

Radio World

FEATURES

Reprinted from May 10, 2000

'Nation's Largest' Digital Radio Facility

Paul J. McLane

At NAB2000, XM Satellite Radio said its Washington, D.C., Programming Center will include 82 studios when completed this fall. XM calls it the nation's largest end-to-end digital radio facility.

Vice President of Broadcast Operations Anthony J. Masiello said the equipment complement includes a Dalet Digital Media Systems audio storage system, feeding some 300 digital workstations and holding 3.5 terabytes of audio.

The system will use 4:1 MPEG-2 compression and is set up to include song title and artist program information in the data sent to the receivers.

Klotz Digital will supply the audio consoles and the digital infrastructure for XM.

The satellite radio provider will employ 120 of the new Omnia-3 digital audio processors from Cutting Edge. Masiello said the processors will be used both for specific format control as well as overall audio level.

CAT-5 installation

XM will use Series 2101 multi-line phone systems from Telos Systems for 192 phone lines — the equivalent of eight T1 lines, according to Masiello.

XM will use Radio Systems



Major vendors to XM gathered at the show.

L-R: Dan Braverman, president, Radio Systems; Thomas Klotz, CEO, Klotz Digital; Frank Foti, president, Cutting Edge; VP of Broadcast Operations Anthony J. Masiello, XM; Steve Church, president, Telos Systems; Edward Schwartz, XM director of broadcast engineering; Stéphane Guez, chairman, CEO of Dalet.

StudioHub CAT-5 wiring, including more than 10,000 premade cables.

Acoustic Systems will provide pre-engineered studios, configured by Northeastern Communications Concepts, which designed the furniture.

Using drywall construction, the XM studios will be prefabricated in Austin, Texas, and assembled on site.



Rendering of a Production Studio at XM

Four-inch-thick steel-clad structural panels will seal out intrusive noise. Acoustic Systems SoundSecure doors and vision panels, integrated cable raceways and a Venturi-type ventilation silencing system will be used.

The installation represents an audio and radio design challenge unlike those faced by most broadcast installation managers.

"At any one time, a few hundred microphones and loudspeakers can be active in our facility," Masiello said.

Each studio structure will float independently on Firestone vibration mounts.

The facility will have more than 250 Middle Atlantic racks and hundreds of Genelec speakers. Other major products and services are from SED Systems, RCS Enterprises and The Whitlock Group.

Beginning in the first half of 2001, XM will beam up to 100 channels of digital programming to vehicle, home and portable XM-Ready radios nationally for \$9.95 a month.

American Mobile Satellite Corp. holds a controlling interest in the company, which is backed by General Motors, Clear Channel Communications and DirecTV.