

New studios for Radio 1

UK - National pop music service BBC Radio 1FM has moved from its old headquarters at Egton House, behind Broadcasting House in central London. The station's new home (Yalding House, 100 yards up the road from Egton) is based around self-op studios as part of the BBC's ongoing programme of cost savings.

Yalding House was formerly the sheet music store for classical service Radio 3 but now the basement houses the four on-air studios, which are linked by a spiral staircase to the production offices on the ground floor, while commissioning and schedule management occupies the level above.

Keith Hart, the project manager who oversaw the installation and move, comments, "It's better organised and enables all the production people to be in two large open spaces, which were seen as more appropriate for R1."

Relocation also gave R1 the chance to bring in new equipment, although an existing studio, Egton 3, was in the process of being moved into Yalding as *PSNE* went to press as its gear is only 18 months to two years old.

The basement studio complex is built around a small central performance space, with the two new on-air studios to the left and to the right the reworked Egton 3 and a fourth area, which will be used for live sub-mixing or as a production cubicle on more involved programmes.

To achieve compatibility between the three on-air studios, each features an Eela console, Egton 3 houses a 340, while the two brand new cubicles are fitted with 440s. The 440s have been split to



All the studios at Egton House are based around Eela consoles and SADiEs

accommodate VDUs in the middle, with in the region of 10 channels on either side. "This has been done because there is the possibility of computer assist in the future," explains Hart.

One of these screens displays information from the BBC's IT system, including schedules and news, while the other is part of a computer network and can give access to the World Wide Web, which is becoming an increasingly important way for listeners to communicate with radio stations.

To one side of the desks is a third screen that is linked to a SADiE, with each studio having its own hard disk editor. The system boxes for the SADiEs and other computers are housed in a separate IT room to isolate fan and motor noise.

Disc-based technology is widely used at the new studio complex, with Mini-Disc players built into the meterbridge of the Eelas. Each main on-air studio is fitted with six Denon MD machines: two DN990R record units and four DN980F playbacks. In addition there are three DN961EA CD players for each cubicle, all of which are fader controlled. There are also DAT recorders

and EMT turntables (as many of the specialist music shows still use vinyl) and a couple of 'wheels of steel' and a DJ club mixer for dance music shows.

An important but unseen part of the installation is the connection back to Broadcasting House. As there is no direct cable route from Yalding to BH, a mixture of copper circuits and megastream links using codecs has been constructed. To reduce the number of full-time engineers on site, the DJs

switch between their own studios locally, meaning there is only one output to send.

The installation, which was given final go-ahead last December, was overseen by BBC Project Management Services and engineered by the Oxford Sound Company.

KEVIN HILTON

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AUDIO SYSTEMS
DESIGN AND
INSTALLATION