

It's A Matter Of Control

by Amy Small
 Communications Coordinator
 Chicago Scenic Studios, Inc.
 Chicago, IL



CSI Control grew out of the groundbreaking set Chicago Scenic Studios engineered for The Oprah Winfrey show more than two years ago. With multiple ways to reveal guests, bands or special acts, the objective was to allow for the greatest flexibility and striking appearance while keeping Oprah close to her audience. Photo by Anton Goss.

Imagine walking into your next exhibit or presentation knowing that everything is already taken care of; every moment thought out, pre-programmed and ready to go with the push of a button. Turntables, winches, and everything needed for a dynamic show already brought to the site and set up.

No one can deny that this would make their projects worry-free, and that was the idea behind Chicago Scenic Studios' development of CSI Control, its new automation and show control system, which ensures that projects run smoothly because they can be pre-programmed and tested thoroughly to avoid embarrassing miscues at a live event.

"We knew that if we made the upfront investment in this system our customers would greatly benefit. Rather than

cobbling together a system of owned, rented and subcontracted items, we can now offer a powerful 'plug and play' show control system at a great price," said Bob Doepel, Chicago Scenic founder and president. CSI Control is ready a project calls for, it can be quickly reconfigured and reprogrammed to meet any client's needs," said Doepel.

It can handle the most complicated automation demands for a wide variety of potential applications, including trade shows, corporate presentations, auto shows, television, theme park and theatrical productions. While its primary purpose is to run and control mechanical systems from turntables and winches to pneumatic cylinders and hydraulic platforms, it can be easily programmed to interface with audio/visual equipment and lighting. It can han-

dle up to 100 axes of motion and up to 1,000 cues, all of which gives it a real “wow factor.”

Chicago Scenic typically sends an operator to run the system, but because it was designed with customers in mind, CSI Control’s touch screen is intuitive so even the most technically challenged can be successfully trained to use it. When Mark Ewing, project manager, engineered the program at Chicago Scenic, he did not overlook any details. The system prompts the operator for every potential need, and it is prepared to convert its power source to comply with any international requirements. Keeping wiring at a minimum is the ethernet cable that connects the operator control station to the AC inverters or other control components running the various motors, turntables and other mechanical devices. Also built into the system is the capability for the inverters to provide 50% more power in short bursts to better control fast moves or heavier loads. Changing the programming is extremely simple and can be done both on-



The 20’ turntable (which can spin at 3 RPM) can be run manually or by pre-programmed computer-controlled cues. It has an easy set-up and a high load capacity along with a higher rotation speed surpassing most other available turntables, along with a center commutator capable of running both ethernet communications and 30 amps of three-phase power.

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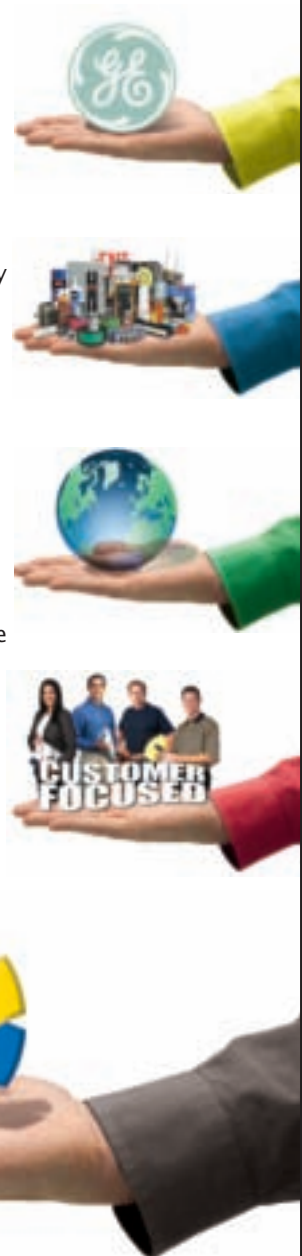
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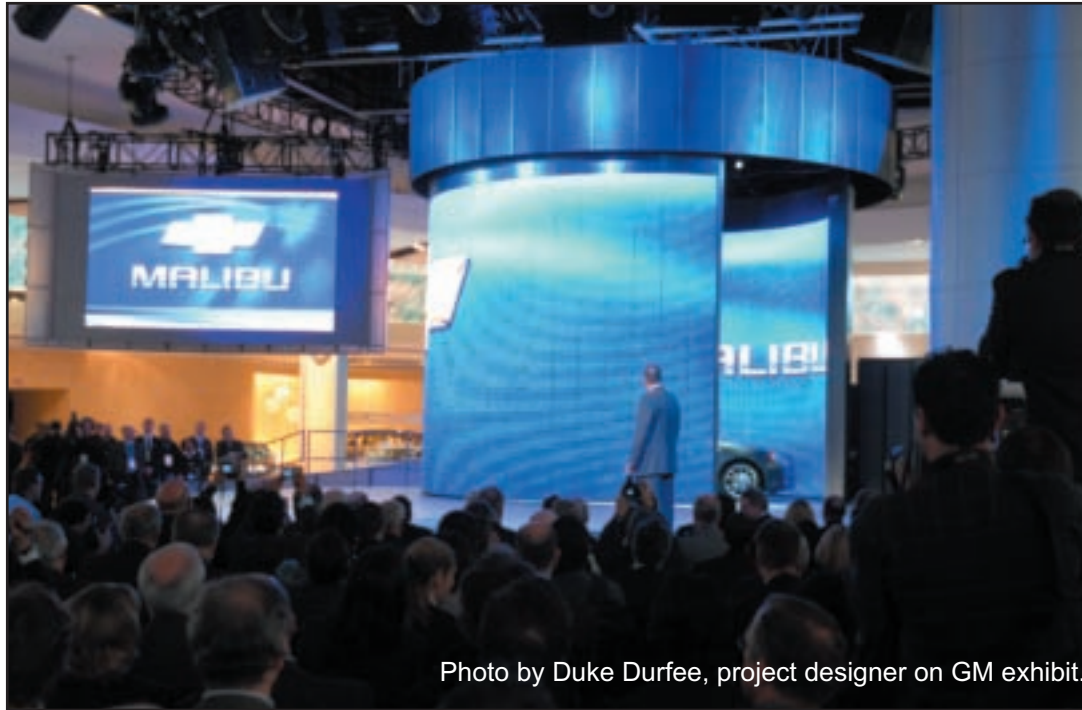


Photo by Duke Durfee, project designer on GM exhibit.

CSI Control made its premier at the 2007 North American International Auto Show in Detroit, where Chicago Scenic worked with Clear!Blue to provide scenery and automation for General Motors' highly anticipated press events. The system was used to fully integrate the video with automated rotating LED-covered walls and a 20' turntable that provided a 360° view of GM's newest cars.

site for short-term projects and, for long-term and permanent installations, CSI Control can be accessed through the Internet to change the system's programming as the client's needs change.

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The system also was in play at the 2007 Chicago Auto Show, where Chicago Scenic, working for George P. Johnson, Auburn Hills, MI, on the Toyota and Scion press events, provided three turntables and two tracking LED walls, all of which were controlled by the CSI Control. CSI also provided a 4,000 square foot deck and ramp for the cars to drive on, support structures for large LED panels and screen and a fabric backdrop that completed the set.

The CSI Control's next trip will be to Detroit this summer

for its appearance at the 2007 Ford Lincoln Mercury National Dealer Forum at Detroit's Ford Field, where it will operate an 18' turntable.

As the three above examples illustrate, turntables are an indispensable part of many presentations, and pairing them with Chicago Scenic's automation system can put a fresh new spin on almost any type of project. One of Chicago Scenic's newest turntables, a 20' diameter model that can spin at 3 RPM, can be run manually or by pre-programmed computer-controlled cues. It has an easy set-up and a high load capacity along with a higher rotation speed surpassing most other available turntables, along with a center commutator capable of running both ethernet communications and 30 amps of three-phase power. The system is made up of 12 wedges that can be removed individually, making it easy to set up and maintain.

Also adding to its unique features is its ability to hold very heavy loads—up to 10,000 pounds in distributed weight or a single 8,000-pound vehicle which makes it perfect for showing off heavy prototype trucks. Chicago Scenic can also provide customers with even more options, including 12', 14', 16', 18', 20' and 30' turntables that have the same ease of assembly, along with low-profile versions of the 12', 16' and 18' turntables.



Chicago Scenic's 20' turntable is made up of 12 wedges that can be removed individually, making it easy to set-up and maintain.

In addition to turntables, Chicago Scenic can provide motors and traveling deck winches and will soon offer cable-pull winches that can dead lift 1,000 pounds at 3' per second with redundant braking for safety purposes.

"This new, rentable system grew out of the groundbreaking set we engineered for The Oprah Winfrey show more than two years ago," said Doepel. With multiple ways to reveal guests, bands or special acts, the objective was to allow for the greatest flexibility and striking appearance while keeping Oprah close to her audience.

A series of mechanized devices allow for numerous stage configurations. In all, the set contains nearly 50 points of motion. Noteworthy items include: a 30' diameter center stage turntable with eight hydraulic lift stages, center close-downs of double-sided light boxes which open like a clamshell to reveal the turntable, or raise into themselves and disappear into the ceiling; three double-sided light boxes that swivel 90 and host 42" plasma monitors providing a creative reveal option; a 16' x 30' LED wall designed in four separate pieces, all of which track both side to side and up and down stage; and Oprah's home base which is designed to allow three positions of differing proximity to the audience.

Even though it is reconfigured and reprogrammed on a daily basis, the system has been running error-free at the Oprah Winfrey Show for two years. "Reliability is key. CSI Control provides a high level of sophistication and reliability to our customers who demand and deserve it," Doepel said. *eb*




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