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USER REPORT

Wheatstone Console Soars at Miami's WPLG

by Darren Alline
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WPLG is an ABC affiliate, and is owned by Post-Newsweek. Seven years ago, we began looking at audio consoles with an eye to replacing our aging equipment. Even then, Wheatstone's television consoles caught our attention.

In December 2005, we embarked on a project to relocate our operations to a new facility situated between Miami and Fort Lauderdale. Beck Associates was contracted as the consultant, designer and integrator. Design work began in the summer of 2008, and the cutover was accomplished in late March this year.

Once the relocation decision was made, we decided to keep our old audio console alive so that we could install the new consoles without having to worry about having audio down time during the transition, and also to provide an opportunity for pre-move training.

WPLG's Wheatstone D-12 installation

We do a lot of news, and wanted the ability to have two productions going on simultaneously. Live news requires lots of IFBs and mix-minus and this influenced our Wheatstone decision.

GOOD FIT FOR NEWS PRODUCTION

We selected two Wheatstone consoles: the D-12 for our main control room, and the smaller D-10 for our secondary control room. Wheatstone makes five consoles suitable for television, and these two fall into the middle of the range. They were delivered on schedule, and installed well in advance of our move, providing plenty of time for training.

Many factors influenced our choice of Wheatstone, but the ability to interface with our control room automation system was foremost. We also liked the user interface—it's well designed for live news. We have some good operators, but the console's ease of use by operators with varying experience levels gives us more flexibility in scheduling staff, and a more consistent sound.

Another attraction was Wheatstone's networked system; it's basically a giant audio matrix, rather than a console. The consoles are control surfaces that interface to the central router—the Wheatstone Bridge—via CAT-5 cable. The Bridge incorporates analog and digital I/O, mixing, processing and has redundant CPUs. This allows our two control rooms to share sources and IFBs. Any system source or destination is available at either console.

The WPLG facility was constructed with an embedded audio system. Although we installed external de-embedders to feed the Bridge, Wheatstone now offers Bridge plug-in de-embedder cards.

Wheatstone also has remote satellite card cages that we installed in the studios to interface with our wired and wireless mics and IFBs. These also connect to the Bridge via CAT-5, making installation a lot easier.

DIFFERENT MODELS; SIMILAR FEATURES

The D-12 and D-10 have a lot in common: four output buses (one is 5.1 surround), eight subgroups, eight mix-minus buses, all motorized faders, adjustable delay on every input, and extensive EQ, filtering, compression, limiting, and expander/gating processing. The D-12 has eight aux sends and the D-10 has four.

In addition to the eight mix-minus buses, each console has a bus-minus output with talkback for each fader, which we use for dedicated IFBs.

Wheatstone provided on-site training that our engineering operations manager, Lourdes Arias-Green, summed up as "fantastic."

The D-12 has been in daily use since we moved and the secondary control room is just now starting to see use.

Darren Alline is the chief engineer at WPLG. He began his television career as a director/TD more than 25 years ago and has been in his current position for more than 10 years He may be contacted at dalline@wplg.com.

For additional information, contact Wheatstone at 252-638-7000 or visit www.wheatstone.com.

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