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#AVchat Debates HDMI, 3D, Green Technology

Is HDMI a drag for clients? Is 3D doomed? These topics and more were discussed in the second #AVchat on Twitter.

Feb. 25, 2011 — by [D. Craig MacCormack](#)

As the CI world continues to wonder how to best handle the migration of many systems to HDMI connections, despite myriad concerns about cable length restrictions and the possibility of a better technology on the horizon, there's at least one bright spot.

"It lets us sell everyone new cables and boxes and well [lets] us sell new ones when a "good" replacement happens," joked [Dawn Meade](#), a member of the outreach subcommittee of [InfoComm's](#) Professional Education and Training Committee (PETC), during the second #AVchat on Twitter Feb. 24.



Could the use of teleconferencing in shows such as NBC's "Chuck" lead to more demand for telepresence among clients?

Meade noted most customers who ask for HDMI cables for their A/V installations "usually only know enough to be dangerous." [Coleen Sterns Leith](#), president of Marketing Matters, called HDMI "good for the industry, but a drag for the consumer." Others, though, argued integrators are charged with giving their customers all the information they need to make the right decision for themselves.

"Customers are growing increasingly aware of the migration to digital compliance," said [Daniel Newman](#), executive vice president and chief operation officer at United Visual. "If not, it's our job to inform them."

Telepresence and 3D: What Do Clients Think?

Anyone involved in A/V these days has heard plenty about the proliferation of telepresence and 3D across the industry, but is this just wishful thinking among merchants or are clients really clamoring for these technologies?

"3D is getting a lot of talk, but it hasn't made a serious move into the pro-A/V world yet," said [Christa Bender](#) of Advanced AV. "Telepresence is more common." She points to the use of the technology on TV shows including NBC's "Chuck" as one possible motivating factor.

Interest is high in telepresence and videoconferencing, said [Jessica Spicer](#), PR specialist at AVI-SPL in Tampa, but adoption has been slow, largely due to "interoperability issues."

A representative from [Omnimount](#), a leading designer and manufacturer of A/V mounts and furniture solutions for home entertainment and commercial applications, believes “3D will be cool for digital signage once we lose the glasses,” a phenomenon that [could be closer than you think](#).

Meade sees 3D as “a fad, and like all fads, it will fade.”

Newman pointed to content management for training and HR as among other hot technologies in the A/V world, while Bender expects unified communications, such as interactive white boards, to become more popular, saying iPads are being used more often as alternatives to touch-panels because they’re cheaper and have a smaller control system.

[Paul Konikowski](#), systems engineer at [Snader and Associates](#), expects Skype to be used more often for large groups to communicate across the miles.

The Role of Green A/V

When it comes to the role of green technology, Spicer expects the idea to “really be a selling point when A/V technology counts for [LEED](#) credits,” while Meade has seen green A/V as “all or nothing,” with customers’ convictions and dedication to green living often a determining factor.

[Gina Sansivero](#) of [Projector Lamp Services](#) and [Project Green AV](#) green A/V won’t take off without some urging from those who know it best.

“To see an increase in demand for green A/V, our industry has to educate the end users,” she said. “Without education, there will be minimal demand. “Green A/V needs to become a motivator for business development, creative solutions and simple, relevant standardized measures.”

Newman expects big things from green A/V. “The savings of energy and money associated with green technology is really still in their infancy of being realized,” he said. “Our industry needs to define it. Right now, it means whatever each manufacturer or integrator wants it to in order to aid in the sale of an A/V system.”

Konikowski thinks most clients who are interested in green A/V “are the ones paying the utility bills.” [Betsy Jaffe at InfoComm](#) says the A/V industry “must beware of greenwashing,” or run the risk of customers tuning out what should be a valuable and cost-saving message.

The responsibility is on everyone to spread the word about green living, said [Rebeca Trautner](#) of Middle Atlantic Products.

“A/V companies have the same responsibility as other industries to do business in ways to lessen the impact on the environment,” she said.

How Performance Standards Affect Decisions

While Konikowski said he’s used CTS-D and InfoComm standards to educate his clients about why he’s using certain equipment, for the most part, integrators said performance standards are a small part of their design decisions.

“It’s just an extra layer of stuff to deal with that Joe Consumer couldn’t care less about,” said Meade. “More federal and government projects are including them on specs, so we might have to care soon.”

Newman called the standards “nothing more than a guide unless you’re responding to a spec where the standards are required.” Regardless of the standards, those in A/V can’t use subpar equipment, or they won’t get much repeat business, said Bender.

“Cost-conscious systems still need to operate safely and efficiently,” she said.

Information about the next #AV chat and transcripts of the first two sessions are available at

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