SONY

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HDC User Group

Newsletter No.11

If you don't wish to receive this letter, or if you know other people who might wish to receive it, please let me know: neil.thompson@eu.sony.com

So much for my commitment to producing this newsletter more often. Time seems to have a way of sneaking round you and overtaking on a blind bend. Anyway, here it is. As usual, any ideas or news for future editions also gratefully received.

This issue

HDVF-EL75 and HDVF-EL70 ‘OLED’ Viewfinders

You may remember from the last newsletter that we were quite excited about the first delivery of these viewfinders. We’ve been struggling for several years now to find the right viewfinder technology for HD. I think we might have got it right with these models.
It’s always been a struggle to try and entice operators away from CRTs, but after the initial 30 minutes of suspicious poking and prodding at these new models, most people really do like them.
There are all sorts of new fangled features such as an in screen waveform monitor, focus assist bar-graph, magnification and mono functions, assignable buttons, coloured peaking etc. which are all very nice, but the bottom line is, there isn’t any lag, the blacks are black, the viewing angle is wide and the contrast is big.

HDVF-EL75 for portable camera mount.

HDVF-EL70, with turret style mount for large body camera or HDLA-1500 cradle.

Although the EL75 has a V-shoe fitting for portable camera mounting it can also be mounted within the turret fitting on cradles, though you do need to connect the cable as usual.

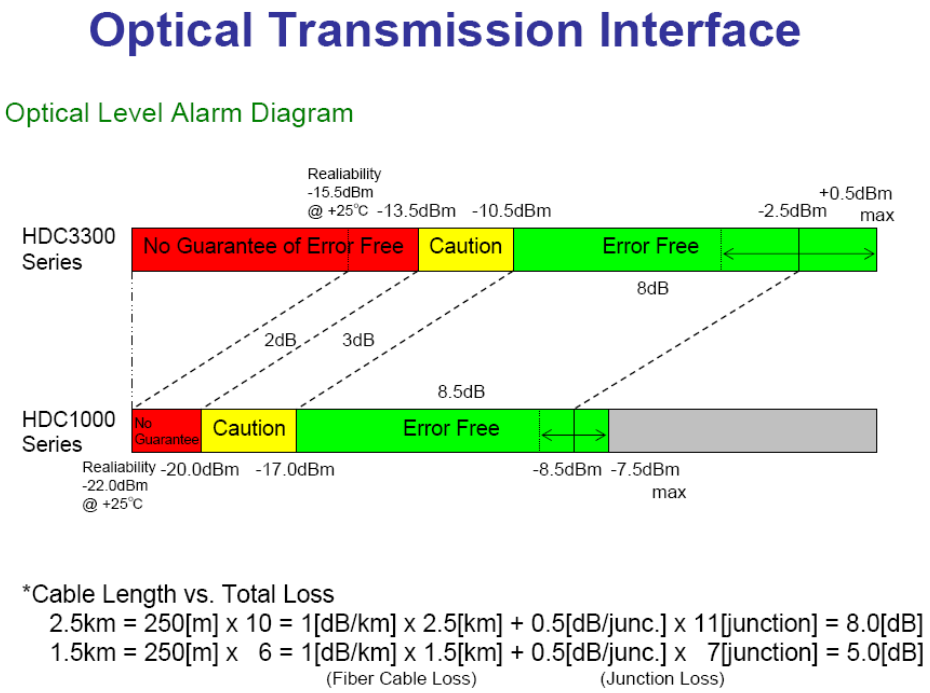
End of the line

Just a reminder of some of the products that are now or will soon be discontinued.

- The BVP-E30 camera system is now discontinued. Last of the BVP cameras, which is a sad day for someone who remembers working on BVP-3AP and BVP-5Ps at BBC film studios in Ealing!
- For the next issue if you have any photos of battered BVP-70s or BVP-550s or similar still in use I might include a classic camera corner.
- HDC-X300 and X310 modular ‘brick’ type cameras will be discontinued in March.
- HDVF-C950W 9” LCD viewfinder will be discontinued once existing stock is sold out.

Fibre Headroom

Someone asked ages ago for an explanation of what the optical level meter on the control panels actually tells you.
The general idea is that you have a given amount of optical headroom (typically about 12dB) before the signal falls of the digital cliff. Fibre cable will cost you a certain number of db per km, but the major cost will be at each interconnection point. Each junction of cable lengths will cost you somewhere between 0.1dB for a brand new connector in perfect condition to 0.5dB for a typical well used connector.
As you can see, the Supermotion signal is at a higher level than the rest of the cameras, and headroom is about the same.



3G Ready

We are just about to start shipping a version of the HDC-1500 system with full 3G capability. As you may be aware, the HDC-1500 has always been capable of capturing images at 1080P 50, and we've also had an upgrade kit available for some months that allows that 3G signal to fit down the fibre and arrive at the HDCU as either a dual link or 3G output.
If you've ever installed the upgrade kit, you'll know it is not a trivial task, and is also quite expensive.
The 'D' versions of the camera and base stations have the upgrade kits built in, which saves time and cost.

- HDC-1500RD
- HDCU-1000D
- HDCU-1500D

You may still need the HKCU-2005 option though. As standard the 'D' versions come with dual link outputs. The HKCU-2005 gives you four 3G SDI outputs, and also enables various monitoring options for 3D use, such as split / mix / anaglyph / chequerboard / line by line.

3D Viewfinders

(Note to everyone who does this for real, particularly Telegenic..do let me know if I'm missing important stuff here.)

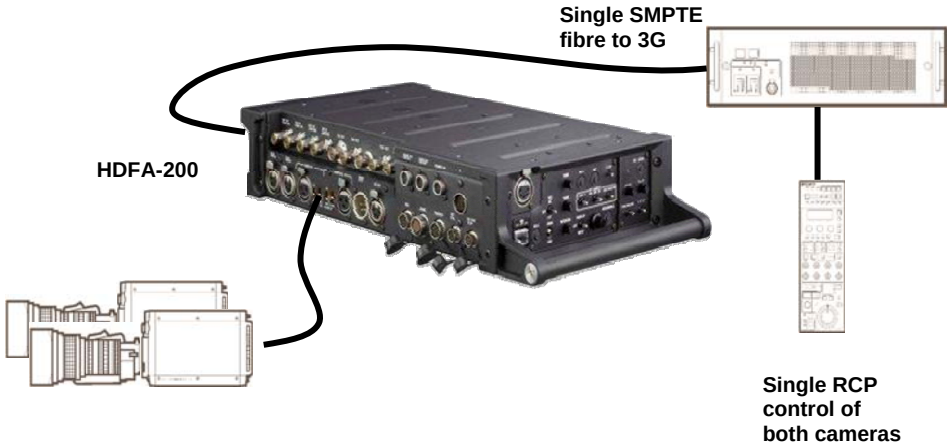
What does the camera operator look at when framing a 3D camera shot. Do you need a 3D viewfinder?

No.
At least that's the answer if you're working on an OB style production, with a vision control area and a stereographer to look after 3D issues. You'd normally just look at the feed from one camera and assume the other is tracking it exactly. It doesn't seem to matter much which camera, though left seems to be most popular. It would probably be a bit much to try and make judgments and adjustments for 3D as well as framing and focussing the shot!

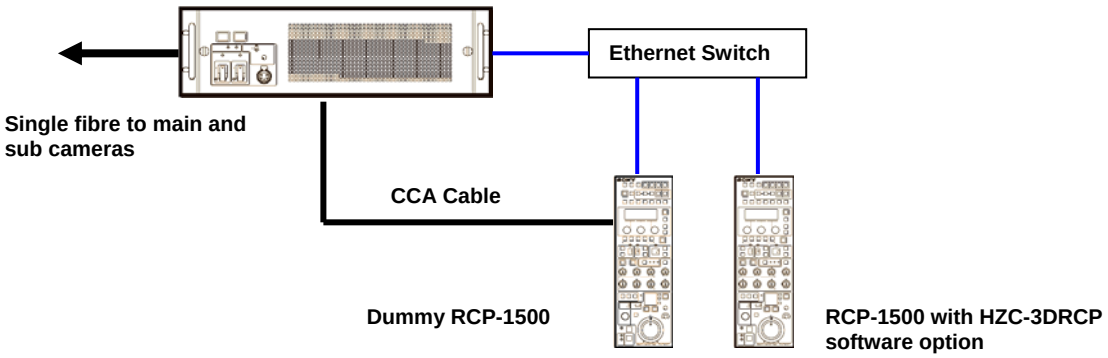
One thing that may be important though, is your return video feed. If a 3D processing unit such as the MPE-200 is in use, it will slightly change your picture size and framing in order to correct for any mechanical alignment errors in the rig / lenses. It's a good idea to have a corrected feed from the processor as one of your return feeds.

Before you start shooting though, it's a major undertaking to get the cameras positioned and tracking correctly, and we are starting to see alternative viewfinder signals that can help with this.
The HDFA-200 for instance, enables various left/right mixes / wipes and difference signals to be displayed on a single viewfinder via the usual connector. Mostly useful during alignment, but these viewing options can be accessed whilst shooting.

For some useful detail on the HDFA-200 in use in a 3D production environment, have a look at the video at:
http://www.sony.net/united/3D/#benefits/p_solution/
featuring my colleague Andy looking slightly uncomfortable on the other side of the camera!



A note about the diagram of a 'sub' camera rig shown in the last newsletter. It showed just one RCP controlling both cameras, in a similar way to the diagram above. I should have showed it with a 'dummy' RCP in the configuration, which is needed to pass data to the second camera, though control can be from just one RCP.



If you have the HZX-3DRCP software installed on any RCPs in your system it would be a good idea to make sure the rest of the system software is not more than 18 months old, to avoid any compatibility issues.

Contacts

We've been re-organised.

www.pro.sony.eu

If you need something fixed…

The Helpdesk Telephone number is: 00800 7669 0000

The helpdesk will arrange collection of the smoking remains of your equipment and return when fixed. Much of the repair work will now be done at our factory in Pencoed, where of course the cameras are made.

Customers with an enhanced support contract are asked to raise issues by emailing Primesupport@eu.sony.com or by telephoning the number in your contract

If you need a field engineer to visit, this can also be arranged via the helpdesk.

Field Engineers:

- Kevin Holt
- Lee Prosser

Service Contracts:

- Kate Bosworth

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