



# Stable AV Networking

Inglis thoroughbred sales turn over hundreds of millions of dollars. Now it has a signage and IPTV system that keeps pace.

Text:/ Christopher Holder

The horses are the real stars. And when you consider that many of these thoroughbreds can go for \$1m or more at auction, you begin to appreciate the reasoning for the \$140m investment. The newly developed Riverside precinct features more than 800 stables, extensive parade space for horses, a 5-star hotel with 144 rooms, state-of-the-art conferencing facilities, all-day dining, as well as a leisure and retail complex with over 1000 parking spots.

The main game is the handful of thoroughbred auctions. To give you a sense of what's at stake, the Inglis top tier sale — the Easter yearling sale — sees somewhere between 500 and 600 horses sold at an average of some \$350,000 every two minutes!

The company knows what it's doing; it's been in the business of selling racehorses for over 150 years — initially in Pitt Street, Sydney, then on a Randwick site, and now in Sydney's south west at a Warwick Farm Racecourse property.

The Warwick Farm move has allowed Inglis to expand operations, not just in terms of how many horses are for sale — they're planning on putting

1000 horses on next year's Easter Yearling Sale prospectus — but also the number of potential bidders and those interested.

## WIND IN THE SALES

Come auction day, all the action is focussed on the sales arena. Part auction house, part concert venue, the sales arena allows the hundreds of horses to be efficiently auctioned at the best price possible.

The horse is led onto the stage; its vital statistics displayed; the auctioneer begins the bidding; the bid spotters in the crowd ensure all bids are acknowledged; the auctioneer's assistant updates the bids for the displays in real time and adjusts the bidding increments; and the winning bidder is instantly approached by sales staff with an iPad — a signature later, the horse has changed hands and the new owner has all the details texted and emailed to their phone.

The atmosphere is crazy-hyped: millions of dollars are changing hands, everyday lovers of good horse-flesh are rubbing shoulders with sheiks and royalty; people are lapping up the

hospitality and the excitement of the auction — after all, here is where the next Black Caviar or Takeover Target is being discovered. It's fast paced and intoxicatingly glamorous.

## IPTV: CONTROL OF WHAT, WHERE & WHEN

Network AV plays a huge role. The entire AV package was designed, integrated and installed by The P.A. People. Headlining the AV package is the Bose ShowMatch line array system, an Exterity IPTV system that pushes content to all 140 screens around the precinct and the VuePix hi-res LED screens.

Putting all your video content on the network has real advantages. Every screen is an IP endpoint and, via the Exterity software, Inglis' CIO Deane Jacobs and his team can program what content goes to which destination and at what time.

**Deane Jacobs:** "The Exterity IPTV system gives us a huge amount of flexibility in being able to control devices and zones — scheduling IPTV devices to change channels before an auction starts and to show other channels after the auction,



such as auction results and advertising. This sort of centralised control — whether that’s from a laptop or an iPad — has proved invaluable.”

#### SOUND ON THE HOOF

This is an unusual performance venue. The venue has high aspirations to attract the conferencing and function market, as well as live music events. The P.A. People discussed the clients’ needs, fleshing out the immediate demands on the audio and lighting, as well as the potential unforeseen demands. The Managing Director of The P.A. People, Chris Dodds explains:

“The original brief nominated a headline European loudspeaker for the job. But the same brief hadn’t considered stage lighting and video, so we thought we’d help balance the budget and spec a performance AV system that included all those elements without breaking the bank.

“The beauty of the Bose ShowMatch system is you can save money without compromising on performance, as you are able to use fewer boxes and tailor your coverage to the space.

“ShowMatch is a unique combination of a traditional-style line array cabinet and a constant curvature cabinet — you get the best of both worlds. You would normally need to back off acoustic output on the nearfield boxes at the bottom of the line array hang. Not so with ShowMatch because the dispersion of those

elements is much greater — in this case 20° in the vertical and 100° in the horizontal. That provides cost savings — via fewer boxes.

“The top-of-the-array boxes have a 5° vertical dispersion and take care of the long throw component.

“Each cabinet is still an active two-way design with a crossover at 750Hz, which is quite low in the vocal range. The EMB2 high frequency driver is remarkably smooth and punchy.

“For this project we’ve employed 3 x 5° boxes at the top of the array then a 10° and a 20° underneath.

“Each cabinet can handle optional and interchangeable waveguides. As mentioned, the bottom cab has a 100° waveguide fitted. It provides a very wide and even coverage. So much so that we’ve splayed the arrays out somewhat to get a full 130° coverage of the room. People look at the arrays and assume there must be a hole in the coverage in the centre. There isn’t.

“Two 18-inch subwoofers aside complete the system. All the loudspeakers are powered by Bose PM8500N network amps with Dante cards.”

#### SCREENS ON THE TROT

The showstopping LED screens provide all the clarity and brightness the auctions need. In the adrenalin-charged excitement of a sale, clearly conveyed and accurate information is crucial, and the QE series VuePix LED displays provide it in spades.

The early brief listed projection, but Chris Dodds from The P.A. People quickly poured cold water on that idea: “We were adamant. There’s so much ambient light in the sales theatre that we would have needed two or more 25,000-lumen projectors stacked to get the performance the client required. Plus the display solution needed to be capable of doing more than showing video of horses. Text and detail are also important, especially in conferencing situations — you’ve got to be able to read a spreadsheet.”

The two large-format VuePix screens (each 4.5m wide and 2.5m high) are positioned next to the entrances of the parade ring on each side, with an additional 2.5m wide and 1.5m high screen installed in the middle of the ring above the speaker’s desk.

The screens will display the current bidding in different currencies, along with information on the horse and even video of the horse in action.

With the fine pixel pitch of 2.6mm, slimline design and lightweight aluminium frame, the installation of the new VuePix screens was quick and seamless.

Deane Jacobs: “The screens are big enough for everybody in the room to see the detail and that’s the most important thing. And the screens have proven themselves outside of auction day as well. We recently hosted a conference where we patched in a Stanford University professor



via video conference. So we had the professor up on the centre screen, with his notes he was speaking to on the other screens left and right. The displays are performing really well.”

#### RECORD CLEARANCE

After chatting to Chris Dodds from The P.A. People and William Inglis CIO Deane Jacobs, getting all the AV aspects happily sitting on the network — Dante audio and the Exterity IPTV’s hotel room TV, digital signage delivery and other video over IP features — obviously wasn’t a walk in the park, but the payoff is immediate.

**Deane Jacobs:** “We have a Huawei GPON gigabit-capable passive, optical network and my role is simplified by having the audio and video sitting on there. It makes monitoring and controlling the content on the screens far easier. It also means we can farm out roles and content creation roles to staff. For example, the marketing team is able to get content and push that out to certain displays — conferences, sales results, the conference agenda and the like.”

In the end, and as I mentioned in the intro — it’s all about the horses.

**Deane Jacobs:** “The system really delivered on its promise at our first sales auction. We had a 96% clearance rate — a record for any yearling sale worldwide.

“The atmosphere on the night was unbelievable.” 🐾

**The P.A. People:** (02) 8755 8700 or [www.papeople.com.au](http://www.papeople.com.au)

**Midwich (Exterity):** 1300 666 099 or [www.midwich.com.au](http://www.midwich.com.au)

**ULA Group (VuePix):** 1300 852 476 or [www.ulagroup.com](http://www.ulagroup.com)

**Bose Professional:** [www.bose.pro.com](http://www.bose.pro.com)

**Inglis:** [www.inglis.com.au](http://www.inglis.com.au)

#### IPTV & VIDEO OVER IP. LINES BLURRED?

The P.A. People’s Managing Director, Chris Dodds reflects on the blurring lines between a traditional IPTV system and video over IP.

“Really it’s all down to compression and bandwidth. More recent video over IP solutions use only light or no compression algorithms, something that’s been common in broadcast circles for some time.

“AV seems more intent on being proprietary and everyone having their own box that doesn’t talk to the other guy’s box.

“If you look at the broadcast video side, things are more predictable with JPEG2000 compression and other mezzanine algorithms that impose only four to six lines of delay. But they’re much more open in their discussion of standards and standards compliance.

“If you flick back to IPTV we’re in a space where everyone is still at H.264 or H.265 and their roots are in serving video for the internet. They’re using 20:1 and 50:1 compression algorithms rather than 2:1 or 3:1.

“Currently IPTV and video over IP are different animals but it’s only a matter of time before we see those worlds converge.

“In an ideal world we’d use high compression algorithms in non time-sensitive applications, such as the delivery of TV, but still have the capacity in our processors so we can still do time-sensitive delivery. That way we can remove the discussion about latency in a real-time world.

“Exterity, from our POV, is the only hardware end-to-end provider. There are other people that provide software-based solutions and match that with third-party encoders or decoders; Exterity does the lot.

“Exterity’s claim to fame is in the venue space rather than hospitality (which is the traditional heartland of IPTV) but is moving into hospitality rather than the other way around.

“The P.A. People has worked with Exterity for close on 10 years now. We’ve done, Carara stadium, Randwick’s new grandstand, and other venues. We’ve found Exterity to be very responsive; always prepared to listen.

“Exterity was very helpful on this project, particularly with the hospitality aspect of the commissioning (the hotel room IPTV service) which is not usual core business for The P.A. People.”