter

I have to say I love this time of year, dark nights, the favorite scene selected on your mood lighting, a good movie cued up on your favorites list in Netflix – what more could you want (*To be drinking rum from half a coconut in the Caribbean, Dave. Half a coconut that was part of a lady's bra mere moments before. – Ed.*)? Well one thing that would be on my wish list would be Apple not messing around like they are at the moment. Now if you are a regular to my column you will have worked out I do like the odd Apple product, at last count I have a 21-inch Mac, a 27-inch Mac, a MacBook Air, an iPad 2 and 3, an Apple TV, and now the new addition to the Apple family, the iPhone 5. I have always had a saying stuck in my head since I was a wee lad: "You're only as good as your last job" and well, Apple, I have to say your last couple of jobs weren't that good. The biggest boob in years has to be the maps app that has replaced Google; it could not even find the street I was standing on. Worse still I have just downloaded the latest firmware for Apple TV to find that it will no longer play streamed movies, and to rub salt into the gaping wound it's now all over the forums warning you not to download it! Apple, you have to sort yourself out as people can go off brands as quickly as they turn onto them.

Hmm, blame Apple? For once I seem to be giving some stick back to the manufacturer when it's usually the poor installer that gets this type of flack when kit disappoints or fails. Are we pushing tech too far? After all, was there anything really wrong with the iPhone 3G? If I look back I definitely think it did a much better job of being a phone. Do I really need the extra line of icons on the iPhone 5 or is it just such superb, almost subliminal, marketing from the big guys that I have to be the first to have one? I do wonder sometimes...

Overall though

Anyway, enough of my ranting, I have to find my Snicker overalls and... erm, where did I put my boots? It's time to load up a van with all the donated goodies for St. Oswald's and get to work...

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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