

The One-of-a-Kind Show

INFOCOMM 2016 IS POISED TO CAPTIVATE, EDUCATE LIKE NEVER BEFORE

Unlike the beckoning harbors of New York or San Francisco, upon which great cities couldn't help but flourish, Las Vegas rose forth from the barren Nevada soil by creating its own destiny—a determination to be different, and to put on a show that simply can't be experienced anywhere else.

Thus, it's fitting that every other year, the city plays host to a show unique in its own right; a show that brings tens of thousands of people together to experience the newest and brightest iterations of the technology that make our lives a little flashier, a little easier, and a little better. That show, of course, is InfoComm.

Held at the Las Vegas Convention Center from June 4–10, InfoComm, North America's premier event for the professional audiovisual industry is poised to be bigger and better than ever before, with a fresh spate of experiences that can't be had anywhere else.

"It's really the must-see, must-attend event in the Western Hemisphere," said Jason McGraw, senior vice president of expositions at InfoComm International. "We get attendees from 110 countries that come to the show, even though we now have 12 events a year all around the globe; it's still a major event globally for the AV industry, and we're really excited about it. It's shaping up to be a fantastic show."

According to McGraw and Rachel

**"We're trying to kick it up a notch and take it even higher in terms of the experience value for the attendees and the exhibitors."
—Jason McGraw, Senior Vice President of Expositions, InfoComm International**

Bradshaw, InfoComm's director of education program development, this year's show will work to build upon the success of last year's with refinements designed to "surprise and delight" both attendees and exhibitors. From its keynote kickoff by Stephen Dubner of "Freakonomics" fame, to a renewed education program that gives attendees unprecedented access to the vast array of knowledge on hand, to a host of improvements aimed at the smaller things, such as additional lounge areas and shuttle bus service, the groundwork is certainly in place for one of the best and most memorable industry events in history.

Among the hallmark draws of the InfoComm show is its wealth of educational and training



If the crowds from InfoComm 2015 were any indication, 2016 in Vegas is set to be a show for the record books.

opportunities, and this year's show is turning them into an all-you-can-eat buffet the likes of the Bellagio's. For \$189, InfoComm members can attend any InfoComm University seminar or workshop they want, Wednesday through Friday (\$279 for non-members). "For the first time, you don't have to figure out precisely every course you want to go to before the show," Bradshaw said. "You can go to one, and if you don't like it, you can leave and go to another one. You could be on the show floor, see a technology that you think is interesting, find a class about that technology, and go see it the next day."

The so-called "Super Tuesday" that gets the show off and running has been reworked for this year, as well. There is the new IoT Insights, showcasing a ready-to-explode segment predicted to grow into a \$19 trillion market over the next decade. "We think there's a great opportunity for IoT in the AV industry," McGraw said. "For us, at this point, I think it's definitely a thought-leadership opportunity, as well as an educational one."

Other all-new programs for Super Tuesday cover the other big areas of the industry, such as the Digital Signage Summit, which will be presented in cooperation with Invidis Consulting and focus on digital signage opportunities in the retail sector; Technology Management in Higher Education, which will explore the challenges of meeting the expectations of today's students at scale; and a revamped Future Trends seminar, which will give attendees an in-depth look at the bleeding-edge technology set to transform

the industry.

"We're trying to kick it up a notch and take it even higher in terms of the experience value for the attendees and the exhibitors," McGraw said. "And at the end of the day, it's about seeing new products, attendees connecting with each other and with the manufacturers that are exhibiting, and the learning opportunities that come from the show." In this regard, InfoComm International has done just about everything in its power to set the stage—the rest of the production is in the hands of the exhibiting companies, which have also been working fastidiously to come up with ways of leaving a lasting impression on attendees.

For Crestron, it's about providing technology for every space, according to Dan Jackson, the company's R&D manager. "The biggest trends at this year's show will be solutions for today's changing workplace," he said. The company will be exhibiting its various solutions for huddle rooms, presentation solutions, and equipment to make collaboration as seamless as possible. "With one-third of all professionals working remotely, organizations need technology solutions that enable knowledge workers to work in teams in real time, locally and remotely," Jackson continued.

Connectivity will be a big theme for loudspeaker manufacturers, like Renkus-Heinz, as network-based distribution continues to gain momentum around the industry. "It's all about Dante connectivity," said Margie Kirby, marketing manager at Renkus-Heinz.

The company will be showcasing its newest Dante-capable product series, the Iconyx Gen5, as well as a new point-source system and software solution, with demonstrations at its booth and audio demo room.

What will the show's other big themes be? Ultimately, though, we'll have to wait until the doors to the show floor open on the morning of June 8 to get the full picture.

Here's what several other major players in pro AV expect the trends and themes for this year's show to be, and how they'll be tailoring their presence there to meet or further these motifs.

Lectrosonics

"We at Lectrosonics anticipate an even further dominance of Dante-related devices this year, and to that end, we'll be showing our full complement of input, output, and 'bridge' Dante units, including the DNTBob88 Breakout box, the DNT16i input-only unit, and the DNT0212 two-input, 12-output unit. The SPNDNT unit allows bridging between Dante lines and our Aspen processing units.

"In addition, we expect a lot of inquiries and discussions about the current FCC spectrum auctions, and the resulting shrinking and increased crowding of the remaining UHF band. In light of that, we'll be showcasing our

suite of wireless microphone and IFB solutions including the IFB system on VHF frequencies, our Venue 2 system with iQ filtering, and all our wireless products with wideband tuning, including the SSM micro transmitter, HHa handheld unit, and others."

—Karl Winkler, VP of sales and service, Lectrosonics



DVIGear

"In 2020 the AV community will look back and see the migration to AV over IP as the most pivotal technological shift of the decade. For years there have been video-over-IP products, but these can introduce latency and compression artifacts because of codecs, which can degrade image quality and create challenges for professional applications. At InfoComm 2016, DVIGear will demonstrate its game-changing DisplayNet AV-over-10GbE products.

"DisplayNet leverages proven 10GbE ethernet technology to distribute uncompressed AV signals with up to 4K (UHD) resolution using off-the-shelf network switches. This approach will redefine how our industry distributes all types of AV signals."

—Steven Barlow, president, DVIGear

Peerless-AV

"It is always exciting to see the latest innovations on display at InfoComm. This year, I anticipate seeing monumental advancements in AV, with companies showcasing large-format touch displays, unique videoconferencing equipment, and products tailored for mobility.

"At Peerless-AV's booth, you can expect to see solutions incorporating these new trends of slim LEDs, interactive technology, and aesthetically pleasing mobile options. We will also be celebrating some of our largest projects at our booth, including our role as the official outdoor display provider of the Daytona International Speedway. To celebrate that, we will be hosting a ticket giveaway to the Daytona 500, making our booth a must-visit this year."

—Nick Belcore, executive vice president, Peerless-AV



Altinex

"With the improved performance of hardware video compression engines, AV over IP becomes a more viable solution for medium and large video matrix switching. As we move closer in merging AV with IT, moving video to a network

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environment becomes an inevitable path to the future.

"Altinex is releasing a new range of products to address this market, including the Digital MultiTasker series of products that provides an easy path to managing video, audio, and control signals in a single multi-slot enclosure. With the MultiTasker, users can build IP-based, AnyWire-based, or fiber optic-based video transport systems to deliver full-resolution video to desired locations."

—Jack Gershfeld, president, Altinex

Matrox

"Video walls and the delivery of AV over IP are the hottest trends in AV. The skillsets of IT people and AV people are creating a winning combination to serve customers who want the best of both worlds."

"Matrox will be demonstrating how AV can be delivered over standard IT infrastructure (Cat-X cabling and standard IP switches) and meet AV requirements, such as 4K and 8K resolution, low bitrates, low latency, perfect visual acuity, and ease of use with our flagship real-time encoding technology: MaeveX. Some of the nodes in our demonstrations include video walls (some of which are being completely streamed and recorded)."

—Samuel Racine, director of sales, America and Asia Pacific, Matrox



Digital Projection International

"Vegas always inspires us to bring a bit extra, reach a bit further, and 'more' is the unofficial theme for DPI's exhibit this year. Look for more of everything that attendees have come to expect from DPI. A reconfigured, conversation-oriented booth and a new way to interact with our displays are only a few of the many surprises we have in store for InfoComm 2016 attendees."

"I hope to see more solid-state innovation on the display side of the business. Rest assured, Digital Projection will cement our reputation as the lamp-free projection leaders at this year's show."

—Michael Bridwell, VP of marketing and home entertainment, Digital Projection International



Planar

"At this year's InfoComm, we anticipate seeing fine-pitch LED for seamless video walls to continue to take center stage. We will be demonstrating the latest in ultra-fine pixel pitches with a massive 8K video wall featuring a 1.2-millimeter pixel pitch, as well as a technology demonstration of 0.9 millimeters—this is where direct-view LED becomes an excellent solution for close-viewing applications, such as conference rooms, auditoriums, control rooms, high-end retail, broadcast, and even high-end home."

"We also continue to see innovative formats of displays to create interesting visual effects that can have an impressive impact in industries such as retail, broadcast, corporate, and museums. To highlight this growing trend, Planar will show its breakthrough Planar LookThru OLED Transparent Display in a tiled array, which utilizes cutting-edge Organic Light Emitting Diode (OLED) to showcase dynamic or interactive information on a transparent surface glass."

—Jennifer Davis, VP of marketing and product strategy, Planar, and chief marketing officer, Leyard



ZeeVee

"Closed, proprietary systems are a thing of the past, and customers will come to InfoComm seeking less complexity in deployment, utilization, and control of their AV networks. AV over IP is now mainstream and can be deployed using open standards. However, the critical missing piece of the puzzle is a simple, easy-to-use management system. We provide the means for anyone to deploy video systems to deliver the most modern form of content without needing a Ph.D. in physics. We assemble the best technology, wrap it in a simple-to-use management platform, and make it easy for everyone."

"Printed matter will largely disappear and humans will absorb all their information from screens of one form or another. Video is everywhere, and whatever form those screens of information take, ZeeVee will offer technology for that information to be presented wherever it is needed and over whatever means is best suited to deliver it."

—Bob Michaels, president and CEO, ZeeVee



Hall Research

"Two trends that we are addressing in our offerings this year are the ability to integrate with soft-codec solutions and switch and extend video over LAN. Utilizing our UH2X-P1, we can extend HDMI over HDBaseT with USB for web cameras situated by the display back to the PC for videoconference applications."

"Video over IP has been a hot topic in recent years, and our new HHD264 will allow us to move video sources to multiple displays through network switches in a variety of applications. Our easy-to-use software will allow one to dynamically change inputs to sources from anywhere."

—AJ Shelat, VP of sales, Hall Research



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"More than anything, I am looking forward to seeing the practical uses of 4K, and I think it is poised to create a total revolution in meeting room design. The commercial segment of AV really differentiates itself from the consumer market with 4K by utilizing higher resolution in a totally different manner.

"4K for commercial applications is more about the visual real estate (coming to be known as the 'digital canvas') that allows many windows of content to be viewed on the same surface at the same time with great clarity. Now, an entire wall of a room can be filled with images that will all be crisp and readable. From our CORIOmaster products, which are ideal for managing odd aspect ratios with multiple windows on LED walls, to 4K Multiviewers, tvONE has several solutions to really help integrators design solutions that truly harness the capacity of 4K."

—Andy Fliss, VP of sales and marketing, tvONE

Exterity

"We expect a lot of discussions will focus on mobile video compatibility, enhanced content delivery methods to multiple devices, and of course, 4K. To address these trends, Exterity will demonstrate its latest IP video innovations that help businesses across a wide

range of vertical markets strengthen their communication networks by making high-quality video content consistently and flexibly available from any source to any device.

"Demonstrations will include our newly enhanced ArtioSign digital signage solution that streams TV and video alongside live news updates and tailored messages, and our ArtioPortal that provides a tailored viewing interface for TV, VoD, radio, and interactive services across multiple devices including smart TVs, smartphones, and tablets."

—Colin Farquhar, CEO, Exterity



Blackmagic Design

"Broadcasters are looking for video-over-IP solutions and the ability to transport UHDTV streams across IP networks. We've responded by adopting TICO compression technology from intoPix, designed to be the standard for moving live content efficiently over IP networks and to enhance live IP systems by increasing efficiency and reducing cost for HD and 4K/UHD video.

"Also, even with UHD technologies becoming more available for consumers, like Ultra HD televisions, there's very little UHD content available, so we've introduced the new Blackmagic Duplicator 4K, which has built-in real-time

H.265 encoding and records UHD content to SD cards for localized delivery."

—Bob Caniglia, senior regional manager, Eastern North America, Blackmagic Design



Marshall Electronics

"Over the past several years, we've seen several new technologies emerge that, in a sense, have put both the broadcasting and AV markets into a temporary state of shock. Where once there was a single way to build a system, there now are multiple technologies to choose from.

"InfoComm 2016 will see mature solutions that unlock the promise of a true unified communications strategy. At Marshall, we will be showcasing integrated solutions that enable SDI, HDMI, and IP technologies to work seamlessly together for conferencing, collaborating, and presenting."

—Greg Boren, product integration engineer, Marshall Electronics



Matt Pruznick is associate editor of SCN and Residential Systems. Follow him on Twitter @pruznick

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