

Comms, weather and subtitling



GRAPHIC WEATHER – Alan K. Richards

Three HME PRO850 wireless intercom systems were sold by local distributor **Zimele Broadcasting Services** to public broadcaster SABC just prior to Mediatech Africa. This marks the PRO850's first entry into the South African market.

HME sales director John Kowalski was on hand at the Zimele stand. "The response to the PRO850 at Mediatech Africa has been amazing. This is a third generation HME multi-channel wireless intercom system which can interface with any hardwire system, as found in the typical broadcasting environments. Being a wireless headset system, the PRO850 can enable people to multi-task.

"The system was released in 2003 and has become an industry standard in North America among broadcasters such as ABC, ESPN, CNBC, Fox and CBS. Typical applications are studio communications and outside broadcast (OB). Our systems are also commonly used for big televised events such as the Academy Awards and the MTV Awards. Typically one would use four to six belt-pacs in a studio application, while for special events you would need between 24 and 40 belt-pacs."

Each HME PRO850 system consists of a base station, belt-pacs and headsets. Its frequency agility enables operation within the 470 to 740 MHz UHF band. The automatic frequency selection scans all available intermodulation-free frequency groups for the best frequencies. Up to 16 belt-pacs can be used on an individual base station, four of which can be used in hands-free, full-duplex mode. The wired intercom interface supports two hardwired intercom channels using two-wire, four-wire or both simultaneously. It is compatible with RTS and ClearCom hardwired intercom systems.

The base station automatically configures and controls the RF power levels for each belt-pac if selected, depending on its distance from the base. This eliminates base receiver overload and extends battery life. Belt-pac controls are configurable for multiple transmit modes and various button functions.

Zimele demonstrated a multitude of other products on its stand and MD Phillip O'Kelly highlighted two products, namely Screen Subtitling Systems and Weather Central Inc. Both these products are new generation and provided unusual and innovative solutions for both weather reporting and subtitling.

Alan K. Richards, Director, International Business for Weather Central Inc who was at Mediatech explained: "Weather Central Inc, founded in 1974 by broadcasters and meteorologists, is a worldwide leader in providing professional on-air, online, and print weather, news and sports systems and forecasting utilising unique, interactive graphics, precise forecast models and data, and patented technology. More than 500 broadcasters worldwide enjoy the benefits of Weather Central's attention to detail and insight, serving our clients' total weather graphics and forecasting needs.

"With 3D: LIVE we are able to captivate viewers as presenters interact with high-resolution mapping and highlighting important information to make the weather story easier to understand.

"We are also able to give viewers the live planning forecast they've been waiting for. It's possible to focus on small communities and provide viewers with forecast information specific to their town. We are also able to capture viewers with dramatic visuals and animations. 3D objects give viewers

All bright on the horizon

Screen Africa managed to pull a busy John Carvalho, MD of **Digital Horizons**, from the stand to have a few words with him. We also spoke to two foreign representatives at the stand, Peter Bruce and Christophe Almeras.

Carvalho was upbeat about this year's Mediatech Exhibition. He said: "It's better than two years ago, due to anticipation for the 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa. Customers are more motivated and with a real purpose in mind. There is a feeling looming in the air that time is running out."

Carvalho explained the reason why so many foreign representatives attended this year's exhibition. He said: "Most world markets – like South America, Asia and Europe – are saturated and Africa is the new market with South Africa becoming a priority. Africa has to play a big part to make markets grow. We have 15 foreign representatives from two suppliers here, which is more than ever, so they perceive this exhibition to be bigger and more important than ever."

Peter Bruce from the UK demonstrated the Kayak HD300 production switcher from Grass Valley. He said: "Mediatech is considered to be a small exhibition, but it is an important one, which we attend every two years. This year we released the Kayak HD switcher line, which is a cost-effective, high-definition (HD) expansion of the HD250-2.5 M/E switcher."

The unit features switchable format support, 72 inputs, 36 outputs, and a control panel with 32 crosspoint buttons. It offers four high-quality keyers per M/E, two utility busses in each full M/E, primary input and internal source mapping to crosspoint buttons, configuration of all video outputs as outputs for all internal sources or as auxiliary busses.

There are many key features of the unit. It is a 3 M/E digital production switcher and can perform format switching between 1080i and 720p for HD and between 525-line and 625-line for SD. It has 10-bit video processing with an 8 RU frame. For ease of use, it has an intuitive menu with touch-screen display. It allows YUV colour correction on every full M/E background and keyer bus, as well as optional RGB colour correction. It can also apply up to four video and key channels of high-end digital effects per full M/E (one standard per full M/E).

Christophe Almeras, who is in charge of Business Development in France for Edius products, showed visitors the Edius 4.5 interface software, which is to be released in



UPBEAT – John Carvalho and Peter Bruce

July this year. The HD developed software is the upgrade from EDIUS 4.0 and operates inside Grass Valley's EDIUS 4.5. The whole new look makes operation easier with clips windows and timeline view being enlarged. This, together with a blue highlight cursor and a generous palette of multicoloured icons, (making recognition more easy), gives EDIUS editors a much more visual approach to cutting video than the previous version.

Good aspects of 4.0 are carried over, like mixing formats on the timeline, converting between HD, SD, aspect ratios and various frame rates, and being able to apply HD/SD effects, keyers and transitions, all in real time. The real difference is that the new version now supports full 1080p resolutions at 24, 25, and 30 frames per second, DVCPRO HD 720p, AVC-Intra and JPEG2000, as well as import/export of AAF and GXF. Owners of EDIUS 4.0 will be able to upgrade to EDIUS 4.5 at no extra charge.

Integration, especially in the HD environment is key to a successful system. Almeras says: "Bridging links with Grass Valley is very important. The software has to be developed alongside the hardware to create a healthy flow in the operation of the system. Edius 4.5 is specifically made to integrate with Grass Valley's Infinity range of cameras, but it also integrates seamlessly with the P2 and XD workflow. It is more of an open format than Edius 4.0." Asked about his thoughts on Mediatech, he replied: "This is my first time here and it has been worth it. We made good contacts and I see a good future ahead." – **TOT**

Pro audio

A new exhibitor at Mediatech Africa was **Philtron (Pty) Ltd**, a South African importer and distributor of professional audio equipment, focusing on the entertainment industry, corporate sector and

a story they can follow and understand. 3D: LIVE provides detailed topography and city-level high-resolution images, offering the best imagery available."

Screen Subtitling Systems' Simon Kane, international sales manager had this to say about his product: "Zimele is our local agent and we are proud of the association. We have customers all over the world and we handle this with only two sales guys. There is no state of the art subtitling system in South Africa, so we believe there is market potential.

"Screen Subtitling Systems started life back in 1976 as Screen Electronics. It pioneered and launched the first ever electronic subtitling system, providing the first digital character generator to the BBC. In 2001 Screen took subtitling technologies into the 21st Century with their Polistream transmission and Poliscript preparation products. In 2004, Screen was acquired by Warburg Pinkus and now forms part of the SDI Media group of companies." – **AS, JS**

re-distribution.

Among the company's corporate clients is public broadcaster SABC who comes to Philtron for its public address equipment requirements. PA brands represented by Philtron are Cotina (speakers) and Kentech (amplifiers).

"Although our core business is sound, we also supply lighting and special effects for discos, cables, leads, power supplies, security and surveillance equipment. Philtron holds some very exclusive brands in Kentech, FX Lighting, DA PRO and Fidek. A new agency is Celestion, a manufacturer of professional speaker systems.

"Thus far our distribution channel has extended beyond South Africa into Namibia, Swaziland and Botswana and we are keen to expand our business into the rest of the continent," says Philtron's Solly Rahman.

PA amplifiers as supplied to the corporate sector come in two models: the PA-3060M with single slot to house the tuner or CD module and the PA-5120 with dual slots. Both models have optional CD and tuner plug-in modules. The TMZ tuner module is an easy to use plug in module which allows AM/FM tuning to be played via the PA system, while the CD3 CD module allows CD music to be played via the PA system. Microphone inputs on the PA5120 are balanced and the microphone has priority function. A telephone interface and input control is also included.