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## Video on the Seas

### Today's Cruise Lines Are Using A/V to Entertain, Secure, and Educate

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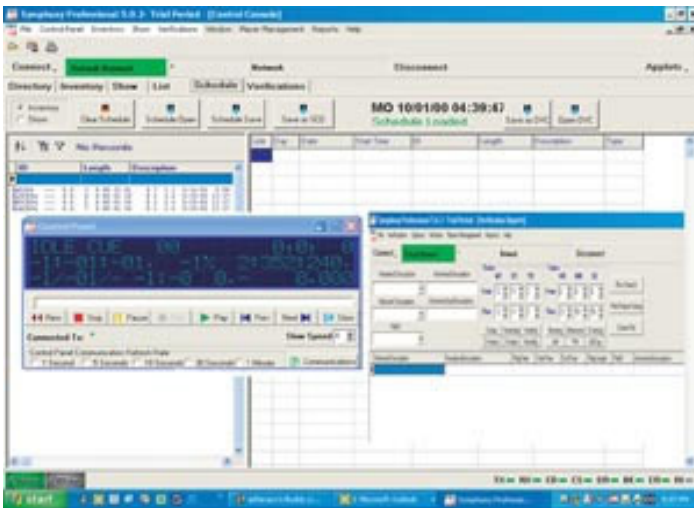
One of the fastest growing segments of the travel and resort industry, cruise lines are using video for everything from in-cabin television and inhouse training to closed-captioned TV (CCTV) security and telemedicine. Many can offer passengers an optional custom video of their cruise vacation. Most ships have onboard TV stations keeping the passengers up-to-date about ports of call and the ship's activities, as well as providing movies, TV shows, and news they can watch in the privacy of their staterooms. The major theater showrooms where Las Vegas-caliber headliners perform also use a large amount of A/V gear. To staff these facilities at sea, the cruise lines regularly hire broadcasting and video production specialists, and purchase independent television programming to satisfy their passengers' hunger for daily communication, information, and entertainment.



Carnival Cruise Lines, with 19 ships, is considered the world's largest cruise line and is part of the larger Carnival Corporation, whose 70 ships include: Costa Cruise Lines, Cunard, Holland America Line, Princess Cruises, Seabourn, and Windstar Cruises. CCL ships cruise from the United States to the Caribbean, the Mexican Riviera, and Alaska, with the sister lines sailing worldwide. All of Carnival's ships have video and audio services for passengers and crew. Guest cabins come equipped with a TV, suite staterooms have a TV/VCR combo, and several newer vessels have interactive television systems. Like most cruise lines, the programming consists of numerous satellite TV feeds, several movies, onboard safety information, event and tour coverage, daily event schedules, as well as inhouse training videos on private crew networks. CCL has the most channels with more than 30. The head end cable system is RF-based analog and distributes the audio and video signals throughout the ship.

The ship's showroom theaters are multi-functional venues equipped with Barco ELM R12 projectors that under show conditions, generally run an SDI video source from Adtec Soloist units because CCL production shows need high quality images run from timecode. While each lounge and bar has varying amounts of A/V gear, the biggest venues are the theaters with up to three Barco multi-source projectors, plus remote cameras with a central control of all matrix functions. In the ship's discos, as many as 600 monitors surround the dance floor in banks of video walls.

"We need multi-skilled professionals to help run all this," says Nigel Stables, Carnival Cruise Lines A/V media manager for 12 years. "Someone who has a bias for either postproduction work or technical broadcasting knowledge, but is prepared to do both. Performing the wide variety of daily tasks for up to 2,800 guests and crew takes skill and good judgment to keep our systems operational and provide the best programming and video services for our passengers 24/7."



Computer software like Adtec's *Symphony Pro 5.0* allows major cruise companies like *Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines* to run several onboard television stations scheduling programming and even promo commercials.

Royal Caribbean was one of the first companies to create original videos and also custom package existing network shows for its ships. It even recently won three national Telly awards — two for original programming for the ships' TV network and one for an inhouse corporate training video.

"One program, *Casino Request Live*, appeals to younger guests, with a cutting-edge video style providing a fun, hip overview of the onboard casino, offering tips on how to play popular games like blackjack and roulette," says Liz Motley, TV/ITV programming specialist. "The other program we developed is called *Get Out There* and is a fast paced magazine-style show providing guests an overview of the various activities onboard the ship." They also offer 29 channels of in-cabin television programming fleet-wide on the RCTV Network, including satellite channels such as CNN International, ESPN, TNT, Bloomberg TV, and the Travel Channel, as well as two movie channels showing recently released motion pictures.

Royal Caribbean has also created and programmed five custom shipboard TV channels. "These are exclusive to our cruise line and offer a variety of shows, including classic TV shows on RCCL's Retro TV channel, current sitcoms and dramas on Family TV, classic movies on the Royal Classics channel, and E! and related entertainment programs on XYtv. We also recently launched a new channel called Venus TV with programming geared toward women. For those that are hearing impaired some of our programming is closed-captioned," says Motley. Each TV also receives music through the DMX audio network. Royal Caribbean uses Adtec's Edje units to broadcast programming on these exclusive in-cabin TV channels.