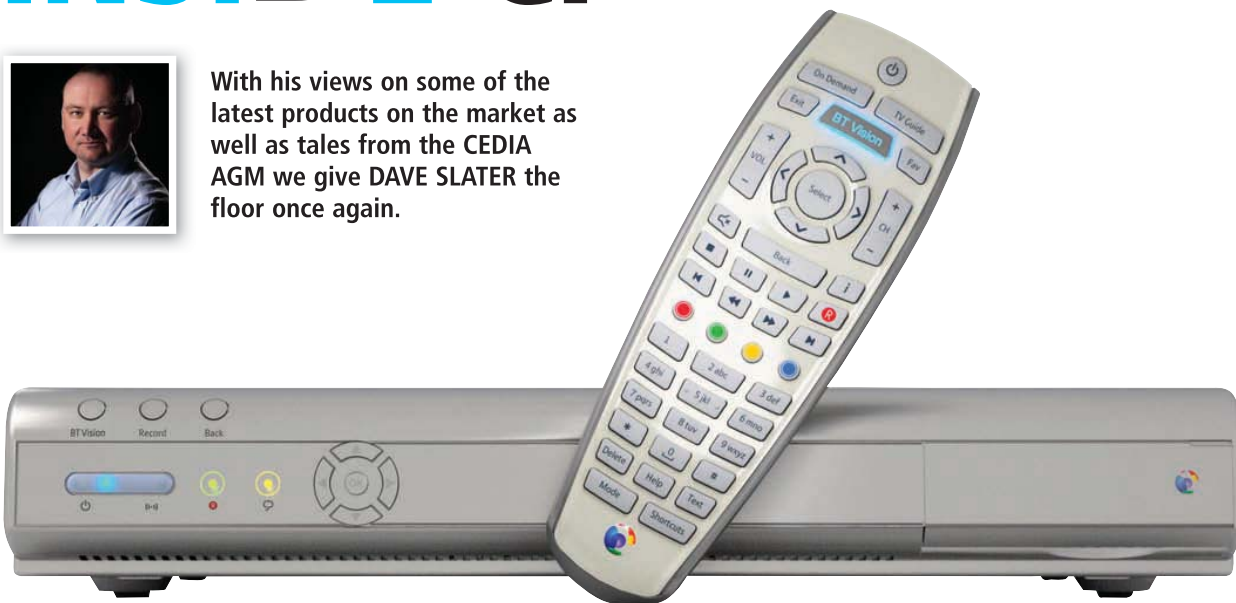


INSIDE CI



With his views on some of the latest products on the market as well as tales from the CEDIA AGM we give DAVE SLATER the floor once again.



It's been a strange old month this month, DSE ran dry of new work, but my life seems to still be running at 200%. I was off to CEDIA AGM thumbing a lift from one of our installers that was travelling to London on a mission to finish a cinema. The AGM was another precision run affair by CEDIA with forums setup before the AGM to help installers discuss their problems. There was an interesting discussion going on between installers, manufacturers, board members and Matt Dodd the energetic host. One thing that kept rearing its ugly head in each discussion is how demanding the end user is becoming, they are expecting work to be done for a fraction of the cost it should be and we as installers are struggling to make ends meet on some jobs, hence the reason for installation companies going to the wall. I find more and more installation companies are diversifying just to make a living, there is no longer high margins in the kit and customers seem not to know the worth of our time.

Big job or small job was a forum that was interesting in the fact that some contracts are lasting over three years with changes going on every month. How is an installer able to make this work, three years of labour stuck on the same job surely cannot be as profitable as 50 small jobs, then there is the cash flow if the customer is a rat when it comes to paying you, it has to be an enormous draw on your bank account. One thing that I did feel that I got from the discussion was that we are all in the same boat, it might be a sinking boat but at least there are plenty fingers to plug the holes with. One thing that a lot of dealers aren't aware of is the white papers and resources that CEDIA have for you which can be found at their education web site www.cediaeducation.com/resources

Visionaries

As the day moved on another interesting subject was Cloud technology with the head honcho from BT letting us into some of BT's secrets on what is coming from them; it will be interesting times for digital content but we will all need faster broadband speeds than what we have now for it to work. The new BT Vision box has better technology now to get over the need for iPlayer to buffer the content so again we are one step closer to having an on demand service for watching our favourite TV programs. Onto the AGM and board change and then a networking meal that was also a great place to do business. The lucky ones had a round of golf the next day for charity; the workers had to go back to work, yes that included me – I've no time for fun at the moment.

So jumping onto the train I was off to Kent to check out completion of a cinema and hitch a lift back up North. It was all looking cool, we not only put a cinema in but converted half of the house, nice wall paper, modern fire, Samsung LED screens with a Control 4 system, the best part of the install was a

funky glass divider between the lounge and the kitchen with the touch of a button on the iPad the Rako module switched the glass from clear to opaque, a real James Bond moment and probably the first thing the client shows all his guests, with mutterings from his mouth like "look at this" and at £5000 just for the glass a nice way of boosting our profits on the contract. We designed and installed a lighting scheme using Delta lights and Rako as the lighting controller. With the iPad being the heart of his music system and house control we included a wall docking station to allow for easy access. All in all a nice install, 3D cinema for the kids, nice chill out zone for the adults, a happy punter (a rare thing these days).

Sounds good

Another treat I had this month was a special visit to a Gecko demonstration of one of the best 7.1 systems I have heard in a none acoustically treated room; it was spine chillingly good. The clip I was shown was from the *House of Flying Daggers*, the delivery to every speaker was pin sharp with great clarity. Rob Sinden of Gecko, the distributor for Steinway Lyngdorf was on hand to give an overview of this truly landmark system.

"The Steinway Lyngdorf Model S surround system provides higher quality sound than any other surround system - regardless of price thanks to its unique design. It requires no acoustic room treatment for the best results and provides more consistent sound quality than any other surround system whilst using ultra compact on or in-wall loudspeakers. Basically it's a complete rethink of how to produce sound accurately in a room. You'll hear more detail and dynamics from movie soundtracks on this system than a £1-million mix of the best amps and speakers in the most highly treated room available. The system is truly that remarkable."

Ah well it's back to the grind at DES HQ with new work next month I have the hard task to price it, sell it, run installers through how to fit it and collect the money on completion, God I feel like a one man band again the only thing in the equation that is missing is me fitting it, and there is no chance of that with a dicky heart. My whole life at the moment can be summed up by the visit to the doctors, having to run on the treadmill; running faster and faster but not getting anywhere fast.

Dave Slater is MD of DSE Group, incorporating DSE DIGITAL.

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