

INSIDE CI

Back from Berlin after braving EasyJet and the awesome IFA Expo, DAVE SLATER brings us his top spots from the Teutonic tech-fest. Oh, and then bangs on about some iPhone, or something...



I do think that sometimes we make things too complex. As regular readers will know, I travel a lot and on a recent trip to the IFA Expo in Berlin I ended up struggling to work the TV due to too many button presses being required to get anywhere. I hate this with a passion, not because I am lazy, but more because if I cannot get things to work in five seconds I will usually give up on them. If I want to

watch TV, I just want to press one button and then use the scroll buttons to go up and down; it's not too much to ask. This is one reason why we as an industry struggle to engage with the client.

But anyway, I had not flown with the stressful SleazyJet for no reason; I was in Berlin for one reason and one reason only: IFA 2012. This show is massive and you really need some comfortable shoes on if you are going to get around all the halls. All the big names in screens were here: Sony, Panasonic and Samsung, having a little competition as to who had the most impressive hall. Sony announced its most impressive new 84-inch screen, the KD-84X9005. I remember when I first saw High Definition and thinking that things couldn't get any better – I love great picture quality, I put it at the top of my list when selling home cinemas – so when I first heard about 4k, I just couldn't wait for it to filter down to the kit we specify on our jobs. Well, this screen just looks amazing and with it being 84-inches it will rival the projector install in smaller rooms.

Halls of Techalla

Moving through the LG, Samsung and Panasonic halls, these were equally impressive with OLED screens a plenty. The black levels of these latest options are amazing, especially the new models from Samsung. But one product in particular which caught my eye (but, sadly, only being launched in the US) was the new ES AV receivers from Sony – "The world's first consumer [AV] receiver fully integrated with home automation technology." There are two new models in the range, the STR-DA5800ES and STR-DA2800ES, and they have been created in a partnership with Control4 meaning, with one of the Control4 Home Controllers integrated into the receivers, on the press of the button you can watch TV, dim your lights, start your Blu-ray player and be in full control of your system from your trusty iPad.

With all the halls showing the latest flat screens, I was keen to look at some projectors, so it was off to Hall 21 and Epson. With DSE DIGITAL already being great fans already of these projectors I was looking forward to seeing the latest range being launched at IFA. The EH-TW9100 and EH-TW9100W will fill the shoes of the outgoing EH-TW9000 nicely – the two projectors build on the success of the EH-TW9000, offering improvements in contrast, now up to 320,000:1, and brightness up to 2400 lumens. I found the new projector sharper and brighter, and the black levels have also increased. Also on display, all new to the range, was a model in between the cheaper EH-TW6100 and EH-TW9100 the EH-TW8100 sat at a keen £2000 price point. I believe this will only help us in the custom install market because, otherwise, it's a big jump from the old EH-TW6000 price point to the range topping EH-TW9000.



Apple of His Eye

With my Jeffrey Wests causing my feet to groan, it was time to finish my short trip to Berlin with a sneaky pint while watching the German youth drag racing through the city centre in their over-tuned Mercs.

So what's next in the diary? Well it's *London Design Week* soon which is always great for us at the DSE GROUP as we visit as buyers for the development company as design and digital need to integrate in order to succeed in producing the high end jobs. Furniture design is big for us as we always try and build our installs around great designed furniture. Bespoke is the key word here – if you can integrate the latest super slim screen into a nice piece of furniture hanging on the wall, you will always impress your client.

It seems like October if full of shows, you have *The Essential Live Northern Show* followed by Smart Homes, and to the tail end of October the newly formatted *CEDIA: The Future of Home Technology Event*. I am particularly looking forward to this latter event as, if it is like the last couple of events CEDIA have produced, it will be well worth the time to visit.

Well, with being a hearty Apple fan I was pleased to see in my inbox another email from my friends in Cupertino. Well, I say 'friends' but these are expensive friends as I'm already desperate to purchase the latest iPhone. Slimmer, lighter and even sexier with diamond cutters cutting and polishing the frame to perfection, will this version 5 be a better phone than the last 4.5 phone? It's packed with new software, whilst Google maps has gone and Apple has teaming up with satnav software to bring you slicker looking street views. There is a more advanced version of Siri, a longer battery life, higher resolution and the usual tweaks under the bonnet which take you an age to discover. Although the biggest shocker is that Apple has dropping the plug adaptor, which is found on all devices out there. I do think this is going to cost third party manufacturers a bob or two as the list 'Made for iPhone' devices is endless – my clock radio, the triple stack charger on my bedside cabinet, the office phone station that you dock the iPhone in for it to become your work phone, my older B&W Zeppelin before they brought out the AirPlay version, and on and on. OMG it's going to be an expensive month!

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