Wireless Ethernet Applications Grow in Popularity

Birmingham Royal Ballet Goes Wireless *by Bill Richards*

Touring their lighting control system, often means cables run from the Wing Rack to the Production Desk rack to allow the lighting designer to get console video. Fine if you have the time, but often as with most touring theatre, Birmingham Royal Ballet often have a need to quickly strike the equipment. A time saving solution was needed by Nick Ware from BRB and an approach was made to Bill Richards at Strand Lighting to solve the problem.

In conjunction with Chris Hooley from BRB, Strand Lighting have designed and commissioned a state of the art Wireless Ethernet system to allow Shownet signals to be distributed to the required points.

Two Wireless Access points were supplied to provide a Locked Ethernet Bridge to the production desk, whilst a further access point provides "open" connections for Wireless Handheld remotes and wirelessly enabled PC's and Mac's to operate. BRB already makes use of a G3 Mac to act as a remote console, and so this now allows further expansion of the system. Further facilities have been designed into this system to allow connection to other networks via a Router Gateway for future connections to other file servers and email. With the ACN standard no longer a pipe dream, this further enhances the BRB system to take full advantage of the standard when it becomes published later on this year.

For full information on how to make the most of your networks, contact Strand Lighting for a full consultation.

Project Equipment List:
Production Lighting Control Desk: 520I
Nodes: 2 x SN102 and 2 x SN103R
Access Points: 3 x Wireless Access Points in custom configuration.
Remote controls: 1 x iPAQ

Wireless DMX at the Hummingbird Arts Centre in Toronto
By Richard Goode

Strand Lighting Canada was asked to solve a difficult challenge for the production staff at the Hummingbird Theatre, current home of the National Ballet of Canada and the Canadian Opera Company. Tom Taylor

the theatre's master electrician needed to get DMX quickly and easily on to the fly bridges, electric pipes and the balcony rail. The crew would string DMX cabling from the downstage right optical-splitter to the bridge and electrics as needed but it was time consuming and often in the way of rigging and props. The balcony rain out in mid house with DMX scrollers and rotators we an even bigger challenge.

Tom Taylor and Assistant Head Electrician Richard

Karwat worked with Strand Lighting Canada's Richard Goode, National Sales and Marketing Manager to package a wireless, configurable and portable DMX solution. The SN110 nodes were custom mounted in an aluminum frame to hold the Access point complete with power supplies, a pipe clamp and Stage pin cord. Tom Taylor commented, "the solution has to be a complete package, lightweight and small so a stage hand can climb up and install it on a pipe and plug it into power".   The access point status indicators are visible for simple diagnostics and the frame offers a home for the antennas to fold down during storage. A single access point located at the proscenium wall completes the wireless network for the remaining four portable wireless nodes.

Richard Karwat said "I used a node just the other day when the Opera wanted a gobo rotator fed with DMX in a location where no permanent DMX was available No cables to run, just plug in the node and move on". The Shownet file server for archiving show files is used to web browse the SN110 across the wireless network and configure the SN110 DMX ports.

Project Equipment List:

- Production Lighting Control Desk: 550I
- Stage Control Desk 520I
- File Server
- Nodes: 2 x SN104 and 2 x SN100 and 4 x Sn110
- Access Points: 4 x Wireless Access Points in custom configuration