

# All About the **WOW**

Universal Studios Orlando  
Radio Studio By Chriss Scherer, editor



**W**hen you visit a theme park, you want to be wowed. The rides and attractions are all designed to not only entertain you, but overstimulate your senses with motion, color and sound. For Universal Studios Orlando, this attention to the wow factor is apparent everywhere you go. Every experience at the park is intended to go beyond the visitor's expectations. While the latest addition to the park is the Wizarding World of Harry Potter, even established items are regularly updated. This includes the radio studios at the park.

*Radio* magazine has profiled the radio studios twice before in an online feature in 1998 and in the August 2002 issue. The last major update was in 2002, but there have been ongoing updates over the years. For example, the studio once had Mini-disc and DAT machines, which were popular

formats at the time. As technology advanced, the studios saw incremental updates as well. After 10 years, it was time to update the consoles and routing system. The existing consoles worked just fine, but to keep pace with the effort of wowing the 250+ visiting radio stations each year, the plan was made to update the centerpiece of the studios.

#### VARIATIONS ON A THEME

There are two studios in the facility. The larger studio has a T-2 (Terminator) theme and the smaller studio has a *Jaws* theme. This includes a moveable T-2 head coming down from the ceiling and a swimmer being pursued by a shark. And while the park no longer has a *Jaws* attraction, the movie is still a well known classic.

1/4 Vrt  
3.875  
x 5



A Corian collar was added to accommodate the smaller consoles. T-2 is still looking at you.

The studio furniture, while 10 years old, has held up well and still looks good. There was no need to replace it. It's Harris Hydraflex and can be adjusted from 30" to 38" in height. This allows visiting talent to find their comfortable height.

Over the last year or so, the engineers replaced the mics and mic arms. Neumann BCM 104 mics were mounted on Yellowtec Mika booms. The Mika arms include the lighted ring to show the mic is live. Again, this fits with the intent to wow visitors.

To update the consoles, Bob Page of the Universal Studios Radio Broadcast Center, called on Broadcasters General Store, who called in Axia. The new system would include two Axia Element console surfaces with PowerStation cores and some Axia Nodes. The first step was to be prepared for the new consoles. The Elements are smaller than the previous consoles, so the in-counter hole needed to be covered. The mechanical shop at Universal stepped in and fabricated several collars (as they are now called) made of Corian to cover the openings for the consoles and

### PARTIAL EQUIPMENT LIST

- American Recorder adapters
- Axia Element, PowerStation, Nodes
- Broadcasters General Store
- BSI Op-X
- Comrex Access, Bric
- Harris Hydraflex
- Neumann BCM 104
- Omnia One
- Telos Zephyr Xstream
- Yellowtec Mika mic booms with lighted ring, iXm

1/3 Sq  
5.25 x 5




Step into the radio studios



The Jaws Studio

extended time outside in the hot Florida sun is seldom preferred over an air-conditioned studio with a catered green room, the Comrex Bric and Access allow for remote feeds anywhere on the park property. An aircard gives complete portability as needed. Some events are held in the Hard Rock Hotel, and audio is shipped back via the Bric.

The radio studios at Universal Studios Orlando continue to provide visiting radio stations with top-notch studio facilities that provide an experience beyond expectations. The most recent upgrade maintains the showcase look and feel that wows both park visitors and stations. 

*Photos by Jim Kuzman of the Telos Alliance.*

## THE TECH TEAM

Bob Page  
 Jeff McGinley  
 Jim Kuzman  
 Buck Waters  
 Jim Armstrong  
 and local Orlando engineers

the headphone and mic control panels for the guests. The Corian color accents the existing furniture.

### QUICK TURNAROUND

The entire console swap was completed over a long weekend. On a Friday afternoon,

Bob Page was joined by Jim Armstrong and Jim Kuzman of Axia and the Telos Alliance, Buck Waters from BGS, and some local Orlando engineers got to work pulling the old consoles out. The previous consoles had all discrete wiring, so that was removed as well. Then the collars were installed.

Once the old wiring was removed, a new CAT-5 cable was run between each studio and the rack room. This simplified installation and made it possible to complete the project over the weekend.

The old mic processors had been removed earlier, but they were not replaced because the Axia has built-in processing on board.

On Monday, Jeff McGinley came in to help tie down some loose ends and have the studio ready for use on Tuesday. The new studios were first used on Sept. 6, 2012.

Another addition was the BSI Op-X automation system. While it's not expected a visiting station will run a full show from the studio with music from a playlist, it is possible. The Op-X replaced a cartwall audio player, and in doing so provides greater flexibility to visiting stations.

### OUTSIDE CONNECTIONS

When stations visit the park, most of them use ISDN to connect back to their home stations. A few have used a POTS codec, and a few have used an IP codec.

But visiting stations are not confined to the studios. While spending

## FACILITY FOCUS

### THE TECHNOLOGY BEHIND UNIVERSAL

#### Broadcast Software International Op-X

This was a unique opportunity for Broadcast Software International to supply the radio automation and audio logging portion of this project at Universal Studios in Orlando. The Op-X automation package along with the SkimmerPlus audio logging software was a perfect fit for the needs of Universal Studios Broadcast Center. We were able to provide the feature set they were looking for with an easy to use and intuitive interface that anyone walking in to produce a remote could quickly understand. With Op-X they can utilize many features like the simple but powerful voice tracking module, background recording, clock builder and remote access capabilities using our award winning iPad remote application. Using Op-X gives them the flexibility to grow with the rapidly changing technology advances in broadcasting. It has been very exciting to be a part of this project with such an esteemed group of broadcasters.



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