

Rogers Sportsnet Toronto, Ontario

In its decision to relocate to a brand new 55,000-square foot facility in Toronto, Rogers Sportsnet – a Canadian television sports specialty channel – took hold of the opportunity to upgrade the entire facility immediately to HD, making it the first really significant ground-up HD build in the country. As part of its plan to build a brand new newsroom/production studio entirely for high definition sports programming, the studio required a dynamic backdrop that was unique in the Canadian broadcast world and could be used to showcase action-packed sports clips, network graphics, team logos, and statistics for its viewers – nationwide. A panoramic wall would be a fresh look for the network’s sports coverage and commentary telecasts.

Initially, Rogers Sportsnet contacted Applied Electronics Limited with a vision of integrating display monitors to form a large monitor wall. After assessing their needs, Applied Electronics proposed a solution that offered them more versatility, operation simplicity and a vibrant yet seamless appearance.

Applied Electronics proposed a “blended technology” solution which integrated six Christie HD8K 3-chip DLP® projectors and two Vista Systems Spyder video processors to generate seamless images across a curved 84 ft. wide x 8 ft. high front projection display. Using this configuration, HD source feeds including HD-SDI video, graphics and/or satellite video can be projected simultaneously on the expansive screen.



Due to the restrictive nature of the studio space, it was required that the massive screen structure be mounted above rows of sports journalist’s desks. Maintaining a safe buffer zone between the bottom of the screen and the multitude of staff working in this fast-paced environment was a primary concern. The combination of a large curvature in the screen surface and environmental obstacles resulted in a variance in throw distances among the six projectors. Christie’s extensive offering of variable focal length lenses were utilized to correct the inconsistencies. Due to the fact that the application’s primary

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usage was as a televised back-drop, precise control over the colour temperature of the projected images was critical. Selecting projectors with a Xenon lamp system greatly assisted with this technical obstacle. Also, a significant quantity of high intensity studio lighting fixtures created an environment that was less than ideal for front projection displays. However, the projector's 8000 ANSI lumens and 2000:1 contrast ratio resulted in vibrant, colour-accurate images.

The entire system came together successfully due to the strong partnership among all of the affiliates. Applied Electronics provided the consultation, system design, supply, and installation services. UP Workshop provided the architectural expertise and both Christie and Vista Systems provided remarkable products and technical support.

Applied Electronics' exceptional 30-year business relationship with Christie Digital Systems Canada, Inc. is based on trust and a proven track record of product performance and reliability, two qualities of the Christie HD8K projector and the Vista Spyder video processor that scored big with Rogers Sportsnet.

Both Christie and Vista Systems assisted with on-site product/application evaluations, a mock-up of the blended image solution and provided extensive user training. With a common goal and a hard "live-to-air" deadline date, there was no doubt that a team-based approach was required to produce the desired visible results to satisfy Rogers Sportsnet.

The cumulative result of this team effort was a project completed on time and under budget. In addition, the projection-based solution is more power efficient and economical than the original concept. With regular maintenance, the only ongoing costs will be replacement lamps for the six projectors.

Rogers Sportsnet broadcasted live-to-air successfully in full HD on May 1st, 2008 with the back-drop working flawlessly and looking vibrant as ever.

Applied Electronics also provided custom design, consultation, engineering, installation and logistical services on Rogers Sportsnet's multi-million dollar HD Broadcast System build, the heart of the facility.

