

# InfoComm 2019 Orlando: AV evolution

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by **Judith Rubin**

InfoComm 2019 took place in June in Orlando. The show alternates between Orlando and Las Vegas. The official report from the organizers states that by show's end, InfoComm 2019 counted 44,129 registered attendees, of which 37 percent were attending for the first time and 18 percent traveled to the show from 117 countries outside the U.S. There were nearly 950 exhibitors, and the industry remains vital with more than 40 percent of registered attendees under age 40. InfoComm 2019 was sponsored by Presenting Show Partner Samsung, Strategic Show Partners Blackmagic Design and Crestron, and Supporting Show Partners Epson and Maxell Corp. of America. InfoComm is the largest technology exhibition and conference in North America focused on the pro-AV industry. InfoComm is part of a global alliance of trade shows, produced by **AVIXA** and its partners, including Integrated Systems Europe, Beijing InfoComm China, Chengdu InfoComm China, InfoComm India, InfoComm Southeast Asia, InfoComm Brasil, InfoComm Colombia, InfoComm México, Integrated Systems Russia, and Integrate.

## InPark exclusive: Medialon and 7thSense close the deal



Matt Barton, CEO of 7thSense Design, a leading manufacturer of media servers for high-end AV applications, is now also CEO and part of the new Medialon ownership team – a leading provider of show control software for entertainment applications.

## Christie's year of innovation

We toured the **Christie** showcase at InfoComm 2019 in company with Larry Paul (Executive Director – Technology and Custom Solutions Enterprise and Entertainment), Mike Garrido (Senior Product Manager) and Deborah Noon (PR Specialist). Christie's display array included some recently rolled-out, high-profile products that InPark recently reported on in depth: the two stars of the new RGB laser projector line – the Mirage SST (showing at InfoComm for the first time) and the D4K40-RGB – and the new MicroTiles LED (also for the first time at InfoComm). [See ["Screens to fill, markets to disrupt," InPark #77](#), and ["Everything is under octrol," InPark #78](#) as well as the [feature story on the new planetarium at US Space & Rocket Center in this issue](#).] The RGB laser projectors and MicroTiles LED are both second-generation improvements of innovative products. Garrido and Paul emphasized that the company takes pains to keep consistency among its product lines, ensuring compatibility with Christie's Guardian and Mystique software, and that the RGB projectors use the same lenses as Christie Boxers.



*Christie's Larry Paul shows off the latest MicroTiles LED. Photo by Judith Rubin*

Not everything AV need be high-end laser or LED. Also being shown to the industry for the first time was a new product on preview: Christie's new LCD panels, with a "razor-narrow" bezel of just .88 mm. Christie's "value video wall," the Core Series LED was also on display, new to InfoComm in 2019. As Garrido pointed out, the company continues to manufacture and support the popular and robust Boxer projectors. And at InfoComm 2019, Christie introduced the next generation of its Roadie family of projectors, the Roadie 4K40-RGB, an all-in-one laser solution touted as road-ready, rugged and reliable.

Garrido indicated that this steady flow of new products is driven by global competition and demand. "This is a year of innovation for the entertainment group," he said.

"Christie has made a deep R&D investment, learning along the way to create unique solutions that answer and anticipate market needs," said Paul. "Our dialog with creative partners is essential. We stay very close to our long-term customers to understand how they really use the products, striving for whole solutions."



*Alcorn McBride's booth at InfoComm 2019 Photo courtesy of Alcorn McBride*

On the InfoComm show floor at the booth of **Alcorn McBride Inc.**, Hunter Olson, Director of Product Development, showed us products featured for 2019, for themed entertainment markets. RidePlayer is an onboard, 16-channel audio player with show control that, said Olson, “provides a fully digital networked audio system on the ride itself.” It has a rugged form factor to meet the demands of dark ride vehicles, parade floats and the like. The power of RidePlayer can be scaled up by its new Dante-enabled companion, RideAmp (new to InfoComm in 2019). Alcorn McBride’s new show controller, the V16X, is an offboard product that talks to RidePlayer vehicles to sync audio, video and effects with the rest of the action. Winscript Live version 5, the latest release of Alcorn McBride’s programming interface, now enables simultaneous deployment of script changes to multiple RidePlayers.

“We’re building up the ride and show ecosystem,” said Olson, “with better control, integration, speed and sync,” moving on to Alcorn McBride’s V-Page line of multi-zone intercom and paging systems that are Dante and Q-SYS compatible, and the VC32 circuit board that lets customers build a custom console.

After the show closed for the day on June 12, **Alcorn McBride** hosted some 60 people for the Geekout in their elegant new company headquarters. **John Huntington** of ControlGeek.net and Jim Jannick of TimberSpring Inc. have presented the **Geekout** during InfoComm week for a number of years, at various locations. It is an informal gathering and presentation centered on show control.

The 2019 Geekout branched out from its usual case study format. Huntington, who is Professor of Entertainment Technology, sound engineer, and author of the book “Show Networks and Control Systems, states: “This year, Jim and I decided – instead of doing the traditional case studies we’ve done for many years – to address the issue of timecode and the way it’s being used these days on live shows, which seems to be in the show control zeitgeist these days.”





Congratulations to Lisa Thorburn, CTS, LEED-AP, Co-founder and President of **Thorburn Associates** on being honored at InfoComm 2019 with a “Women in AV” award. Thorburn Associates, specialists in acoustical consulting, technology engineering, and lighting design, was founded in 1992. Over the course of her career, Lisa has been dedicated to sharing technical knowledge, not only with InfoComm attendees and AV professionals, but also with members of the architecture, engineering and construction industry. While leading **her firm of five national offices** through 3,000 projects across all markets, Thorburn has shared her insight with related industry groups such as the **Themed Entertainment Association**, Society for Marketing Professional Services, and Construction Specifications Institute.

## Smart Monkeys’ ISAAC gets smarter



ISAAC is an acronym for Integrated Scheduling And Automation Control.



## From the server to the screen

**AV Stumpfl** was promoting the PIXERA server and its many user-friendly features. PIXERA is a 64-bit system for real-time media processing, compositing and management, combining a powerful render engine with an innovative interface. According to company literature, “a radical new interface logic enables even first-time users to intuitively understand the main software mechanics. Entering the world of professional media playout solutions has never been easier.”

**Strong/MDI Screen Systems** (part of Ballantyne Strong) is a leading manufacturer and innovator in specialty screens, screen coatings and unique products and custom solutions for giant screen cinema, immersive displays and media-based attractions such as flying theaters and dark rides. **Dustin Small became a new asset to the firm in 2018 bringing his company Eclipse**, expertise in curvilinear screens and theme park background. At the Strong/MDI booth at InfoComm 2019, Small reported that the themed entertainment

At the **Barco** booth we met Richard Marples, Inge Govaerts and Leander Werbrouck and learned about products suitable for dark rides, digital art displays and museum exhibits. These included: For video walls, the new LED XT series and the UniSee platform; for projection, three models shown configured with the three images seamlessly blended into a single image: the F80 (first launched at ISE 2019), UDX and UDM (new to the industry at InfoComm 2019). The UDX-4K40 outfitted with a Dynamic Projection Mirror Head was also projecting on the booth walls and exhibit hall floor. A key to the **company's global success** is staying close to the end user, said Werbrouck. “We respect the market dynamic and needs, we co-create and problem-solve.”

At the **Panasonic** booth we enjoyed a product tour courtesy of Paul DeLorenzo and Fred Mitchell. The company has a strategic partnership with Disney and its projectors are in other major parks as well; other venues include The Shed in New York City. Some highlights: The ET series of short-throw lenses for projection in tight spaces and as an alternative to LED walls; the PT-RQ50KU 3-Chip DLP® SOLID SHINE 4K+ Laser Projector (new to InfoComm in 2019 and shipping in December). **Panasonic's** imaginative demos at the show included an active eSports arena, and an interactive digital art display.

**Sony's** Kevin O'Connor is helping build the company's presence in the theme park and visitor attractions markets. Laser phosphor projectors include the new VPL-FHZ75 (6500lm) and FHZ70 (5500lm), designed to meet market demand for high brightness projection in midsize environments, and the compact VPL-GTZ240 2,000 lumen native 4K Projector catering to simulation and planetariums and other multi-projector situations. The modular Crystal LED display system, honored with a 2019 “Display of the Year” award from the Society of Information Display, is designed to deliver high contrast, precise color, and a near-180-degree viewing angle. The Sonic Surf VR spatial audio solution combines multi-channel speakers, displays and specially developed software designed to simulate placing, moving and partitioning sounds in one space. The result is an interactive area where sounds move freely around within a space to create immersive experiences.

Museum and planetarium customers and collaborators include [Adler Planetarium](#) (Chicago), [Burke Baker Planetarium](#) (Houston); California Academy of Sciences (San Francisco), Sky-Skan and Evans & Sutherland.

Thanks to [Digital Projection](#)'s Chuck Collins, Richard Hill and Kyle Greetham we were able to sample the intriguing INSIGHT 4K HFR 360 – a high frame-rate solution immersive, collaborative, and interactive 3D experiences. This multi-viewer 3D projector allows up to three users to view native 4K-3D content while interacting with one another in a shared, virtual environment. With head-tracking technology and the HFR 360's ultra-fast frame rates, each user experiences a unique perspective of the on-screen content that remains consistent with their changing position. The INSIGHT 4K HFR 360 won two 'Best of InfoComm' awards, from Commercial Integrator and Projector Central; the possibilities for themed entertainment seem rich. The company is well established in planetariums, museums and specialty cinema with various high-end projector lines for domes, 3D and immersive applications.

We visited the booth of [Stewart Filmscreen](#), a company long established in theme park and specialty cinema markets. Stewart Filmscreen, headed today by Mary Stewart, is well positioned and experienced to produce the custom products needed in the attractions sector, whether front- or rear-projection. "We can make a 90' x 40' seamless screen, we can perforate a 60' screen – these are examples of things that are customary for us but would be very challenging for other providers," said Mark Robinson, CTS, Vice President of Customer Experience, who has been with the company 33 years. The company makes its own fabric. A recent project was a 180' x 15' screen provided for the National Museum of the United States Army in Fort Belvoir, VA, for a 270-degree panorama. The company's new website features a screen configuration and pricing tool. •••

*InfoComm 2020 will take place June 13-19 at the Las Vegas Convention Center. Prior to that, look for InPark at ISE 2020 in Amsterdam, February 11-14*

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