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Cirrus Research plc
dedicated to noise measurement

Issue06: Spring 2014

the Measure

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Keeping you up-to-date with the world of **noise measurement**

Trojan – keeping the peace in Wakefield

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Welcome

Welcome to the Spring issue of *The Measure*, the newsletter from Cirrus Research.

As always we have had a busy start to the year with a programme packed full of new developments, training opportunities and product updates.

We have a real mix of articles in the issue, as well as a busy calendar looking at the rest of 2014 and beyond highlighting where Cirrus Research's popular training courses are going to be held UK-wide.

Focus on... introduces an interesting case study that looks at our best-selling Trojan Noise Nuisance Recorder, a favourite among Local Authorities and Housing Associations. This case study looks in detail at how Wakefield Council in West Yorkshire uses the Trojan technology and data recording to help prove or disprove allegations of neighbourhood noise nuisance. The length that some people go to, to try and get their neighbours in trouble is pretty remarkable – the Trojan helps to exonerate householders who are being victimised with malicious allegations.

As well as the case study of the Trojan, Cirrus recently launched its updated Trojan 2 and has arranged a series of free training seminars. Have a look at our calendar on the back page to see if there is one you would like to attend.

We also have Noise Action Week coming up in May and we would love to hear if you are doing anything to support this national initiative.

noise ACTION WEEK 19th to 24th May 2014

If you want to get in touch or have a question for the team contact me at james.tingay@cirrusresearch.co.uk or follow us on Twitter @cirrusresearch.

James Tingay, Editor

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Have you heard...?

... you can recover lost data with AuditStore™!

A recent incident where Cirrus Research used its AuditStore™ software to recover data accidentally wiped from a client's Optimus Red device, should be a cautionary tale.

Designed specifically to give total peace of mind, AuditStore™ has been developed to ensure that all your noise measurement data is valid and trustworthy. It allows you to present data with confidence and have the ability to validate any results with 100% certainty – crucial in any legal or dispute proceedings.

But should the unthinkable happen, AuditStore™ also acts as a back-up so any data lost through human or technical error can be retrieved easily and in full.

The software works by taking a selection of the data of each measurement and storing it in a separate, secure memory that is totally independent of the memory card. It includes essential elements such as time, date, duration, the LAeq, Peak(C) and LAFmax, LA10 and LA90 and the overload indicator. In addition to all this, it also stores the last calibration on the device, in full.

We think of it as the ultimate safety net when it comes to keeping your noise data secure, verifiable and accessible.

Expansion in the USA

Cirrus is continuing its North American expansion strategy with the appointment of new distributors for the US and Canada.

Scantek Inc. has been appointed to cover Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin. Specialising in sound and vibration instrumentation sales, service, rental and calibration, Scantek Inc. is a recognised leader in its field and brings a wealth of experience to the Cirrus distribution network.

Geneq Inc. has been appointed to cover the Canadian market. Based in Montreal, Canada and founded in 1972, Geneq Inc. provides a wide range of test and measurement instrumentation for Environment, Health & Safety, Geomatics/Land Surveying, Biotechnology and Materials Testing.

Cirrus Research Marketing Manager James Tingay said: "Both companies have the technical expertise and market knowledge essential to Cirrus' continued success in North America and we are delighted to add both of these companies to our distribution network."

Cirrus Research already has in place 5 other distributors across the US. Other US territories covered on behalf of Cirrus Research are:

- A J Abrams – New York state, Pennsylvania and the North Eastern states
- ISI – Ohio and surrounding regions
- OHD – The South East and Central Southern states
- MEDI – Northern California
- Don Wolf & Associates – Southern California

James added: "North America is an important market for us and one that is currently growing faster than any of our other international markets. With our additional distribution partners we are very confident that the sales momentum will continue to new records in 2014 and beyond."

Did you know...?

Noise can be shocking in call centres!

Acoustic trauma, also known as acoustic shock, usually happens when someone is subjected to an extremely loud noise or noises such as gun shots, explosions or shouting at very close proximity.

It's not a condition that you would usually associate with an office environment but it seems some UK call centres have noise limiters set at 118dB on their headsets as a result of an acoustic risk being identified.

When a conversation or sound hits 118dB or higher, the headset shouldn't transmit the sound to the wearer. However, not all manufacturers or headsets have this feature. So next time you feel like shouting down the phone at a call centre rep or slamming the phone down, you could find yourself being the cause of acoustic shock at the other end of the line!

Ask The Noise Doctor...

Q What is the noisiest children's toy?

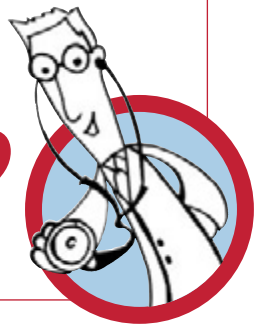
A When parents joke some noisy toys should come with a health warning – they may have a point.

Listening to a child's toy screech, blare or sing for hours on end is enough to set anyone's teeth on edge but while some parents will veto loud toys because they are annoying, the Sight & Hearing Association (SHA) is asking parents to consider another reason: hearing damage.

A noisy toys list has been released by SHA with the top slot being taken by a device designed for baby/toddlers – the Baby Einstein's Take Along Tunes.

Takealong Tunes is a 'baby's version of an MP3 player' that plays seven classical masterpieces. When held directly against the ear, the toy measured 114.8dB and 88.1dB when a child's arm length away. The safe limit is 85dB at 50cms away from the toy.

Other toys on the list include a cat-themed keyboard called 'B. Meowsic' and the lovely titled 'Despicable Me 2 Fart Blaster'. Of 18 toys tested this year by the SHA, seven blasted above 100dB, which can damage hearing in less than 15 minutes.



Follow the Noise Doctor on **Twitter @TheNoiseDoc**

Focus on... *Trojan Noise Nuisance Recorder*

Trojan - keeping the peace in Wakefield

When it comes to keeping the peace, noise nuisance is an issue where a simple dispute can often escalate quickly and without warning.

If left unresolved, prolonged noise nuisance can blight the lives of those living with it, affecting their health and mental wellbeing, so much so that people consider moving house as a result.

Fortunately Local Authorities and Housing Associations have long taken the issue seriously with dedicated teams employing the latest techniques and technology, to ensure a comprehensive investigation and a fair outcome. At Wakefield Metropolitan District Council Jill Edmondson is Team Leader in the Communities Environmental Health Department and has special responsibility for noise nuisance. Her team of officers cover an area that encompasses a city centre, several towns, urban housing, industrial zones and rural settings – each bringing with it their own unique issues when it comes to noise nuisance.

There are also plenty of misunderstandings when it comes to the public perception of what constitutes noise nuisance, rather than just an annoyance. What one person finds unbearable may have little or no effect on someone else.

Technology has a huge part to play

Investigating officers have to tread a fine line on every complaint, weighing up the situation impartially, independently and decisively, taking action as and when they feel it is required. However, with only 7 officers to cover Wakefield's 330sq km district, technology has a huge part to play when it comes to documenting or disproving a noise nuisance complaint. Jill's team currently use five Cirrus Research Trojan Noise Nuisance Recorders as part of their evidence-gathering.

"The recordings are invaluable when an officer has to approach the subject of the complaint and if necessary show them the evidence of noise nuisance," says Jill. "And whilst it is our duty to investigate whether noise nuisance is taking place, the results are not always what we or the complainant expect."

At a recent training seminar hosted by Cirrus Research, delegates were keen to share some of the more unusual cases they had dealt with, where not all was as it seemed. For example, some officers discovered that the complainant had been deliberately antagonising his neighbour's dog to capture the barking on a Trojan to justify his noise complaint.

Another officer dealt with a man who had recorded and was playing background tapes of barking to try and persuade a Council to take action. His colleague had another case where a man had been deliberately setting off car alarms to make his case seem stronger. Since January 2013 Jill's team has booked out the Trojans on 234 separate occasions, usually for 5 days at a time. The same year Wakefield Council dealt with 1400 complaints of loud music, 150 of car or house alarms going off, 110 of noise from pubs or clubs and 120 of dogs barking.

Peace of mind

The Trojan is designed to be mains powered with secure cables, but it will switch to its own internal batteries if the mains power is lost. Another important feature is that, when power is restored, the Trojan will automatically restart even if its internal batteries are spent. This allows continuity and gives officers peace of mind that they are recording everything over a set period of time.

> "The Trojan is particularly invaluable when the noise nuisance is sporadic."

"The vast majority of cases can be dealt with through advice and the complainant speaking to their neighbour," said Jill. "For those who have already tried this approach with no change in behaviour, we will then look to visit both parties and, where appropriate, a device is generally left for up to a week. If proof is recorded then a notice would be served. In extreme cases the officer can seize electrical and sound equipment or the defendants can find themselves in court with further fines, costs and even ASBOs served on them".

The Trojan has recently been upgraded by Cirrus Research with new features to help make the lives easier for Jill's team and others like them across the country.

The new Trojan² offers a high quality, high resolution audio recording using a 16bit/16kHz uncompressed WAV file. This gives plenty of frequency range (up to 8kHz) and a wide dynamic range (up to 96dB) so audio recordings can handle both high and low levels with no loss of quality.

Another key feature is the wireless remote control and 4GB memory – usually more than enough for most noise nuisance applications but it can be expanded with a 32GB option. The AuditStore™ function in the Trojan² also guarantees the chain of data from the instrument to the software, a useful feature if you need to present measurements and recordings as evidence.

Other noise monitoring extras that have been included as standard include Pre & Post Trigger options for audio recording that can be set as needed. The pre-trigger can be up to 30 seconds and post-trigger up to 60 seconds, particularly useful for catching out falsified recordings.

All the software provided is licence-free with NoiseTools supplied as standard, free of charge and without any installation or licensing restrictions. This means customers can install it on as many desktops, laptops or servers as necessary at no extra cost. Updates are also free of charge.

"The Trojan is particularly invaluable when the noise nuisance is sporadic," concludes Jill. "It gives us a very clear picture of what is going on. The equipment users like the remote control and being able to switch on the recorder from most rooms in the house whenever the noise starts. We find our Trojan recorders are in constant use all year round."

Training courses

2014 is going to be a busy year for the Cirrus sales team who are delivering a packed programme of product and CPD training over the coming months.

Additional dates are being put in the diary for the Cirrus Product Training Courses (CPTC) as well as for the more specific Trojan² Noise Nuisance Recorder.

The pilot seminar on the Trojan² was held at the end of 2013 at Wakefield Council offices, attended by environmental health and noise nuisance officers from across West Yorkshire. Cirrus hopes to repeat the successful half day course across the UK, allowing customers to refresh and update their skills, as well as incorporating a first-look at the new Trojan².

Business Development Manager Craig Storey who led the first course said: "The feedback we got from the delegates was very positive, so we are now rolling it out to other parts of the country.

"It's the perfect opportunity to go into more detail on the product and its applications but we also found it was a great way for officers from different authorities and housing associations to share experiences and anecdotes. We know that our customers are so busy these days that networking opportunities are seen as a luxury – the Trojan training course allows them to update their training, gain CPD points, as well as meet with neighbouring local authority counterparts all at the same time."

Visit **www.cirrusresearch.co.uk** for details on the next course or call **01723 891655.**

Cirrus Product Training Courses

Thursday 6 March 2014
Oulton Park Circuit, Cheshire

Thursday 13 March 2014
Brands Hatch Circuit, Kent

Thursday 20 March 2014
Castle Combe Circuit, Wiltshire

Tuesday 25 March 2014
The East Midlands Conference Centre

Thursday 12 June 2014
Oulton Park Circuit, Cheshire

Wednesday 25 June 2014
Brands Hatch Circuit, Kent

Thursday 3 July 2014
Castle Combe Circuit, Wiltshire

Tuesday 8 July 2014
The East Midlands Conference Centre

The results are closer to home in noise survey

What makes people feel unhappy in their home? A recent survey threw up some interesting results.

Whilst most would think perhaps a lack of space, poor heating or no garden would top a misery monitor, the main issue flagged up was... noisy neighbours.

It seems having inconsiderate neighbours nearby can push people over the edge – loud music, barking dogs and slamming doors all being cited as major irritants.

A study conducted by the London School of Economics and HACT organisation looked at what changes in your home would make you happiest. Most people would say more space – yet people dramatically overestimate the effect more rooms in their homes would have on their overall contentment.

The organisations studied the impact common housing problems have on residents' overall happiness and found the top seven conditions that most affect it were:

Annoying Issue	Cost for Compensation
Noise	£1068
Damp	£1068
Poor lighting	£1044
No garden	£783
Condensation	£645
Rot	£598
Vandalism	£436

The figures essentially represent the money you would need to give people each year to compensate them for living with any of these annoying issues.

"This is a very interesting survey even if does use an unusual way to measure the 'unhappiness' levels of the participants." said James Tingay from Cirrus Research. "Our experience and that of our clients who use noise nuisance recorders does show firm evidence of the misery that persistent noise can cause, so it is encouraging that more data is now becoming available to back that up."

Trojan Training Courses

Thursday 13 February 2014
Swindon Borough Council Offices, Swindon

Thursday 13 March 2014
Newham Council Offices, Newham

More dates planned for 2014, contact us for more information on 01723 891655

Events in 2014-15

June 2-4, 2014
AIHce 2014, San Antonio, Texas

June 8-11, 2014
ASSE 2014, Orlando, Florida

June 17-19, 2014
Safety & Health Expo 2014, ExCel, London

September 15-17, 2014
NSC 2014, San Diego, California

November 16-19, 2014
Internoise 2014, Melbourne, Australia

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Cirrus Research plc dedicated to noise measurement

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