

# Making The Connection

LEE ELLISON, CEO, AUDINATE

BY KELLEIGH WELCH

When the opportunity to join Audinate as its CEO came up in 2008, Lee Ellison knew the company was good fit. Audinate had already released Dante, its patented media network solution that has been adopted by numerous audio manufacturers, and combining that effort with the company's team of designers made Ellison's decision an easy one.

"I had previously worked with David Myers (co-founder of Audinate) at another Australia-based company. David and Aidan Williams, our other co-founder, met me in Portland and mentioned they needed a CEO, and described what Audinate was doing. Immediately, it became apparent that the company had something special: a team of incredibly bright people with significant expertise over a broad spectrum of IP technologies," Ellison said. "So when I considered the opportunity to join Audinate, we had great people and great technology, combined with a solution that solved customer problems. It seemed like the perfect ingredients for success."

As the developer of the digital media network system Dante, Audinate has grown as a well-known collaborator with many equipment

"I was indoctrinated into the market. First, there was the annual NAMM show, then ISE, and then 45 days later, ProLight & Sound. After meeting hundreds of companies, it was apparent that past networking technologies were too complex to setup and had limitations. Pro audio companies developed legacy audio networks. Audinate is a networking company, not a pro audio company, and that ties nicely with my past experiences."

Based in Sydney, Australia, Audinate was founded in 2006 and stemmed from the Australian company National ICT Australia (NICTA). It has operations in Portland, OR and in the United Kingdom, which provide sales, marketing and technical support for those regions.

"Being globally dispersed causes some pretty horrific times for conference calls," Ellison said, "but we have a very committed team. We have 30 people in the company with one of the industry's largest teams dedicated solely to A/V media networking."

Since Ellison's induction to the company, the company has released new products he's particularly proud of, including the end-point chip, Ultimo.

"This will expand the market for network audio," Ellison said. "It

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manufacturers in the industry. "It's fantastic to see Dante installed with our partners in major stadiums, universities, hotels, the Olympic Games, courtrooms and shopping centers," Ellison said. "Having said that, I get just as much satisfaction when I see a forum post from a sound engineer who expresses how great Dante is to use."

Prior to joining Audinate, Ellison had worked in telecom and IT technology companies for 30 years, but had little exposure to the pro audio world. It wasn't until he was hired at Audinate that he was fully introduced to the industry.

has been a lot of hard work by all of us, but I am fortunate to be part of the market success and to work with our OEMs to build a recognized Dante brand. There are about 150 Dante-enabled OEM products now available, with hundreds in the development pipeline—some pretty significant brands who have yet to be announced, that recognize Dante meets their use cases across all market segments."

Audinate's initial focus was on live sound, and in 2006, Dante was used for the first time at a Barbara Streisand concert, Ellison said. Since then, the company has grown to ac-



Lee Ellison

commodate the commercial installation and broadcast markets.

"We are also active with partners in the emergency communications and public address markets. In the future, there will be the need for a wide area A/V systems that are routed over Layer 3 IP networks. This is why we are spending a great deal of time in the IETF standards bodies—to make sure we can use RTP-based standards in the future," Ellison explained.

Ellison noted that the company keeps its focus on customers rather than its competition, making sure to constantly improve the company's services.

"Our attention is on our customer needs and how to create and feature rich capabilities in Dante. We continually get feedback from customers who have implemented other networking technologies, that Dante was the easiest integration they have ever had," said Ellison. "Our customers realize that they can't do everything in-house, and it is strategically better to concentrate on where they can innovate and create value in their own products."

Audinate is also constantly growing in its research and development department. "New capabilities are being added to Dante to monitor network status and performance," said Ellison. "Advanced technologies are always being created, new standards are constantly evolving and Audinate will continue to enhance Dante's toolkit."

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