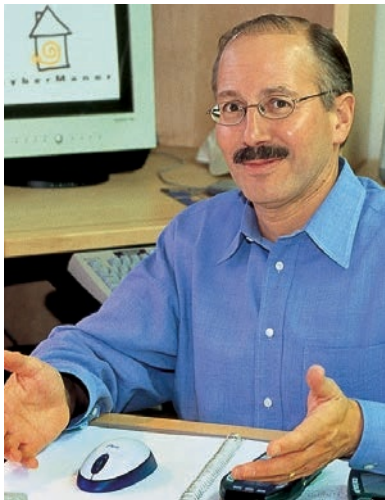# Communication Bridges

New Hardware Product Links Two Proprietary Protocols for Multi-Room Audio Control

BY GORDON VAN ZUIDEN

Thanks to Myro:Bridge from Myro Control, supported third-party devices (such as iTunes or Sonos ZonePlayers) that are connected to a Russound RNET-compatible system become a smart source for an entire household.

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Back in 2002 a Silicon Valley start-up company called Global Cache called on my company and asked us to identify the missing integration "glue" in our IP-based computer and AV systems. At that time there was no easy way for a network device communicating over TCP/IP to "talk" to an AV device that would only communicate with IR or serial commands. If we wanted computer control of our AV systems, there was no hardware communication bridge to connect these systems together. From that initial idea, Global Cache went on to develop a very successful line of IP-to-IR and serial bridge devices, helping it become one of the key manufacturers to enable custom integrators to use an IP device (such as anything on the Apple or Android mobile platform) to control legacy AV equipment controlled only by IR or serial commands. Thanks to companies like Global Cache, we now have off-the-shelf tools to seamlessly integrate systems that are not engineered to communicate with one another on their own.

Meet Myro Control

Recently I came across another such company called Myro Control (www.myrocontrol.com) that has developed a product bridge to resolve another gap in our integrated offerings: the connection of an IP Sonos product with an RNET-based Russound product.

Sonos has one of the most comprehensive and successful product lines for providing whole-house audio solutions for our clients. From the richness of their iOS and Android interfaces, to their amplifier line, to the portable speakers, and most recently the PlayBar, Sonos has become a leader in our industry. But they do not offer in-wall keypad solutions for whole-house audio systems catering to clients that prefer to control music by pressing a button the same way they can turn on a light switch.

Russound has been providing keypad-based whole-house audio control solutions for decades, but its in-wall keypads are designed to communicate over the proprietary RNET communication protocol, whereas Sonos communicates across its hardware platforms via the proprietary SonosNET or TCP/IP. We need those devices to talk to one another if we want the breadth of the Sonos music content to be controlled by an in-wall keypad.

A Passionate Innovator

This is where a passionate innovator named Danny Mavromatis enters the picture. Driven by the need to have these two whole-house audio solution companies communicate with each other, Mavromatis developed the Myro:Bridge product. I ordered one of these to test on my home system a few weeks ago where I have a couple of Sonos Connect units driving Source 1 and Source 2 of the Russound CAV 6.6 whole-house amplifier in our home. In my current setup, I only had volume up/down and on/off keypad control of my Sonos music, but no transport control over the Sonos music content. With the addition of the Myro:Bridge I can now use all the transport controls of my Russound keypad (pause, forward, rewind) to directly control my Sonos stations, such as Pandora or Amazon Cloud Player. In addition to that great feature, the Myro:Bridge reads the metatag information from my Sonos music services and displays the artist and song title on the LCD of the keypad as it is playing. And perhaps best of all, behind the scenes it is sending a "keep alive" signal to my Sonos Pandora Music Station so that this service is always streaming music, 24 hours/day, seven days a week. The product worked so well that I ordered a second one for my other Sonos Connect unit.

> **'**A home can have up to six simultaneous Sonos Pandora streams of music running every minute of every day and fully controlled by the Russound keypad in any given room.**'**

The end result of this happy marriage of Russound and Sonos is that a home can have up to six simultaneous Sonos Pandora streams of music running every minute of every day and fully controlled by the Russound keypad in any given room. Dad can have full transport control of Pandora stream 1, Mom stream 2, and the children and in-laws can have streams three through six.

In my mind this is the ultimate whole-house music experience; it's as easy to play and control music as it is to turn on tap water. This is exactly the control functionality that many of our clients want from us to complement their mobile device control of whole house music.

A custom integrator's success in this industry is often predicated on our ability to seamlessly bridge disparate electronic systems in our client's homes. Innovative companies like Global Cache and Myro Control provide the hardware solutions that allow us to easily satisfy our customers with well-engineered, reliable, integrated solutions for their home.