

The New Pro Audio Toolshop

Wouldn't these gizmos be great? Well...

By Harry Gahandini

Before heading to the desert for the winter (Florida is out – too many hurricanes), it's time for my annual list of Sound Reinforcement Products I'd Like To See.

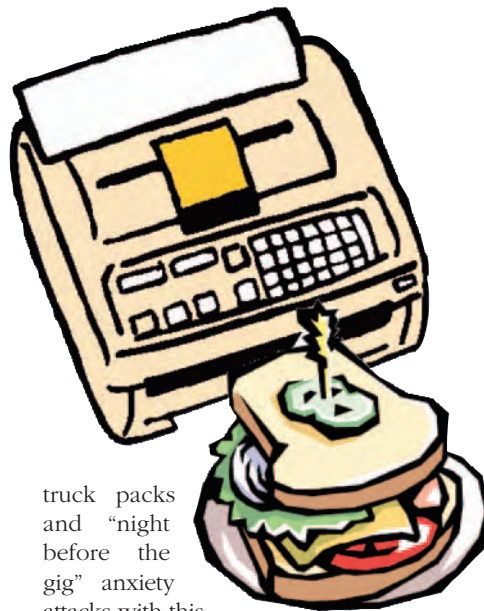
Guitar pick DI. Perfect for acoustic guitarists and bass players who use a pick, it eliminates the need for a microphone while also supplying that "direct" sound, and with plenty of natural string overtones that all sound people love. Comes with custom "ground lift" switch so when dropped, it doesn't stick to the beer-covered floor.

Gaff tape dispenser. This tabletop unit looks like a double extra-large version of the clear tape dispensers commonly found on most desks. Razor cutter facilitates precision right-angle ends instead of raggedy "thread hangers" with teeth marks. Also has postage-style meter to calculate cost of "borrowing a little tape" when used by other departments.

Faxable sandwich. The production manager faxes the crew's lunch orders to the sub shop. Why can't the sandwich "magicians" simply fax the food back?

Ultra high-frequency subwoofers. We have subwoofers to provide lows for dancers and ultra-subwoofers to crank out even more lows for the DJs and snails. So how about ultra-high subs to meet the needs of older folks and insects?

Biofeedback eliminator. Break the loop of recurring bad dreams about



truck packs and "night before the gig" anxiety attacks with this handy device. "Did I forget the flash RAM card of the mix, did I pack enough 9-volt batteries, will that cracked 17-pin connector on the PSU cable decide to disintegrate?" Relief is just a rack mount away.

Contractor GPS. You know the stage/roof contractor is asleep under a truck or inside a dimmer rack, but which one? CGPS tells you his exact location so you can get the lid raised before one of the band members puts a par can through his skull or her implants.

Date-sensitive riders. Special paper (a la *Mission Impossible*), to be used for printing tour riders, which self-destructs after three months. Avoids office personnel sending out "the old rider" when the band "re-unites."

Touch screen blocker tape. Stop the madness with another type of tape, this kind to be deployed the next time

one of those annoying messages shows up on the screen of your \$200,000 digital console, blinking over and over, "voltage swing does not match word clock data-DSP RAM reaching critical mass-please add dilithium crystals to continue show before imminent shut down..." Should be designed to be used with gaff tape dispenser to meet ever-popular multitasking requirements.

iPod rack mount. Turns the ubiquitous consumer-priced iPod into a piece of "pro gear" by making it big, cumbersome and expensive. Also should include IEC power cable, dual transformer-balanced XLR outputs, phase reverse and "pro EQ" button – basically a "frown face" to undo built in "loudness contour." Must accommodate touchscreen blocker tape.

"Queer eye" for the sound guy. Advice on decorating and style tips for the fashion-impaired audio pro: "Wood is hot, road cases are not. And do yourself a favor, put an Eames lounge or the new Lazy Boy by Todd Oldham behind your mixing desk. While you're at it, lose the polo shirt – a ripped-sleeve black T with a funky band name on it makes a true style statement. Ramones or Plasmatics says you're punk but know how to party. And say no to Barry Manilow."

Hey, get off Manilow – what do these "eye guys" really know anyway? ■

Harry Gahandini thanks Ben Blumberg and Rob Leseau for their critical input on the R & D side of this quest. Just in time, Harry's departed for a well-deserved break, although it doesn't seem like he needs any more sun.