

INSIDE CI



DAVE SLATER laments the fact that CI customers never seem to learn that cheaper doesn't mean better, lauds all things Apple and looks ahead to some big events in the CI calendar...

Technology changes at such a fast pace - Apple are now bigger than Microsoft, who would have seen that coming about ten years ago?

Not me, but one thing that never changes is the way customers in the custom install market act. We are still having the same conversations with our customers that we were having back in 1990. We specify a great system, even offer a good deal; some money off, some extra freebies, but they still try and play you off against another two dealers. Surely by now they should have worked out why some things are cheaper- usually the things that don't work are always cheaper.

We see it time and time again, you start contact with a signed contract and half way through the client says he has bought some cheaper screens off the World Wide Web! At this point, you have written your codes for the control system and are just about ready to pick up final payment – suddenly not very likely as you will have to start again.

So not only have you lost the small margin you were going to make on the screens, but you need to trawl the web for discreet codes to get the screens to change input, then the customer complains that he has to wait when changing Sky as everything falls down. I have been in this game for longer than I can remember, and there is always one thing I can predict; if the customer knocks too much off the price it will never work the way it should as you have broken the golden rule of trying to make cheap kit work.

Apple of his i

So what's new at DSE HQ, well I have updated my Apple iMac with Lion OS 10.7 (pictured) and I love it. With everybody I know owning an iPad, Apple have brought more gestures to the desktop. For example I love Launchpad - it takes all your applications and shows them just like it does on your iPad.

Mail is another program which has been changed to look a lot like the iPad version; new to mail is the conversation pane that tracks all the comments in the same thread, a nice little touch and something I loved on the iPad upgrade. With the next big thing from Apple being the iCloud, I can see why Apple are trying to make their products all look and act the same across their entire range.

With iCloud being like a smarter Dropbox, I cannot wait to try it out, it's going to make life easier when it comes to making sure all devices I have are current and that I have my collection of music, movies and documents all synced at the same time. I have even bought a £2.99 app to find out how to find the best way to use Lion, it has so many hidden new features this app is perfect Apple fans. I am only hoping that Apple don't bring out a control system that is easy to setup and use or all us CI guys will be on the dole.

Show time

So it looks like it is going to be a busy September for shows, first it is *London Design Week* which I have to say I love. I have a role helping The Society of British Interior Design (SBID) and it's my job to try and bridge the gap between digital companies and designers, so *London Design Week* is always a packed week for me. I have noticed more CI guys setting up stalls at these shows, and a lot of our work at DSE comes from some really well respected design companies.

CEDIA US is another important show in the year's calendar, especially this year, with one eye on their economy I am just hoping that the US CI market doesn't start to slip back again. This year's show is back in Indianapolis, which is one of the original host locations for the *CEDIA Expo* and is the home to CEDIA International Headquarters.

Then for all the northern dealers who think they are missing out on the fun, *Essential Install Live* is being hosted at Lancashire County Cricket



Club in September 2011 and as usual will have its gala dinner the evening before the opening of the show where the trade is honored with a number of awards.

Big screen demo

Another great business tool for you to use to sell the next top of the range home cinema is one from Panasonic who have constructed a great demo facility at Pinewood Studios. What makes this a great day out for your client is the chance to see famous people working around the studio, which is then backed up with a great demo of Panasonic's largest 3D plasma on show which can be enjoyed whilst sitting comfortably on Signature home cinema seats.

I think this is a great idea and can only go to help you secure the contract; it is always down to the wow factor when getting the final answer from the client. Panasonic will also be showing third-party applications and products from the likes of Adobe, Apple, Avid, Quantum, Object Matrix and Rimage. I will be making a visit to this facility in the next month so will let you know my experience of how it can help your business.

That's it from me then, I will sign off this month as I need to start packing for a busy month of travelling the globe. At least with all this new technology hitting the market, we will have a fun run up to Christmas trying it all out and with the France project closed for the summer months due to noise pollution concerns, I have a little time on my hands.

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