

Mike Blackman heralds the opening of ISE Live & Online

ISE MD marks the opening of the next chapter in a 17-year journey

Integrated Systems Events Managing Director Mike Blackman marked the opening of ISE Live & Online this morning with a presentation at the Fira de Barcelona Gran Via in front of an illustrious gathering of representatives from government, local executive boards and agencies, ISE's owners and the media.

ISE Live & Online is a unique hybrid event, livestreaming from the Fira and broadcasting to a global audience via the ISE Digital platform.

The opening of ISE's first show in Barcelona represents a significant milestone in the development of Integrated Systems Europe, and a personal and professional triumph for Blackman, who launched the event 17 years ago with a staff of three.

Along with representatives of the Fira, ISE co-owner AVIXA and ISE exhibitors, Blackman made a symbolic trip by motorbike from ISE's office in Munich to Barcelona, stopping en route in Geneva, the location of the first ISE show in 2004.

ISE Live & Online (1-2 June), a special edition of ISE, is bringing the AV community together again for the first time since February 2020. Whether joining in person at ISE@Barcelona or online, you can expect to leave with the tools you need to build a roadmap for success in the post-pandemic era.

Speaking at a press conference just before the doors to ISE in Barcelona opened, Blackman said:

"What a journey! I'm not just talking about my motorbike trip from Munich to Barcelona over the past three days, though it did give me plenty of time to reflect. We stopped off in Geneva for a break. A beautiful city. Geneva was the location of the first ever ISE in 2004. I started thinking... How things have developed, how ISE has grown, how we have faced down challenges and how we have finally landed here today at Fira Gran Via Barcelona. The destination of a journey that began for ISE 17 years ago.

"To more recent events; you do not need me to comment too deeply on our shared experiences of the past 15 months. The effects have been universal, and our heartfelt sympathy goes to all countries, businesses and individuals touched by it. No one has escaped. Yes, in more recent times the light at the end of the tunnel has begun to glimmer and then to shine. Which is why after conducting exhaustive research with our exhibitors, partners, and owners we decided that ISE Barcelona, Live and Online, should take place. And here we are...

"ISE Barcelona is the first in-person event we have produced since February 2020. We've always said that ISE is a destination to learn, to network and to do business. Here today you will find world-leading technology suppliers and solutions providers

in attendance. Plus, there is a compelling mix of content being produced live on the ISE Main Stage and in AVIXA's AV Experience Zone.

"Just as importantly, visitors will have the chance to reconnect with clients and colleagues, with friends and acquaintances. As ever, ISE provides the base for the community to come together again.

"And for those who cannot be here in person, at 12:30 today ISE Digital, produced live from this venue, will reach out to the ISE community, and introduce thousands more to it for the first time.

"But despite everything that I've just mentioned, what you see here in Hall 2 is just a sense of what's to come. An exclusive preview, if you like...

"I'm delighted to report that there's massive support from the industry for ISE 2022 next February. Our stand rebooking process starts in earnest next week, and we are confident that it will be 'business as normal, business in Barcelona'.

"In fact, many of our biggest clients are already asking for more space than they had last year. Pre-reservations from our top 50 clients amount to 37,000 net square metres – that's equivalent to around two-thirds of the entire space that we had at ISE 2020. It also demonstrates why we had to relocate here to the Fira Barcelona to accommodate this enthusiastic demand.

"And there's another reason we came to Barcelona. Catalonia is positioning itself as the European audiovisual hub, and we want to be a catalyst in that development. As the world's leading show for professional audiovisual systems integration, we believe we are well placed to help.

"We've had strong support regionally from the City of Barcelona and from ACCIO, and nationally from ICEX – and we look forward to strengthening those relationships as we prepare for ISE 2022 and beyond.

"So, today marks the next stage on our journey that began in Geneva, paused in Amsterdam for many years, and has now taken us to the beautiful city of Barcelona. The new home of Integrated Systems Europe.

"Thank you. Enjoy the show!"

Dave Labuskes, CEO of AVIXA, said:

"We always knew the ISE journey from Amsterdam to Barcelona would not be an easy one. None of us ever imagined what would transpire between February of 2020 and June of 2021. And yet, with steadfast commitment to our industry and our members, we have arrived. We've shed old assumptions and business models and we've suffered extraordinary losses of life and life's moments. But now, we come together to celebrate and lead our industry on to greater heights than ever

imagined as well. The commitment of our new host Barcelona and our new home, The Fira, is reinforced by the dedication of those of you who join us this week. Let us reflect and remember – and dream and aspire – together, as we reconnect and revitalise at an ISE like none other before it or yet to come."

Giles Sutton, joint CEO of CEDIA, added:

"We're delighted to see ISE Live and Online kicking off today. A special thanks to all the local businesses for their support and participation this week: it demonstrates a great outlook for the AV and integration industries in Spain. We're excited for delegates to dive into the broad offering that is ISE digital, and look forward to interacting with you on the CEDIA content hub. We hope everyone enjoys the opportunities ISE Live and Online will bring this June, and can't wait for a full-scale ISE in February 2022."

At the in-person event in Barcelona, there are numerous opportunities to reconnect with the AV community. Attendees can visit exhibitor booths, experience live presentations from the main stage and enjoy networking and live music within a safe environment. Meet the AV Cluster and the Barcelona City Council, visit the Catalan Innovation Zone and connect with the industry in the AVIXA AV Experience Zone.

Running at the same time, with some sessions livestreamed from the Main Stage in Barcelona, ISE Digital offers a rich programme of content, in an easy to access platform, powered by CISCO.

And the third event in the series, ISE@London, (23-24 June) at Evolution Battersea, will offer more opportunities for the industry to get together, reconnect and do business.

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