



# INSIDE CI



**Summing up 20-years at the coalface of CI in just two paragraphs, DAVE SLATER celebrates two decades of DSE Digital in his own, forcibly alcohol-free, inimitable style...**

**If anyone had told me that I would be working seven days a week after 20-years of running my own business, I would have been a tad disappointed, but looking at my diary each week it's the truth!** 20 long years since DSE Digital was born – ah blimey, that passed quickly! Technology is Space Aged now compared to when I started: no iPads, massive mobile phones, plasma screens that use to give you a sun tan when you had them on for more than 30-minutes, and customers who paid almost £10k for a 50-inch screen.

So is it easier now? Not on your nelly. The customers are taking longer to release their deposits and even longer to settle the final payment! Plus, the client is now a closet technology expert thanks to the World Wide Web. This is all fine, but with margins dropping as fast as my bank balance, surely we need to take a long hard look at the CI industry. On chatting to some colleagues in the industry it seems we all have the same approach, we all need to sell more than just the technology, and lighting, fabrics and furniture are all helping us to take the profit up.

## Son et lumière

Well, what have I been up to this last month? *Bristol Sound & Vision Show* was on my hit list, and the three days over a weekend were packed with business being done right through the day and spilling into the bars and restaurants of the city. Is this the kind of format we need in CI? Using small rooms with the kit on display and the audience consisting of Custom Installers instead of the general public? I like the idea of how intermittent it becomes when doing business and it clearly works as, while wandering through the rooms, I saw the new range of speakers from Dali called Fazon and was so impressed I bought a pair!

With the show closing at 5.30pm, by 6.00pm all exhibitors ended up in the hotel bar, and if you know some of the die-hard drinkers you can imagine how much fun this is to watch, especially with me still not being able to drink thanks to Doctors Orders and being the only one making any sense by 11.00pm!

With the sudden arrival of spring, we are back into a couple of jobs we have running. France has started again (*I thought France was on strike again*

*this month? – Ed*) with completion to be no later than June, as our client has decided they want their house back. Not that this will be a problem for us so long as everybody else pulls their collective finger out. With the CI guy being there along with the finishing trades, you are never given the courtesy of time. Also after a couple of calls to the new guy in charge (don't quote me, but what a jobsworth!) I believe we are going to be in for a bumpy ride. At least the firm who said the site was ready for us last year are now out of the picture and so, all being well, the client will soon be sunbathing around the new freeform pool, sipping Champagne and listening to her tunes from the sunken speakers.

The calendar seems to be filling up again, and we're only a short time off the *CEDIA Annual awards*. This is a great event and I missed the last two years due to work commitments, but have booked my ticket and am dusting off the penguin suit. It always amazes me that with the UK and European installs the design and installations seem to be getting better each year. Some of the work we have seen when doing our *INSIDE CI* road trips has blown me away. I am the first one to admit it's a hard game to get right, as you have to deal with cash flow, very demanding customers and technology that is so far advanced it needs a little help to work properly. Unfortunately we have not had any time to put any of DSE Digital jobs forward this year, but good luck to everybody involved – it sounds like it is going to be a great night.

## Easy as Chelmsford 1, 2, 3

So, as promised in last month's column, I said I would tell you about my visit to Artcoustic's showroom in Chelmsford. The showroom has had a complete overhaul, providing stunning demonstration facilities to showcase the brand's new SL range. The Spitfire SL 16-8 loudspeakers are now installed for LCR duties, with upgraded Spitfire SL subwoofers for LFE, and C1 SL for side and rear channels. This 7.1 system is designed to exceed industry standards and delivers an amazing performance; it really needs to be experienced.

This is what private home cinemas can and should aspire to. The Spitfire SL range allows for 7.1 speaker systems from just £4700 retail including VAT, to over £25k for a state of the art system. The stunning interior design is by Steven Thorne Interior Designs and there is no doubt that the professionalism of Paul and Tom of Artcoustic will help you convert the sales lead. The guys are there to help you with specifying the right speaker for the right job, and now with Artcoustic integration built into DTools you'll be installing for fun.

The main cinema room is very impressive with a JVC 3D projector firing the image, the sound is gripping and focused, and the system delivers power effortlessly with detail. The showroom is a must see experience and, utilise it properly, it will also make you some good money on your next cinema project.

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

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

**+44 (0)1914 914 141 dave@dsegroup.co.uk www.dsegroup.co.uk**