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Extron NAV Pro AV Over IP Keeps Fast Paced Bidding Going Smoothly at Euro Auctions Industrial Auctioneers

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Brian McCabe
Global IT Manager
Euro Auctions

Challenge

Euro Auctions, headquartered in Northern Ireland, is one of the largest auctioneers of industrial, construction, and agricultural machinery in the world. It has offices and auction sites across Europe, the UK, USA, UAE, and Australia. In a typical year, it conducts upwards of 50 multi-million-dollar auctions. The recently expanded Leeds, UK site nearly doubled in area to 70 acres, becoming Europe's largest permanent auction facility. The expansion included construction of new workshops, an office and administration center, and three auction arenas, each with a sales ramp where equipment is driven past bidders for inspection. Included in the expansion was installation of state-of-the-art AV systems designed to provide bidders with video views of the items up for bid, and instant updates of the current bids via both video and audio on screens and PA speakers located throughout the auction arenas.

Euro Auctions turned to Visavvi, the integration services arm of global audio-visual technology specialists Saville Group, headquartered in York, UK, to design, build, and commission the new AV systems. Visavvi tapped into its broad and deep range of accredited partner manufacturers, including Extron, to create a flexible, scalable, and reliable system to support Euro Auctions' burgeoning business.



(Left) One of the three auction arenas. Flat screen video displays face bidders from the front ramp, another two displays are on the side walls, and one confidence monitor display is on the rear wall. (Right) Enlarged detail of the confidence monitor display and one of the many speakers.



Solution

In the fast-paced auction environment, AV distribution latency is not an option. As bids change at the speed of an auctioneer's rapid-fire chant, they need to be heard and seen instantly. Extron NAV[®] Pro AV over IP Encoders and Decoders form the ultra-low latency backbone of the video signal path, using the existing 1 Gbps Ethernet cable infrastructure to send 4K video and RS-232 display control long distances throughout the sprawling facility. The existing Ethernet cable plant also distributes the audio, relying on Dante network connectivity. Extron AXI 44 AT Dante Audio Interface units perform input and output duties for the Dante network, placing audio inputs from auctioneer mics and PCs onto the network and outputting audio from the network to PA amplifiers and high-power active PA speakers.

Flexible Video Routing and Display with NAV Pro AV over IP

NAV provides several advantages that make it the right choice at Euro Auctions - Leeds. It transports video over the existing Ethernet cabling to existing network drops throughout the site, saving installation time and expense and allowing AV content routing from any source to any destination. When separate auctions occur in each arena, three different auction booths and display ramps feed content to speakers and displays in their own areas. When arenas are combined for large auctions, content from one auction booth is piped to one or both of the other two arenas. Video is even viewable in the Canteen, allowing bidders to monitor the action while grabbing refreshments. The NAV PURE3[®] Codec provides the ultra-low latency required for the auction application. Equally important, it provides flexible video scaling to accommodate different display resolutions, allowing high-definition images of sale items to be displayed next to crisply rendered text showing the bids.

Due to the harsh outdoor environment, the displays are housed in special enclosures that protect them from rain and dust. Since the NAV decoders



In all three auctioneers' booths, audio from the PC and auctioneer mic is distributed via the Dante network.

have a compact slim form factor and POE capability, this makes them ideal to fit within the weatherproof display enclosures.

Smooth Deployment and Intuitive Operation

At the heart of the system is the Extron NAVigator, a hardware appliance that manages, configures, and controls the NAV Pro AV over IP system. NAVigator enabled the Visavvi integration team to deploy all NAV encoder and decoder endpoints rapidly using the intuitive web-based interface. Technicians can use the same interface to reconfigure endpoints whenever the need arises. Day-to-day operation of the system is handled by an IPL Pro S1 IP Link Pro Control Processor reacting to commands from a TLP Pro 1025M touchpanel in the Communications Room and NBP 100 button panels in each of the three auctioneer booths. Visavvi's experienced AV programmers used Global Scriptor's powerful Python programming to tailor the human-computer interfaces for intuitive, error-free operation, whether it is an AV technician using the interactive GUI on the Comms Room touchpanel to route AV content, or an auctioneer punching the button panel in his booth to activate a speaker or display.



A mobile auction van roams the vast equipment yard when sale items can't be moved to the auction arenas. The auctioneer's mic output is processed by an Extron MP 101 microphone preamplifier and transmitted to the auction hall.



Eight NAV E 101 Pro AV over IP Encoders place 4K HDMI video from eight PCs onto the facility's 1 Gbps Ethernet network. These encoders share rack space with the PCs in the Communications Room.

Result

Euro Auctions is very pleased with the way the new Leeds facility AV system has improved the auction experience for bidders and auction staff alike. They're drawing-up plans to further expand the system and appreciate the fact that NAV AVoIP scales-up for further growth and more screens within the existing design solution, with minimal additional investment. Noting his satisfaction with the successful AV system implementation, Euro Auctions' Global IT Manager Brian McCabe put it this way, "Extron's cutting-edge AV over IP and control technology has allowed Euro Auctions a hassle-free event setup with a virtual plug and play solution that functions well with minimal interaction required from the Euro Auctions staff."

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