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Press Release

Genelec and IDA Audio to redefine immersive 3D Audio for professional headphone users

Iisalmi, Finland...Genelec, the world leader in professional audio monitoring, and IDA Audio, a pioneer in head-related transfer function (HRTF) modelling technology, are joining forces to create the world's first truly accurate immersive audio experience for professional headphone users. Accessible via a software application for smartphone, the jointly-developed technology scans the user's ears, upper body and head to create a Cloud-based customised personal audio profile, which can then be loaded into the user's DAW via a choice of third-party plug-ins.

Until now, even the most professional headphones have been limited in their reproduction of 3D audio because of the proximity in a headphone of the audio source, which eliminates the acoustical influence of the listener's ears and head, and therefore the cues that create the sense of audio source location and distance relative to the listener. With this new software application, professionals and enthusiasts alike will be able to use their favourite pair of headphones to experience the same realistic, truly accurate 3D audio presentation for which all Genelec monitors are known.

After decades of research by audio experts, immersive audio is now rapidly becoming a mainstream reality, revolutionising cinema, live events and the world of gaming and augmented/virtual reality. Yet, for audio professionals working on immersive content, the challenge has been to create reliable reference monitoring systems that can accurately reproduce the spatial experience of everyday life. Recently, Genelec introduced The Ones - Ultimate Point Source monitors with controlled directivity both in the horizontal and vertical planes, making them ideal for spatial audio reference monitoring.

Professionals using headphones for 3D audio face a compromise. Having spent years training themselves to listen critically, using headphones means the 3D information

does not get reproduced accurately. Now, in collaboration with IDA Audio, Genelec will restore the ability to critically monitor 3D audio over headphones, using personal head-related transfer functions (HRTF), acquired by modelling the listener and then delivered through the above-mentioned Cloud service.

“Everyone is unique when it comes to hearing – the ways in which our brains perceive the world around us is shaped by our physical features, determining how we hear,” explains Siamäk Naghian, CEO of Genelec. “No two people share the same HRTF, because the size and shape of each person’s head, ears, and upper torso all affect how that individual experiences the sounds around them. This makes it extremely difficult to monitor 3D audio over headphones, since using headphones means you remove the effects of those physical features - and this adversely affects the sound.

“The answer of course is to 3D scan each individual listener and then map their own unique HRTFs. This enables reproduction of those physical effects when headphones are used. Just as an expertly tailored suit fits you perfectly, so does your own personal HRTF. This means that you can precisely hear in three dimensions through any high-quality headphones that you choose to use.”

In the past, the way to acquire unique HRTF profiles was to fit miniature microphones in your ears. You would have to remain completely still inside an anechoic chamber for an extended period of time to take the necessary measurements. Thanks to dedicated computer modelling, those days are finally over. Using their smartphone’s camera, users will be able to scan themselves, gathering sufficient data for IDA Audio and Genelec to accurately 3D model and then create the unique HRTF filter set for personal rendering of 3D audio. Users will also be able to choose to undertake the scan with a designated third party if preferred. Based on years of comprehensive research, IDA Audio’s modelling algorithms provide precision that matches Genelec’s dedication to the accuracy and acoustic transparency of reproduced sound.

“The audio we listen to should match our experience of the real world,” continues Naghian. “This announcement is about contributing in a very positive way to the daily life of our users. Immersive audio will open up a new dimension within the listening experience. Together with IDA Audio, we are excited to take this radical step forward into the future.”

“For us, cooperating with the world leader in studio monitoring is a fantastic opportunity,” added Antti Vanne, CEO of IDA Audio. “We believe that in-room listening allowing head movements will remain the fundamental method of reference monitoring, but achieving true-to-life spatial reproduction over headphones will enable a much broader audience to enjoy natural and immersive audio experiences. With Genelec, we are breaking new ground and reaching towards untouched horizons in the world of audio.”

The jointly-developed software application will be available to professional users in early 2018 as a download directly from the Genelec website, while visitors to this week's AES Show in New York will be able to get a personal demonstration on the IDA Audio (OwnSurround) Booth #961. Genelec themselves are located on Booth #322.

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About Genelec:

Since 1978, Genelec has dedicated itself to helping customers fulfil their dreams by offering them the most truthful sound reproduction possible. Since then the company has developed the highest quality studio monitors and active loudspeaker systems, becoming recognised as the global leader in the innovation and development of technologies for highly demanding professional audio monitoring. Genelec's ongoing philosophy is not just to be the best but to always seek to become even better. Accordingly, the Genelec R&D team's technical ambition has led to countless innovations and revolutionary designs, setting benchmarks and helping to define the path of our industry. Developing and maintaining a wide product offering has also given Genelec an exceptional opportunity to support various professional audio monitoring applications and ultimately gather tremendous experience. Every Genelec customer benefits from this experience by having precision audio monitoring tools to rely on even in challenging conditions.

Genelec products are designed for demanding professional, premium AV installation and home use. They reveal the original nuances of the sound, without leaving anything out nor adding anything to the signal in any stage of the production. Genelec products are made to last, with pride and care by our own highly committed and experienced production team, based in Finland. Even our very first products are still in active use and we continue our strong commitment to provide service and spare parts for all products for years even after their discontinuation.

www.genelec.com

About IDA Audio:

IDA Audio is a pioneer in head-related transfer function (HRTF) modelling, numerical simulation, psychoacoustics, acoustic modelling and analysis as well as cloud computing. IDA Audio's core team has years of experience in academic research within the area of audio reproduction over headphones. The company offers the world's most advanced HRTF modelling and algorithms to reproduce precise, natural, spatial sound, allowing users to tailor their headphone audio experience to their unique anatomical features. IDA Audio brings the true experience of the environment to every headphone

in the market. Personal immersive 3D sound grants users access to the world of sound in a way never heard before. For audio professionals, IDA Audio's technology enables the use of headphones as a reliable immersive 3D audio monitoring tool anywhere, anytime.

www.idaaudio.com

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