

Pristine Systems' CDS32

by Stan Carter

Finding an automation system to handle the day-to-day operations of today's news/talk station can be a daunting task. There is a lot going on, and being able to handle it all smoothly is essential.

When I first came on-board at WJNT-AM in 1993, talk programming options were quite limited compared to the choices available today. After a few years, as more and more programming choices became available, it was apparent that WJNT would have to invest in an automation system that could handle programming tasks that are unique to news/talk.

EASY CHOICES

WJNT originally chose CartWorks (the predecessor to CDS32) when we installed our first automation system. For several years it handled all of our requirements at WJNT very well.

However, the news/talk programming continued to grow, and we started to push the limits of our first automation system. To accommodate our growing programming lineup, it became necessary to add external timers and mechanical relays. While this solved some problems, it was not 100% reliable.

In 2006, WJNT-AM was purchased by Inner City Broadcasting; from a standalone AM station, we became part of a 6-station cluster. One of the first items on our shopping list was a new automation system for our new talk studio.



The WJMT Talk Studio

Pristine Systems CDS32 (Content Delivery System) was the obvious choice. The other stations in the cluster were already using Pristine Systems CDS32 for music on hard drive, live-assist and satellite music formats. We found that the latest version of CDS32 was well-suited to handling our news/talk programming.

HANDLING THE SOURCES

We chose the CDS32 satellite automation system with two Broadcast Tools SS 8.2 audio switchers to accommodate our 16 different audio sources – mostly satellite, along with television and RPU sources used for TV news simulcasts, church broadcasts and remotes. The multiple audio switchers allowed us to do away with all the external timers and relays I had added on over the years, tremendously simplifying things as well as improving reliability.

If additional audio sources are needed in the future, CDS32 can be expanded even further. A third Broadcast Tools SS 8.2 switcher can be added, allowing us to control up to 24 different audio sources.

Multiple satellite sources also mean multiple content closures. With our original automation system the number of closures was limited, meaning picking and choosing what could be accommodated and using

external timers and relays. Making programming changes could be quite challenging at times.

With CDS32, this became a problem of the past. Our CDS32 system can accommodate up to 48 input closures, which allowed me to do away with all of the previously added-on timers and relays. We were also able to take advantage of optional automation closures for return liners, optional breaks, etc. This made for an improved on-air sound.



EASY TO HANDLE CHANGES

As anyone in broadcasting knows, numerous things will be handed to you at the last minute. Again, CDS32 makes it easy to handle last minute programming changes, whether a last minute church program on Sunday, a new overnight satellite show, or adding a live break to the morning talk show.

The CDS32 script editor is extremely flexible and makes it easy to modify programming. All input sources, relay closures and commands use easy-to-read labeling. Items like time syncs, floating breaks, and hard breaks are easy to program in or modify on short notice.

One of the most challenging things we have been able to accomplish with CDS32 is automating college sporting events. The script-based automation programming used by CDS32 makes it easy to transition seamlessly from regular programming to a college sports event and back with no human intervention. Got a last minute college game that you need to air? No problem – add one command in the automation script and CDS32 is ready to go.

TIME SHIFTING

Another challenge for talk stations is time-shifting programs. We air several short features that are available on satellite, but cannot air them live.

The background recording feature in CDS32 will let you automatically record any audio source available on the audio switcher while regular programming continues with no interruption. Recordings can be based on time or relay closures. Time-shifting a one-minute stock update or a four-hour talk show is handled with ease.

PLENTY OF HOT BUTTONS

Along with our satellite programming, WJNT also airs a live morning talk show with different show hosts during the week. We also air a fast-paced afternoon talk show, along with several local high school sporting events. All of our live programming requires fast access to sound effects, drops, bumper music, and spots.

CDS32 makes it easy with Hotkeys. Up to 48 individual audio cuts are immediately available on a separate audio output. The board or show host can access this with a click of the mouse or by using the dedicated button panel. Multiple Hotkey groups can be created, so each talk show host can have their own individually customized button panel. High school sports, live remotes, etc., or anything requiring quick access to audio cuts can have its own Hotkey group.



Hotkey Button Panel

As I mentioned before, last minute things are part of radio, and getting spot orders on short notice is quite common. In the past, it was necessary to directly record each spot into our old automation system due to file compatibility issues.

CDS32 handles multiple audio file formats with ease. It does not matter if the audio file is an uncompressed stereo WAV file or compressed mono MP3 file – just add the cart info and the file is ready to play. Adding spots at (literally) the last minute is a snap.

Add in other features like 24/7 tech support, network spot transfer, auto spot set fill, etc., and CDS32 is a great choice for anyone looking for an automation system to handle the demands of news/talk programming.

Product information at: www.pristinesys.com

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