Symetrix SymNet Edge Dante-Scalable DSP

By Ben Burrell

My colleagues at Sapphire Sound and I were first introduced to Symetrix's SymNet Edge digital signal processor when we were tasked with integrating a multimedia system into an older Roman Catholic church in Calgary, AB.

which left us with a minimal amount of new cabling to install.

The system also needed to be run by volunteers with a limited technical background, so we were looking for a simple user interface. We incorporated an Extron touch panel into the system, which

"CAD-style" drag-and-drop, and it is well organized and easy to keep clean.

The fact that it's all open architecture and not fixed format in the DSP makes it ideal for future considerations. You only use what you need, but you can relax knowing that any processing block

At the time, SymNet Edge was the latest addition to Symetrix's line of DSP solutions – a scalable hardware solution that works with SymNet Composer, the company's open-architecture programming software.

SymNet Edge features four configurable I/O card slots for up to 16 total channels of local I/O plus 128 channels via Dante, which was more than enough for the project at hand. We also liked that it delivers ultra-low latency networked audio, whereby several units can be connected without the need for third-party network switches.

One of the more useful features of SymNet Edge is the onboard 10/100 and gigabit switches, which are also key selling features on other SymNet Dante DSPs. This helped to keep the costs contained and reduced the overall complexity of the system.

The solution can be used for a number of applications – automixing, loudspeaker management, routing and distribution, zone mixing and paging, and a lot more; however, our use here was relatively straightforward.

The church we were working on was a very old building, meaning there wasn't a lot of wiring access. That's what made SymNet Edge and, specifically, its Dante capabilities an optimal choice for the job. We were able to use some of the existing network cabling,

in addition to the levels and inputs of the audio system, controls everything from the house lighting and in-house camera package to the motorized blinds and more. Integrating the third-party touch panel was very simple – a definite selling feature for SymNet Edge.

The card-based format was very appealing, since the client only had to purchase the I/O needed for this specific application. With almost everything being on Dante, we didn't need many cards. Of course, the flexibility that Dante affords was also very welcome and was one of the main reasons we opted to incorporate SymNet Edge. Symetrix's new SymNet Radius fixed-format platform wasn't available at the time, but also would have been a good solution.

The application required some remote I/O, but we only had network connectivity between the rack where the amps and processors were housed and the house console. We used Dante on the input and output side to get content from the console to the processor and then to the amplifiers and back.

We definitely like the software end of this platform. SymNet Composer is very easy and flexible, and has the added bonus of consistency across most of Symetrix's DSP platforms. Configuring the software is simple and straightforward, as it's mostly a matter of

you could ever need is readily available – over 600 DSP modules, in fact.

I should note that, because we used the third-party touch panel, we didn't incorporate Symetrix's ARC wall panels or free ARC-WEB browser-based remote, though we typically do use them in our installations as they are extremely simple to program and even simpler to use.

The only real barrier to this platform for applications like this is price; however, as more and more Dante I/O devices are becoming available, SymNet Edge (and the company's other scalable platforms) will only be more sought-after.

In my opinion, the feature set more than justifies the price and the ease of integration and operation is certainly impressive. If you're on the market for a scalable DSP solution for virtually any application, SymNet and the Edge unit in particular are worth a closer look.

Ben Burrell is the Sales and Operations Manager at Sapphire Sound's Calgary location. He has worked with the company for six years and has been integral in growing the company's market share in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Sapphire Sound currently has offices in Calgary, Vancouver, and Abbotsford and specializes in audio, video, lighting, and control systems. www.sapphiresound.ca.