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NewTek Introduces Next Generation TriCaster Mini

Among the many notable abilities of the TriCaster Mini, is its capability of working with up to 4K UHD content, including running eight UHD streams concurrently.

Andres Caamano | Nov 07, 2019



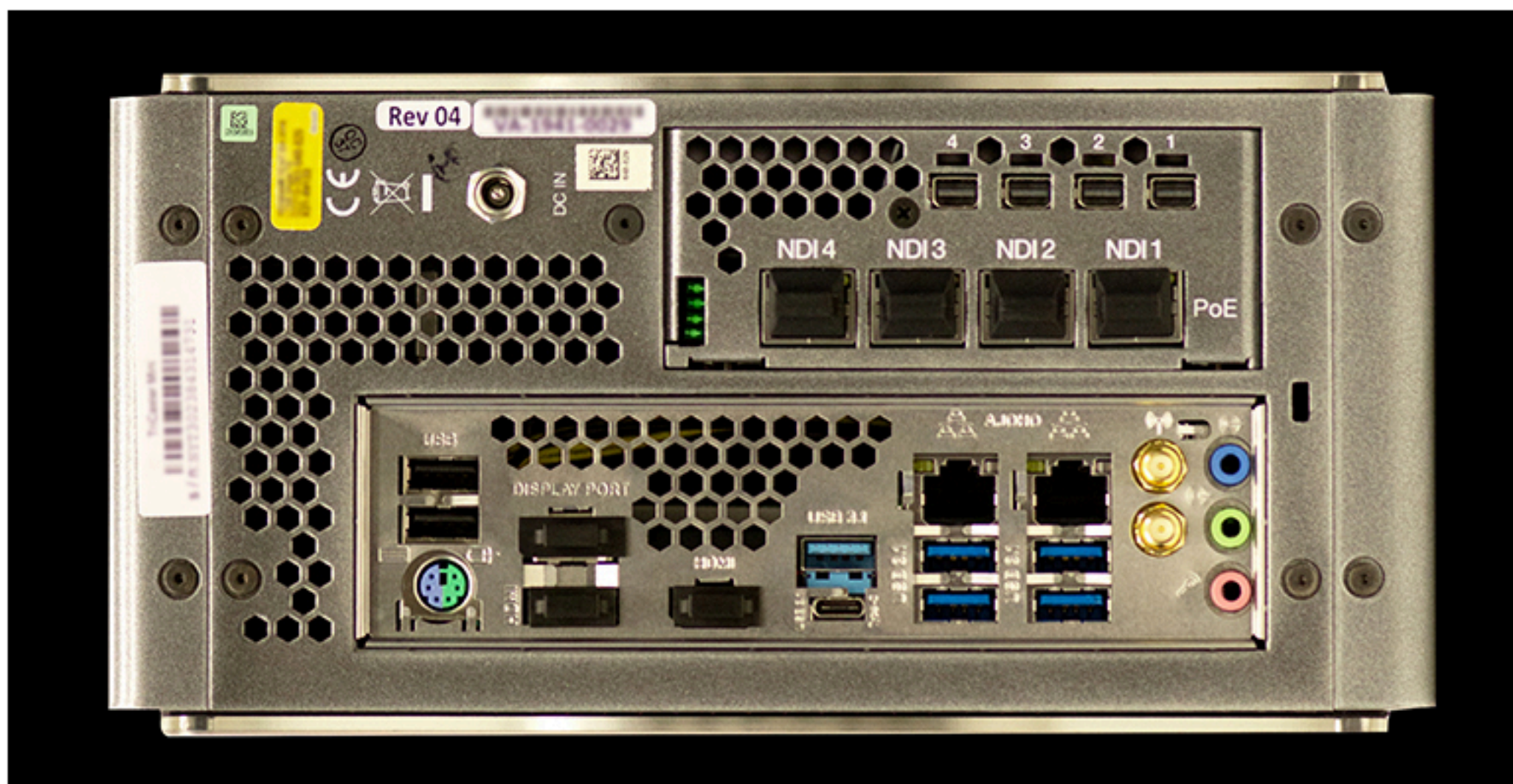
As the desire to work with 4K is becoming more common within houses of worship, finding the right tool to produce that content, paired with an ease of portability, might at first glance seem to be a tough challenge. With its announcement Thursday, **NewTek** can now add its newest entrant to their TriCaster line - which dates back to 2005 - as a 4K option for users. The newly announced **TriCaster Mini** is an ideally compact video production system, with resolution capability up to 4K UHD.

The TriCaster Mini, at just 8.4 pounds, makes it very easy for churches to use, particularly if used in various youth ministry areas.

As NewTek product marketing manager Matt Allard explained, “This is AV-over-IP device, an NDI device. The options for running cables can be pretty limited at houses of worship, and this allows one to tap into standard IP networks, or one can combine with Wi-Fi networks as well.”

The TriCaster Mini offers eight external video inputs, with four being plug-and-play NDI connections, with power-over-Ethernet, or PoE, providing a significant ease of control, just by plugging in an Ethernet cable.

In addition to providing the four NDI connections on its back panel, an additional two adapter modules are included with the unit to allow one to instantly convert two HDMI sources into NDI-compatible sources. Altogether, the TriCaster Mini package comes in at a base price of \$8,995. Shipping will begin for the TriCaster Mini in a couple of weeks.



The back panel of the NewTek TriCaster Mini.

With so many formats available, and years of familiarity with HDMI connections, Allard explained the benefits of moving toward NDI. “For example, you can put the (NDI input device) next to an HDMI camera,” running a short HDMI cable between the camera and the input device, while having “a long run of CAT5 cable, or standard ethernet cable,” into your network, avoiding long runs of HDMI cables, which are problematic. “With 1 gigabit of ethernet connectivity for output, it will support up to eight sources at the same time,” added Allard. With the TriCaster Mini’s ability to work with UHD, or 2160p, it also supports all framerate permutations.

To help store video content at one’s fingertips, the TriCaster Mini comes with a 1TB SSD internal drive. If that amount of storage is just touches the surface of your needs, the unit also has five USB 3.1 connections to the back of the unit, allowing one to tap into additional storage as well. One of the benefits of going with SSD, compared to spinning HDD drives, is the ability to handle up to eight streams of UHD concurrently, something that the previous iterations of Minis “would not have had enough processing power to do,” noted Allard.

Beyond just being able to connect to additional hard drives, the TriCaster Mini can connect to three displays, which can be MultiViewer displays.

Most importantly, as the “Mini” name implies, comes a product that is both small and lightweight, coming in at just 8.4 pounds, making it very easy for churches to use, particularly if used in various youth ministry areas to regularly be moved around, and when just having minutes to get set up.

Over the years, NDI has grown from simply being a streaming format, where data was sent “from point A to B to A,” explained Allard, to now with the newest version of NDI, 4.0, now has “a file wrapper on NDI, where you can record that clip, and play that clip back (later), where I can set up the TC Mini to do a replay.”

With what the TC Mini now offers, it allows one to record a one-hour event directly to the internal 1TB drive, temporarily store it there, where one can now “have a complete, archived recording that I can access later,” added Allard.

Once the NDI session is recorded, it can also be brought into an Adobe Premiere timeline, and from there, edited or cut up to the film editor’s needs. One can also edit multiple camera feeds together, with the sessions all being time stamped, keeping the feeds synchronized.

With the TriCaster Mini, its abilities are expansive on the hardware side, and made even more robust with various software tools, such as Digital Media I/O. With this software, it allows among other things, to set up a system for streaming within a square or vertical rectangle, as the viewing area for a smartphone. In all, the software included with the TriCaster Mini adds about a dozen features to its capabilities, provided at no cost for the first six months after purchase, and then at a \$199 monthly subscription rate for premium access thereafter.

Added flexibility also comes with LivePanel, which can be on a tablet or PC, “to have full control of the system remotely,” said Allard. “Imagine giving your pastor or priest, to do their own show themselves, add an element, or also add a whole set of production commands by himself.” Having the ability to bring up a graphic, based off a command, and not needing a volunteer to do it at that moment, are one of many commands that can be built in, using LivePanel, ahead of time.

Another software tool that works with the TriCaster Mini is its free mobile app, currently available on iOS, where one can connect to a tablet, and create video content. The NDI@HX app allows one to capture a live POV of a “celebration or service, and it’s done actually through the Wi-Fi, streaming into the TC Mini,” noted Allard.

For churches that might be looking at adding the TriCaster Mini, but are starting from the ground up, NewTek recognizes this, by including a quick start up guide right in the box. Don’t know where to connect the cables? Got that. What software to download? Got that. The guide even has a URL to direct a user to videos that one can view on how to “create your first session, how two mix, to get that person who doesn’t know how to stream, to get them going,” explained Allard.