



Avid Everywhere for Live Sound
by Robert Scovill

What does the future hold for the live events industry? When Avid® introduced Avid Everywhere™—a strategic vision for helping content creators and media organizations connect with consumers in more powerful, efficient, collaborative, and profitable ways—it represented a shift in how media could be created, managed, delivered, tracked, and consumed across the industry. These same principles apply to live performances too.

If you haven't heard about this groundbreaking vision, I strongly encourage you to read the *Avid Everywhere—A Vision for the Future of the Media Industry* white paper before making your way through this one, which drills down a bit further to contextualize what the Avid Everywhere vision can bring to the live events industry—specifically for live sound. But first things first...

Live sound professionals are content creators

Yes, that's right—today's modern live sound professionals, artists, and administrators now rely on content creation more than ever for many aspects of their day-to-day lives. This includes reviewing daily recordings for rehearsal, performing post-mixing and mastering processes, and distributing, selling, and finally archiving performances for future release. Concert tours, houses of worship, broadcast organizations, and corporate AV participants—including the fans and event participants—all have a stake in the game moving forward. If you're now asking yourself, *How so?*, then please read on.

The inaugural Avid Everywhere white paper touches on three major tenets of the evolving world we live in with regard to media creation, management, and distribution. These tenets are:

- Accelerated digitization of the media value chain
- Consumerization of content creation and distribution
- The relentless pressure for operational efficiency

For professionals and fans who live and breathe the live event experience, the demands and expectations they have today are expanding at an explosive rate. Any technology provider, artist, engineer, or organization that reasonably expects to sustain success and visibility with their clients, customers, and fans will rely immensely on their ability to manage—and in the end conquer—these tenets moving forward.

Haven't read the "Avid Everywhere" white paper? Find it at avid.com/avideverywhere.

Avid is leading the way in solving these industry challenges with the introduction of the Avid MediaCentral™ Platform—an open, extensible, and customizable foundation that streamlines and simplifies workflows by tightly integrating all products and services that run on top of it, bringing the Avid Everywhere vision to life. The platform provides the utmost security and protection, enabling you to create and deliver content in smarter, faster, and easier ways—with the Avid and third-party solutions you choose to use.

For live sound, the key challenge I want to focus on is #3—the relentless pressure for operational efficiency. This tenet is the first that needs to be addressed in the live event world; firstly, because live events are challenged to be as efficient as possible, and secondly because the two previous tenets are direct functions of this efficiency. So, unless a live sound event can meaningfully and efficiently create digitized assets, there will be no content to distribute and monetize, let alone collaborate on, resulting in a highly compromised and challenged value chain in the end.

Avid's unrivaled influence on the live sound market

In 2004 Avid introduced the VENUE live sound environment to the live sound market and immediately made its presence known by reshaping the definition and expectation of how live sound technology could empower the live sound professional. Groundbreaking workflows, such as Virtual Soundcheck, leveraged the power of Pro Tools® DAWs married to VENUE live mixing consoles and changed forever the face of live sound. Other innovations, such as VENUE Link (in which metadata is passed between the live mixing console and DAW), offer the first glimpse of how streamlined and efficient this workflow can be. These new workflows provide not only the means for live sound professionals to refine their live concert sound to a level previously unrealized, but also make it possible for artists to easily and economically capture, remix, and archive multitrack and two-track audio for every show on a long concert tour.

The impact these workflows have on the live sound market cannot be understated. The demand for the technology needed for Virtual Soundcheck workflows gives equipment providers new and incremental income streams that, before VENUE, simply did not exist as part of a touring package. Including this equipment as part of the rider (technical specifications document) is now commonplace and represents high margin income for equipment providers at a time when traditional live sound technology rental prices (speakers, consoles, and so on) are increasingly value challenged.



In the live event world, the “relentless pressure for operational efficiency” is the biggest challenge that needs to be addressed.

For engineers, these new workflows provide additional paths to higher income by elevating their professional profile and expanding their skillset to encompass not only live sound mixing, but also live capture, archiving, and remixing for distribution.



For artists, it opens up incredible opportunities for satisfying their fans' inexhaustible appetite for content. This in turn leads to better engagement with those fans, which then leads directly to additional revenue opportunities for the artist. All of these are wins for everyone involved.

For organizations like houses of worship (HOW) that rely heavily on training and orientation for volunteer staff members (both musical and technical), the ability to deploy the Virtual Soundcheck model to evaluate and train prospective talent offline provides sufficient value to make the investment in technology appealing. In addition, because the HOW market also has a voracious need to create and provide fresh content weekly for members and prospective members, as well as provide access to archived content, these new capture, archive, remix, and delivery workflows are highly coveted and a welcome relief to the previous operational stresses associated with them.

How Avid is perfectly positioned

When Avid boldly reset the expectations of the live sound market with the introduction of VENUE and conquered many challenges along the way, as with any technology or workflow shift, new challenges arose that were previously not visible. For live sound professionals and their clients, the primary challenges are time management and the efficiency required to capture, review, and finalize the assets. For artists, it's about having timely access to review and approve content, followed by effective fan engagement. For fans, it's all about gaining access to the artist through these assets and creating a shared experience with their tribe.

Simply put, for the monetization portion of the model to work, workflows need to be extremely efficient in order to maintain a high margin, from the actual live performance to the final end product.

Today's challenges can be met and conquered

Let me take you on a little tour of some of the key workflows in two of today's live event market segments to help provide you with some insight into the unique challenges live sound professionals address on a daily basis. This is just a sampling, but you will start to see the uniqueness of the live event space. That said, in the end these workflows can lean heavily on established and emerging media management paradigms used in broadcast and film, with regard to shared media assets for collaboration and distribution.

Concerts

- **FOH Mixer/Engineer**—Today's concert sound mixers are tasked with recording dry (no audience) stereo mixes for the purpose of reviewing how their own work gets generated from their live sound console. These mixes are usually printed to CD or WAV/MP3 and then imported into an app (like iTunes) on a laptop, which requires tedious labeling of songs and master folders. Over the course of a tour, this can result in hundreds of recordings that require a high level of manual data entry and file management (in my experience, a typical tour performs an average of 150 shows). These files are space-intensive and require tremendous forethought with regard to organization for easy sorting and searching in the future. The process, while “modern,” is also extremely time-consuming—especially when measured against the available time to do so. For the touring engineer, this process usually takes place the next day, though it would be better served to do it all immediately after the show, when personnel are awaiting (and often expecting) the assets.
- **Artists/Producers**—The artists and producers who employ the FOH mixer regularly desire to review a previous night's performance—especially if it is being considered for any type of release. The FOH mixer must then provide a “sweetened” remix that includes audience and ambience microphones blended with the stereo mix. These files require all of the same labeling

- Every day in the US, 750 recordable events take place in venues ranging from night clubs to sports stadiums and everything in between¹
- Every week in the US, approximately 250,000 contemporary church services take place that potentially leverage the recording, archiving, and distribution of their events²
- Over 60 million music tour tickets are sold worldwide each year³

and organizational demands, creating—at minimum—double the amount of utility work for the FOH mixer. This often results in multiple copies of unsecured files being handled in a way that can easily be accessed by people outside the group of desired listeners. In addition, these mixes are regularly used as references for the multitrack recordings also captured from the shows. These multitracks require even more refinement with regard to the cataloging and security of the files. As it sits today, all file-specific information and ranking data (metadata) exist outside of the file itself, requiring intensive and accurate administrative work by personnel who simply do not have enough hours in the day to do so.

- **Lighting and Video Operators/Designers, Technicians, and Musicians**—These contributors and creators often require access to the aforementioned “desk mixes”—both during the rehearsal and post-concert phases of the process—in order to rehearse, build, and refine their elements of the show against actual (prerecorded) performances. The FOH mixer is required to provide multiple copies of this audio on a daily basis, usually at a time when the FOH mixer has the least amount of time and facility to do so. More often than not, this means the task is left until the following day, which is an unacceptable turnaround time for a high-level production demanding immediate access to content.

House of Worship events

- **Production Personnel**—On the day of an event, typically Sunday, these staff members and/or volunteers are tasked with providing edited and mastered audio content for immediate distribution of spoken word sermons and music productions to the congregation. They are also tasked with providing audio feeds and/or recorded audio for video layback for on-demand video streaming services directly from a website to the congregation. These personnel are also tasked with recording rehearsals and services for distribution to musicians and video production staff for off-hours rehearsals and preparation.





- **Musicians**—These performers, many of whom are semi-pros and volunteer their services, are often sent a list of songs being considered for the upcoming week's service. More often than not, the publicly released version of the song is used as a guide. The performers are then tasked with learning the songs and practicing them on their own time until a rehearsal day is chosen and announced. Depending on the singers and players available, there is no guarantee that the key signature, tempo, or even the basic arrangement of song to be performed at the upcoming rehearsal will be the same as the original. For the time-challenged volunteer or semi-pro musician, it makes for tenuous preparation at best. For worship team leaders, this requires that all material be well organized and can be distributed to awaiting team members by a method and in a format that the team can all use.
- **Administrators**—These personnel are often tasked with handling the archival duties for all recordings—both audio and video—to satisfy requests from congregation members seeking them. All metadata for these types of recordings are managed in analog form or by manual entry into a large database. Oftentimes, the data is not kept in a consistent manner, or in some cases it's not kept at all, which, coupled with regular staff turnover, can make the archiving job even more difficult.

So, here's your takeaway—time is today's most valuable currency, and time management is everything to the world of live events.

Today, Avid's long history in the media technology space stands to culminate in a perfect marriage of the most revolutionary and cutting-edge live sound technology with PAM (production asset management) and MAM (media asset management) models. In turn, live sound content creators and distributors around the world will be empowered and liberated with the introduction of Avid's upcoming private and public marketplaces. Avid stands ready to fully and—most importantly—efficiently connect live event professionals, artists, and fans together and provide the means to manage every step of this process in the most modern and meaningful way imaginable.

The cloud is the solution

If you take into account just the sampling of challenges presented so

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far, it's readily apparent that the modern live sound market is perfectly suited to be served by a cloud-based set of solutions connecting all of the disparate and geographically disconnected professionals who need access to content at differing times of a 24-hour a day cycle. There's a need for swift, secure, and efficient review, for collaboration and finalization, and for ranking and archiving assets—complete with auto-generated metadata. Once these solutions are available, the task shifts to seamless engagement and distribution of final assets to an anxious and awaiting fan base (complete with meaningful engagement metrics and analytics). A fan base that is no less disparate and no less geographically disconnected, desiring availability 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

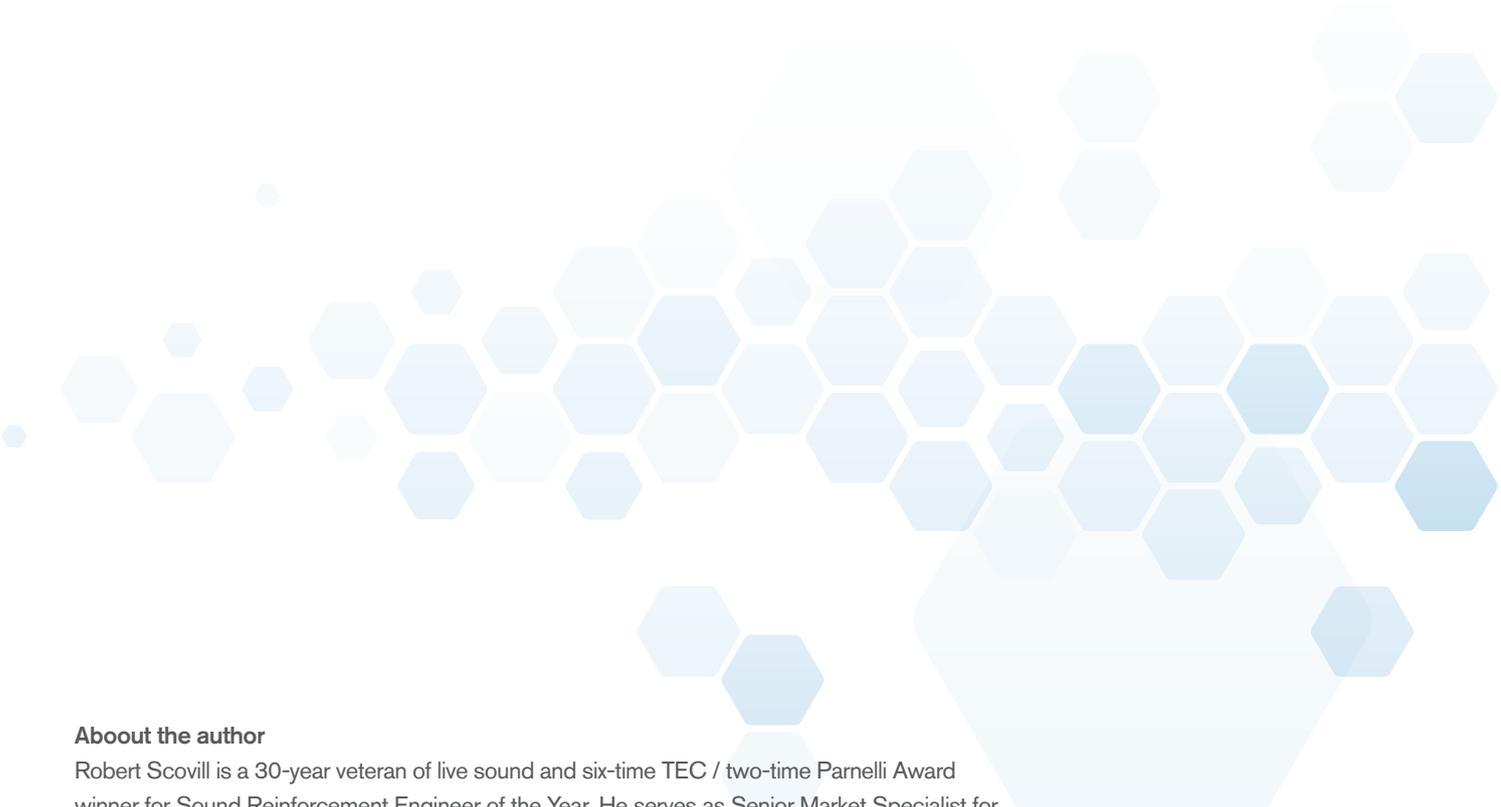
By contrast, in today's live media asset world, professionals use countless disparate combinations of online and portable storage that require time-consuming upload and download processes, expensive expedited shipping services for archived assets, and as many different distribution methods as one could ever imagine. In the end, it all provides a sense of chaos for those managing the assets, as well as those who wish to experience the finished assets.

The live events world is in desperate need of a unified, cloud-connected, centralized service, providing efficient management of a massively increasing quantity of content. Avid is perfectly poised and motivated to provide that solution and it will be with Avid professionals, using Avid technology, leveraging the Avid private and public marketplaces. So what are you waiting for? Get on the platform!

The numbers are enticing ...

- Live Nation, one of the premier concert promoters in the world, promoted nearly 25,000 events in 2014 in the US alone¹. As to the number of actual shows taking place across all tiers of the market in the US (e.g., clubs, theaters, arenas, and stadiums), a conservative estimate of 10x is certainly not unthinkable. That equates to **750 shows every day or approximately 275,000 shows a year in the US.**
- It is estimated that in the US, there are nearly **325,000 houses of worship**, of which approximately **250,000** are listed as protestant. The vast majority of these churches have chosen the **"contemporary" worship format, which leverages a marriage of live music and media technology**². This format of worship experience is being adopted around the world. For example, Asia currently ranks Christianity as the largest growing religious segment in APAC³.

1. "Number of events promoted by Live Nation from 2008 to 2014," Statista.
2. "Fast Facts about American Religion," Hartford Institute for Religion Research.
3. "Number of music tour tickets sold from 2011 to 2014 worldwide," Statista.



About the author

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About Avid

Through Avid Everywhere, Avid delivers the industry's most open, innovative and comprehensive media platform connecting content creation with collaboration, asset protection, distribution and consumption for the most listened to, most watched and most loved media in the world—from the most prestigious and award-winning feature films, music recordings, and television shows, to live concerts and news broadcasts. Industry leading solutions include Pro Tools®, Media Composer®, ISIS®, Interplay®, and Sibelius®. For more information about Avid solutions and services, visit www.avid.com, connect with Avid on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [LinkedIn](#), or subscribe to [Avid Blogs](#).

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