



Horizon Control Publishes Open Source Section On Web Site.

When it comes to software, there is never a shortage of ideas, but more so a lack of skilled developers, especially in a niche market such as entertainment lighting. Horizon Control is the software development team behind products such as the Rosco Horizon PC based controllers, the Entertainment Technology Marquee range and the very popular Light Palette and Palette series of lighting control consoles from Strand Lighting. HCI's core technology is in its internal fade engine and unique Universal Attribute Control, but with the release of the new Open Source area on its web site, there are now countless 'hooks' into this powerful software product that allows a level of customization never before seen in our industry.

Giving skilled users that may dabble in software development the tools needed to poke and prod the main fade engine allows them the ability to write powerful macros that go way beyond recording a series of keystrokes. The mere ability to branch execution with a simple IF statement opens the doors to possibilities that have never before been available to the general public in a high end light desk.

The gateway from the real world into the engine Horizon has opted to employ is, yet again, another Open Source project called Lua. Lua is an established scripting language that easily allows software companies to extend functionality of their application that is typically written in the much more complex C++ language. HCI has published a library of commands that users can use in Lua such as HC.FadeAttribute() and HC.CueListGo. Using these in their own scripts, users can get to the root of what is going on in the system and tweak it as they desire.

Some of the sample applications already published vary in complexity and usefulness. Some of the more simple scripts can be attached right to a macro button on the console are saved with the show file. These include a selective FLIP tool that looks at a pre-selected range of fixtures, determines which ones have a negative tilt value and flips them automatically. Another is a tool that loops through a selection set and takes any lights at full to zero and vice versa. These are the handy sort of tools that one or two guys need, but it would be foolish to task the core development team to incorporate them in to the main code and invent a consistent syntax to use them.

Slightly more complex examples already posted take an Excel spreadsheet and communicate with the console to patch the desk for you. Or another dynamically publishes a web page to the console's web server to produce a live Show Report. Simple macros are attached to important cues like House to Half and Begin Intermission or End of Show. The Stage Manager then can surf the desk's web page to see what time of day certain events happened. Other applications are much more in depth and work nicely right out of the box, but HCI hopes more advanced programmers will take the ball and run with them. These include interfaces for

authoring custom architectural touch screens and a Bi-Directional 2D Visualizer that makes a perfect designers remote complete with magic-sheet style grid mimic, cue list display and a command line that mirrors what the lighting programmer is typing.

More information can be found at <http://www.horizoncontrol.com/web/opensource.htm>

Please contact rob@horizoncontrol.com for more information.