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1. PROJECTION: SINGING A NEW SONG

In 2019, projector manufacturers are finally going to wise up to the fact that solid state illumination is no longer a differentiator. 20,000 hours of ‘lamp’ life is no longer a big deal. ‘Lower long term cost of ownership’ is something we’ve now all heard too many times. They may as well be saying: “Hey! This projector has a lens!”

What are they going to talk about instead? Perhaps how you can make projectors easier to use. How a projector has features that will make users more productive.

I don’t really care what they choose to differentiate with, except that it needs to be a) something users really care about, and b) new.

2. LED: COMING SOON TO A WALL NEAR YOU

LCD has established itself as the de facto technology standard for screens. The image quality of which it’s now capable was unimaginable only a few years ago. But after 4K and HDR and all kinds of clever image optimisation – where do they go?

Perhaps they’ll make screens that are modular, enabling them to be used creatively. Or with absolutely no bezels at all, making them ideal for video wall applications. Or weather resistant? Or consume less power?

Well, perhaps not. After all: LED-based screens have achieved image parity with LCD – some say superiority – and they already do all that.

Until now, though, they’ve been more expensive to buy. In 2019, they won’t be. Then, things will really get interesting.

4. SMART BUILDINGS: NOW, WE’RE GETTING PERSONAL

If you thought smart buildings were just about HVAC – think again.

Yes, managing energy usage is still a key element – and probably the key cost justification for smart buildings. What’s changing, though, is a growing focus on how smart buildings can contribute to employee well-being, morale and productivity. Increasingly, that’s a competitive imperative.

Imagine a room booking system that sets up the conference room the way you like it. An intelligent security/access system that doesn’t just let you in – it instructs the lift to take you to your floor. That’s just two possibilities.

In 2019, integrators will increasingly be asked how their proposed solution plays into this reinterpretation of what it means for a building to be ‘smart’.

3. VR/AR: TOO BIG TO IGNORE

In my mind, the jury is still out on AR and VR. On the other hand: this year, ISE threw its weight behind VR/AR with the debut of the XR Technology Zone and the XR Summit. If ISE says it’s real, who am I to doubt it?

I can see how AR will work in visitor attractions and other entertainment applications. I can just about see how it might enhance video conferencing.

The problem for me is that VR and AR are primarily about individual experiences – whereas much of what the AV industry does is about shared experiences.

All of the above said: VR and AR are too big to ignore. 2019 will be the year in which someone, somewhere finds a compelling use for them in the AV industry.

5. I WILL IF YOU ASK ME NICELY

Thus far, voice interaction hasn’t made huge inroads into the work environment. 2019 will be the year that changes. It likely won’t be Alexa, though. IBM’s Watson, Microsoft’s Cortana and Google’s Assistant look better bets. All three are making a bigger push for the corporate environment than Amazon.

What will challenge the AV industry will be how it will understand what we prefer to ask for, and what we prefer to point at. The combination of voice command and touch interactivity is the future. 2019 will see increasing numbers of such interfaces appear (as they’ve already done for domestic applications).

You ‘heard’ it here first...



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