



When PC makers stop offering VGA ports on new models in 2014, some commercial clients that rely on analog content will need some help.

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THE SUN SETS ON THE ANALOG SUNSET

Integrators who haven't been riding the digital wave are far behind the curve, but the waning days of analog present business opportunities. *by Aaron Stern*

YOU PROBABLY THINK you've heard it all about the analog sunset and know everything you need to know, but C2G thinks otherwise. The company is on an aggressive outreach campaign to promote awareness about the ongoing migration from analog to digital, and warns that while integrators may be fully up to speed, their clients may not be.

A big reason integrators — and their clients — should have the analog sunset firmly on their radar screens is that starting in 2014, many PC makers will no longer offer VGA ports on their new models, meaning facilities and employees who still rely on analog presentation and display content will be left in the cold, or at least to find a suitable adaptor.

"From a PC point of view, many of them are unaware or haven't thought of the implications coming from the PC side of the industry," says Gary Hess, VP of innovation at C2G, and a man who has been at C2G for nine years but prior to that was a product marketing manager for Intel. "Analog on a high-speed chip does not play well with digital... so they're dropping those ports."

Markets that are particularly at risk, says Hess, are higher education and, perhaps surprisingly, corporate verticals. That higher education is getting

left behind is not necessarily surprising; tight budgets, shared meeting spaces and change-resistant faculty are not a recipe for innovation — which isn't to say that colleges and universities aren't doing big things when it comes to integration and innovation, but smaller institutions, in particular, are susceptible to being stuck with outdated equipment.

But so, too, are corporate meeting spaces — particularly smaller rooms, says Hess. That's because businesses often invest their big A/V dollars in larger meeting spaces by mitigating costs in small meeting rooms.

"When you start to go into the eight, 10-person boardrooms... often times the budgets on those are very con-

strained," Hess says. "They really try to pay for [the larger spaces] by cutting corners in the smaller rooms."

C2G's analog sunset education push is dubbed "Adapt. Convert. Transform." It includes a dedicated website (cablestogo.com/analog-sunset), whitepapers, webinars, two education sessions at InfoComm 2013 titled "Digital Video at Length," and "Perspectives on Digital Video Connectivity — From SDI to Thunderbolt and Everything in Between," taught by A/V veteran Joe Cornwall (representing C2G) — and, of course, promotion of the company's

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— Tom Kehr, InfoComm**

various analog/digital converter products, particularly in-wall solutions that mitigate the tendency for portable adaptors to “walk off,” says Hess.

There will be few, if any integrators, who will be caught off-guard by the content of the “Adapt. Convert. Transform.” initiative.

“Honestly, if they haven’t already thought about it by now they are well behind the curve,” says Tom Kehr, an InfoComm senior instructor. Analog signals and components are legacy technologies and have been for a couple of years, says Kehr, and even consumer-friendly products like Blu-ray players will no longer have VGA ports in the very near future. “It’s going to be HDMI, there’s going to be an Ethernet connection, a digital audio output and that’s about it.”

The trouble for integrators now, says Kehr, is that they are in a position of having to support both analog and digital for many clients.

“It’s almost like you have to run parallel infrastructures sometimes,” he says. “But as we go along in the next couple of years it’s actually going to be easier because you won’t have to support the legacy.”

Kehr says that manufacturers deserve a ton of credit for overcoming early issues with HDCP and Edid management to enable what has been, overall, a smooth transition to digital.

“They make this work for us,” he says.

The big takeaway for integrators during what remains of the analog sunset, says Hess, is the business opportunity that is out there: The opportunity to educate clients still dependent on legacy technology — clients that integrators, perhaps, did installations for four or five years ago before digital signals had taken over — to help them transition and to build lasting relationships with them.

“They need to be having those conversations and to start doing that planning,” Hess says. “[Integrators] can be very proactive about it and maybe create some new business for themselves in the meantime.” **CI**

QUICK TAKES



DSE Accepting Apex Awards Nominations

Digital Signage Expo wants integrators and their clients to submit nominations for its 11th Annual APEX Awards, which honor outstanding digital signage implementations in various categories. Read about it at www.digitalsignageexpo.net/dse-apex-awards.



Q1 2013 Tough for Projector Market

In the first quarter of 2013 the global projector market came in at 1.76 million units, according to the latest market tracker research from Futuresource Consulting. These results are a year-on-year decline of 7.5 percent compared to the same period in 2012, but there were bright spots. In the installation and large venue segment (4000+ Lumens), global volumes increased 9.8 percent year-on-year and reached 146K units. LED models continue to fuel the market in the ultra-mobile segment (sub 2KG projectors), which grew 26.7 percent year-on-year in the first quarter (LED volumes increased 31.4 percent). The vertical market most visibly negatively affected is education as district-level education spending is expected to continue its decline.



MNEC.com Officially Launches

Commercial Integrator and sister sites *TechDecisions* have worked in collaboration with NSCA to re-launch MNEC.com, a resource on mass notification emergency communication (MNEC) for integrators, authorities having jurisdiction (AHJs) and end users. The site will also provide information and coverage of NSCA's series of regional MNEC Symposia.

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BUZZ-WORTHY CIs

HIRED & PROMOTED

Video Corporation of America has hired **Amy Fulton**, a 15-year industry veteran, as director of marketing.

Integrator Verrex has hired **David Wuensche** as project manager for the Southwest U.S. and Latin America regions.



JAMIE FINNEGAN

Almo Professional A/V has hired veteran automation executive **Jamie Finnegan**, formerly of AMX and URC, as its business development manager.

DVIGear has hired **Frank Salazar** and **Chip Del Coro** as regional sales managers. Salazar (Western Region) and Del Coro (Northeast Region) will work to build DVIGear's network of professional audiovisual dealers in their respective markets.

JOINING FORCES

Stampede Presentation Products, Inc has been appointed to serve as a strategic U.S. and Canadian distributor of the complete line of **Key Digital** solutions, including the company's iOS-based Compass Control solution.

Séura had added **Marla Maney** as its new marketing manager.



MARK INGRAM

FST21 has added security industry veteran **Mark Ingram** as director of U.S. sales.



Send your company's buzz-worthy announcements to *CI* editor Tom LeBlanc at tbleblanc@ehpub.com. Integration firm news is especially welcomed.