



AmberFin Expands Audience Appeal

New Products, New Division and Sinclair Deal for Snell & Wilcox

By James E. O'Neal
TV TECHNOLOGY

In a Sunday morning press conference, Joe Zaller, vice president in charge of corporate development at Snell & Wilcox, announced new products, a new software-oriented division and new business developments.

One of Zaller's major announcements

involved the launch of a new Snell & Wilcox company, AmberFin, which crosses the line from Snell's long-established hardware-based broadcast products into the world of software-driven broadcast solutions.

Simon Derry is chief executive of the new company, and was on hand to explain the functioning of AmberFin.

"We needed to appeal to a broader audience within our customers than we've done traditionally," Derry said. "Setting up a separate company helps in that effort."

Derry explained that customers have been facing new demands in the areas of hastening delivery of content to new distribution platforms and in controlling delivery costs. This was an influencing

factor in the establishment of AmberFin.

"What we're taking about here is predominately a software-and-services business, and that model is different from Snell & Wilcox's real-time hardware-based product line," Derry said. "We've separated into a couple of business units to address that, and most recently have launched AmberFin for the right-hand part of what we see for us as predominately software-based solutions in the file-based world."

Derry said that Snell would not change the ways the company interfaces with its established customers, and that the Snell's intellectual property would be available to both business units. Currently there are some 45 to 50 AmberFin employees.

KAHUNA SWITCHERS AND SINCLAIR

Another announcement from Snell was the expansion of capabilities in the company's Kahuna line of video production switchers, and a major Kahuna business deal with the Maryland-based Sinclair Broadcast Group. This comes on the heels of last year's adoption of Snell as exclusive provider of production switchers to

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Joe Zaller

the Raycom Media group of stations.

"We have signed a similar deal with Sinclair," Zaller said. "Sinclair is one of the largest television station groups in the United States and plans to use Kahuna group-wide to be the centerpiece of their transition to HD news."

Sinclair has more than 50 television stations in 36 markets.

In other new Kahuna developments, Zaller said that Snell & Wilcox had been working in collaboration with Harris Corp. to integrate Snell's Kahuna production switcher with the Harris NewsForce SD/HD newsroom automation system. The results of this partnering will be demonstrated in the Harris NAB booth.

Zaller said that the two companies will continue to work together to interface the Kahuna with other Harris products, including Platinum routing systems and Inscribe graphics systems.

Zaller also announced an upgrade to Snell's iCR content repurposing platform. Among other new features, iCR V3.0 will provide users with advanced MPEG-4 authoring tools and enhanced QC tools and reporting.

In addition, Zaller said that the range of products within Snell's IQ modular line has been expanded to address increasing requirements in the digital broadcasting transition. These include Dolby E audio units, 3 Gbps distribution, video processing, as well as control and monitoring of broadcast signals.

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