

Going Under the Hood at the “Under the Hood” Show

A look at the equipment responsible for getting the car-centric show on the air

By



Russ Evans

The author is co-host of the syndicated "Under the Hood" radio show.

The car-centric talk show I am a co-host for, "[Under The Hood](#)," had been using the studios of Midwest Communications for over 20 years.

The studios were good but we wanted to have our own home with custom features. A place to hang the collected memories of 30 years on the wall and grow with a full video system installed for broadcast to social media and a possible local TV network.

The scope of the project was a complete ground-up build of a new studio beginning with an empty room.

The show operates on a limited budget like many radio pioneers have had to deal with and so you have to improvise. This meant doing the work in-house. Our team consists of the three hosts and a producer, without an on-staff engineer. I happened have a background in pro sound electronics as well as automotive so I became the point man and had to familiarize myself with what it takes to build a modern radio/podcast/video studio.

The new studios are located in rural Garretson, S.D., amongst the cows and corn some 15 miles from Sioux Falls, S.D. in the nationally-known Nordstrom's Auto Recycling complex. The massive facility was built in 2019 with a dedicated 800 square-foot upper room sound-insulated for the purpose of a radio studio.

The studio is based around an Audioarts Lightning 16-channel console fed by Electro-Voice RE20 microphones running through a Symetrix Jupiter 8 processor.

Calls are handled using a Backbone Networks IP phone software system. It's the same company that provided the LUCI software we use. It has worked very well for us.

The microphone booms are all Compass from Blue. They have integrated tally lights for the talent.



Chris Carter, left, drives "Under the Hood." He is operating an Audioarts Lightning console. Russ Evans is in the background.

We use Denon DN-300RMKII rack-mounted solid-state media recorders to capture the audio for later use on podcast and the live signal is sent through a Barix Exstreamer 500 to the live stations.

Fully automated video switching is provided by way of a Insoft HDVMixer. This system is a hands-off voice activated switching system which allows us to stream to most any social media channel. Cameras are AViPAS 1080P installed in six positions.

LED accent lighting is installed behind the wall sound panels and Neewer 660 fixtures provide the video lighting.

Since we are a call-in car talk show we wanted the caller's sound to be as clean as possible and ran the caller's audio through the Jupiter processor. This allows us to get an automatic clean-up and level on the incoming calls.

We broadcast to over 240 stations and do a podcast but the streaming is important to. We had a challenge getting the audio on the stream to the level we wanted and, in the end, we found our solution by running the audio from the board out through the processor before it feeds the stream and that did the trick.

"Under The Hood" has been on the air for over 30 years, 19 with the current hosts. We look to have a good run of at least 20 more years before we hang it up, if ever. We are always actively looking for new markets to air the show to continue to provide free automotive advice to listeners as well as provide a solid platform for stations to place automotive advertisers on.



Left to right, Shannon Nordstrom, Chris Carter and Russ Evans.

Program producers and studio engineers are both invited to send news about equipment used or recent installations at a radio studio to radioworld@futurenet.com.

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