



INSIDE CI



After getting angry and kicking his computer DAVE SLATER composed himself to tell us all about his plans for Las Vegas, a new capricious addition to the DSE office and an distribution company with the wow factor...

Well, welcome back from the Christmas break. It's another year and time to get going again.

I'm just packing my bags to get off on my regular trip to Las Vegas for CES, and I have to say I am looking forward to it. The last three months has seen an immense amount of new products landing in our laps, there have been previews of 4K from JVC and Sony, triple flash from SIM2 and Epson jumping into 3D in a big way.

Have we overdosed on technology? Does it feel like you just get used to one piece of kit before you replace it and need to learn it all over again? Well certainly that's how I feel. I have been dreading the day I would have to change my Microsoft server at DSE HQ; we have had it since 2003 and it's been moaning for the last two months about not being too well, the odd blue screen, the odd power supply failure, the odd stubbed toe after kicking it in a frenzy on a cold December morning. But here it is the day has arrived to change it for a new Dell, all singing, all dancing, young teenager model, dual core processing, hot swop drives and Microsoft SBS server 2011 (it's already out of date as I am writing this in 2012).

Like all technology you seem to have to give it praise when it does something right, you are scared incase it goes into a huff if you shout at it, so firing it up it looked magical. That was until I discovered I had no working SharePoint, only half the emails were on the backup disk and the printers were asleep even though it was lunch time. I do believe in the saying "if it aint broke don't try and fix it", but my old server was dead.

Microsoft has made a great piece of software but there are still too many bugs. Take the backup of the server; with the old server you set a wizard and then swopped out the two external hard drives, keeping one at home just in case the building burnt down. This version of SBS only likes it if two drives are connected so how the hell can you take one home if it keeps asking where the drive is. On the forum groups it gives you a clue on what to do in Powershell, so if Microsoft forum groups have the answer why has Microsoft not produced an update that works? Ah well, the joy is it's now been 10 days of hell changing over all the software but

it is looking great, faster, slicker, prettier and, most importantly, with enough power and hard disk space to last me another ten years.

The start of things to come

So with the office sorted, I was off on my travels in the UK visiting the newly opened Genesis Experience Centre near London. It was a Control4 open day and with technology brimming to the ceilings I had to take a look to see what the fuss was about. If you don't know what Genesis are about I would suggest taking a half day out of your schedule to visit this place. Genesis are a distributing company with a difference, they are there to help you with the project from start to finish, whether it is acoustically treating the room, to selling the projector and screens, they have it all. The main demo room is built around a 2:35:1 home cinema with two levels of cinema seating. The projector was by Digital Projection - the Titan 1080p 3D - and a pro audio speaker system was hidden behind the screen with a fully active system with the amps installed in the rack cabinet. There were a total of 4 subwoofers installed in the room; 2 x 1000 watt at front stage and 2 x 500 watt at the rear to infill the bass at the back of the room. The first demo disk to grace the system was The Book of Eli, the screen extended to its full width, the sound from the front stage was pin sharp, full of detail, the semi-automatic guns firing bullets around each of the 7 speakers backed up by explosions from all 4 sub woofers, was truly engaging. The next clip was from Rango- again presented in 2:35:1 format the scene with the Eagle chasing Rango was fast moving. Again the sound was very impressive, and as the tower collapsed and landed on the eagle, the bass rumbled through my seat. Now if your client is not impressed by this setup, he will never be!

With 2011 being complete, I am looking forward to 2012, yes it has been a tough year but I still look back at it with affection and count ourselves lucky to still be here. With so much new kit to play with I think it's going to be a busy New Year, with INSIDE CI on the web now it's going to be fun touring the country to see what other installers are up to. If we can bring back a little of that community feeling, it will help us all. Custom Install is still one of the hardest businesses to run but it is fun playing with cutting edge technology as long as we can make some money out of it. Maybe it's time to take a look at what we charge as a service industry. Margins are low on some of the equipment so we need to make sure our labour covers the project size. If my invoice from the IT guy for 7 days is anything to go by, I don't think I am charging anywhere near enough for my time on jobs. He even tried to charge for his mistakes, God if I was only able to do this I would be a multi millionaire by now.

A Happy New Year to you all, I hope it's going to be a good one for you.

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