

BEDROCK BITS

OUT with the and IN with the **NEW**



The Latest Happenings in the World for Home and Commercial Automation Markets

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The 2011 CEDIA Expo brought a number of trends to the forefront in the connected technologies industry. Numerous great products were displayed by both newcomers and veterans of the show. Our top 12 take-aways include:

1. IP Networks are Ubiquitous

More and more devices and accessories communicate via IP networking. Most mid and high-end audio and video products have IP connectivity, either wired or wireless. Soon anything with a plug or a battery will be connected either to a local network or the Internet. Check your new toaster; it may have an Ethernet connector on it!

2. The Industry is “Real”

New businesses often spring up because of the founder's passion, and the custom A/V industry certainly has its roots in musicians looking to make a living. Pressed into learning business to stay around, they did, but things have changed. Today's players are first and foremost focused on business and making money and passion is second, if at all. Those with business acumen will survive and thrive.

3. Home Control is Heating Up

If you're utilizing tablets, smart phones and other 3rd party devices as a control interface to have total home control then you're in the game, and the home control game is taking off! While several new vendors and startups launched new products and concepts at CEDIA, some existing vendors closed up shop and have ceased operation. Could it be because this must-have technology for control (tablets significantly reducing the interface cost), wasn't apparent in their business plan or systems?

4. Apps are Everywhere – Imagine That

With virtually every product that has a plug connecting to the Internet, the question is how do you control that product? Of course, the answer is the custom written application for your favorite smart phone or tablet. Many manufacturers are providing, or will provide applications to operate or configure their products. This is great news for people who can write applications, especially on multiple platforms. These folks are needed and we only see demand going one way, and that's up.

5. Digital Signage is HOT

The stage is set for an industry that will experience very rapid growth in the next 5 years. New content boxes are becoming easy to program, simple to control and less expensive. The progressive installation companies will want a share of this business. The days of having people on staff in a supermarket to make paper signs, or post them, are coming to an end.



Bedrock Learning shares newest products at 2011 CEDIA Expo

6. Wireless Solutions Abound

Are there fewer wires in your future? Products featuring wireless distribution of audio, video, control, and HD video are prevalent. Wireless HD is gaining traction with the goal of replacing all HDMI cables over the next several years. These new advanced formats that adapt to interference and other signal problems may become mainstream.

7. Cloud Computing

Cloud computing is gaining exposure and popularity in many technologies, so it is not surprising to see it finding its way into the CEDIA/Connected Technologies market. Various companies offered new products or accessories using the cloud for storage and/or program creation. For example, one company showed a control technology built completely on the cloud that generates a custom application for execution on a smart phone or tablet.

8. Lighting Control

With the continuing growth in energy awareness, affordability and high aesthetic appeal, lighting control, including shades and blinds continues to enjoy rapid growth development. New LED fixtures and various LED lamp modules with color temperatures similar to incandescent lamps will continue to replace standard filament lamps using much less energy for the same lumen output. Prices are significantly higher for these technologies, but should decrease over time.



9. Bigger and Better Pictures

It's always been easy to make a big picture with a projector, but a big, clear picture is another thing. Both projectors and flat screens continue to get bigger, clearer, brighter, thinner, and less expensive, combine this with 4K technology and you truly have the ultimate home cinema experience.

10. The 3-D Evolution

Still a little reluctant to fully take off - Will this be the year? Much advancement has taken place in the last year; demos at CEDIA were (mostly) very well done. Active 3-D glasses seemed to produce the best experience, but advancements with passive glasses continue. Did you check out the glasses free 3-D? Still in its infancy though, it can really only be seen in hand-held gaming consoles.

11. 4K Revolution

The very technology apparent at the NAB show early this year, 4K Resolution, has found its way to the CEDIA dealer via projectors and flat screens from a number of prestigious vendors. Great looking pictures with 4K media, but the increased resolution cannot be enjoyed until a 4K Blu-ray hits the market, although whispers of such a device can be heard, nothing has been shown just yet.

12. The Big Ones are Jumping In

As the industry matures, and the market expands to the masses, large companies are taking note. Visiting the show were large manufacturers and utilities. Look for their increased involvement in the next year.

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