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Date: 2-23-01
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Also in this issue:
Special Report: Test & Measurement
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CDN027184

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Comsat Offers Ku-band Service

Another company has joined the fast growing fleet of companies offering mobile satellite services. As of the RTNDA show last month, Comsat General Corp. in Washington, DC, a subsidiary of Comsat, is offering broadcasters a turnkey Ku system including a new transportable uplink.

Named SkyBridge, the system includes a 2.4-meter dish mounted on a 19-foot truck with an official setup time of five minutes. Two redundant high-power amps, video receiver and test equipment are rack-mounted for customization. The truck can be bought or leased as part of the package along with satellite time and a downlink.

Comsat General designed and built end-to-end NBC's Ku distribution system, which includes larger mobile uplinks. A company spokesman said before RTNDA that the first Skybridge buyer had already been lined up.

Setup is Problem for Component Systems

SMPTÉ is looking for a way to possibly eliminate setup in NTSC systems in combined component/composite facilities as a way of assisting NTSC/component transfer. Component systems being set up by SMPTÉ do not use setup, so such transfers are complicated by addition or deletion of setup and the decrease or increase of the level, but mostly in decoding because of inaccuracies in the setup level.

The two SMPTÉ Working Groups that are working on standards for component television, the Digital Video Standards and the Component Analog Video Standards Groups, are reportedly looking into the matter "on an urgent basis."

"It makes no difference whether the component systems are analog or digital," Stan Baron, the chairman of the Digital Video Standards Group, has said. "The removal or addition of setup will be a significant source of error wherever translation between

A Dish for Bowls and Other Events



Starshooter is designed to be operational 15 minutes after arriving.

The "finest C-band transportable uplink on the road" is how Capitol Satellite, a subsidiary of group owner Capitol Broadcasting Co. of Raleigh, NC, and Raycom, an independent college sports syndicator operating out of Charlotte, are describing their new Starshooter vehicle. The 45-foot trailer boasts a 4.5-meter Andrew antenna with construction

sturdy enough to allow it to stay in business in winds over 80 mph.

Starshooter is scheduled to roam the midwest and southeast this year for Raycom's coverage of Big Eight and other football and basketball conferences and bowls. Capitol Satellite provides other C- and Ku-band services through its North Carolina Teleport.

the NTSC environment and the component environment takes place."

Merrill Weiss, who heads the Component Analog Group (see SMPTÉ report in this issue), said that "Having no setup in NTSC makes it possible to keep black levels constant without operator intervention. In addition, there is an improvement of approximately 3/4 dB in signal-to-noise ratio or dynamic range achievable by eliminating setup. It would only be necessary to add setup on the output of a facility when required for transmission or interchange."

An ad hoc group at SMPTÉ studying component studio implementation will investigate elimination of setup and will seek input from the industry on this issue.

New Telerecording Method for Audio

It is now possible to digitally record high-quality audio through a switched telephone line onto a floppy disk.

CompuSonic's made audio history recently when the company sponsored a telerecording demonstration along with AT&T, which provides the high-speed lines.

Live audio of WLS radio was sent from Chicago to a CompuSonic's DSP-2002 via AT&T's Accunet Switched 56 and recorded onto floppy disk. Later, recorded stereo music was also sent over the phone lines and played back from a floppy disk with no noticeable degradation.

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The AccUNET Switched 56 service is a digital 56 kb digital line similar to dedicated private lines which used to be employed for digital transmission. Because it's a switched service, however, it can be dialed up as needed at a much lower cost, less than \$50 per hour of usage, according to AT&T.

The CompuSonics DATS (digital audio transmission system) consists of the company's DSP-2002 audio computer, which CompuSonics has been aiming at the audio recording industry, equipped with an optional interface cir-

cuit board and software for high-speed digital transmission of audio signals. Also used in the demonstration was software featuring the company's CSX digital audio encoding, a telephone interface unit, and California Microwave Flextie unit.

According to David Schwartz, president of CompuSonics, the actual transmission time for a specific recording depends on the CSX rate selected. A stereo recording with a CSX factor of eight, for example, can be sent over the AccUNET Switched 56 service in a peri-



CompuSonics president David Schwartz listens as the company makes audio history by recording live audio digitally over switched telephone service onto floppy disk using the company's DSP-2002.

od four times the actual running time. A 15-minute recording will take one hour. Schwartz said at the time of the demonstration that CSX 16 was under development, and that it would have the capability to record audio at 6 kHz in real time.

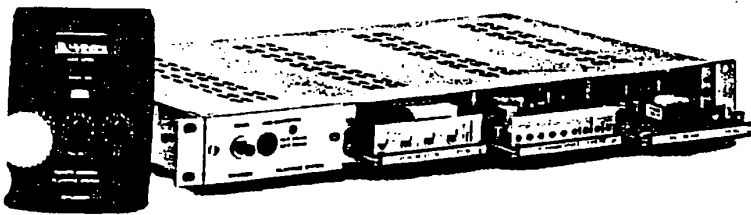
Schwartz said that beta tests of the telerecording system have started in New York City and Washington, DC. He says a major radio network, which he declined to name, is recording news actualities over phone lines for broadcast.

However, Schwartz envisions much farther-reaching applications for the digital audio telecommunications system. He mentioned the possibility of sending high-quality audio for radio spots from the west coast to the east in hours, instead of the days it would take to arrive by mailed tapes. And he even visualizes a time when new music will be sent out from recording companies directly to radio stations or consumers at home, from the phone onto floppy disk, without the need for tapes or vinyl recordings. If that happens, it would be good news for CompuSonics, which not only has a floppy disk-based digital recorder for broadcast use on the market, but has been trying to break into the consumer marketplace with its floppy disk-based DSP-1000.

New Weather Network Goes on Satellite

A new weather network is being started this fall by Environmental Satellite Data of Suitland, MD and Wold Communications. Named WINX, it will distribute weather

Standard Setter



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