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LED Walls or Projection for Churches: Growth in Technology Makes Decisions Tougher

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With there being no room behind the wall to do projection, LED achieved the goals for this application. Photo courtesy of Josh Holowicki. As 2020 has turned into 2021, many recently arisen challenges are continuing to confront churches.

Among the challenges thrust to the forefront are those associated with recognizing the increasing value of broadcasting and streaming worship services. Even with churches having been largely open in recent months, most have been so on a limited

capacity basis. For some churches, the video solutions typically under consideration range between investing in an LED video wall or projection.

Not too long ago, LED walls were often deemed too cost prohibitive for many houses of worship. When making such an "either-or" decision then, LED walls often lost out, once cost was factored into the equation.

These days, though, much has changed. "For the most part, LED has taken shape," said Josh Holowicki, founder of E2i Design in Brighton, Michigan. "It now serves as a strong contender from a cost perspective. A few years ago, unless you were willing to

Flexibility: A Major Factor for Churches

A shift has come about as churches seek to benefit from "a flexibility standpoint for an onstage display," Holowicki noted. Flexibility

#### is key when working with customized imagery, videos and worship lyrics or scripture, as houses of worship look to increase their visual tool investments.

spend big money, projection was the way to go."

backdrop to the pastor and worship team."

can."

"With social distancing and people being online as church attendees, it has required a significant increase in the media quality," said Stefan Svard, founder and president of Audio Video Electronics, based in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota. Upgrades for many churches have included investing in camera systems. Upon taking that step, churches have often "looked to LED walls as a

As LED walls have made significant strides in recent years, Holowicki argued the room for huge technological improvement has narrowed.

"When LED panels first came out, they were low-resolution, like 20-millimeter (pixel pitch), and at a high cost," said Holowicki. "Over time, the pixel pitch got tighter and tighter. In my opinion, we've largely gotten to the bottom, as tight (a pixel pitch) as they

Amid the improvement in technology, Holowicki noted the greater need for flexibility points to LED walls as the better option.

"With COVID, people have flipped from a live experience, to a capture-heavy one. As a result, (the church is) configuring the stage

regularly," said Holowicki. "They are looking to have a more dynamic experience, versus if they are just live."

### again, flexibility is important."

producing content, before one looks to do something different."

tremendous component to their ministry, and have a broadcast-quality LED wall."

Being Ready For the Future

As a return to some degree of "normal" is envisioned down the line, Holowicki added, "Once they are engaging in live experiences

Improving the Experience

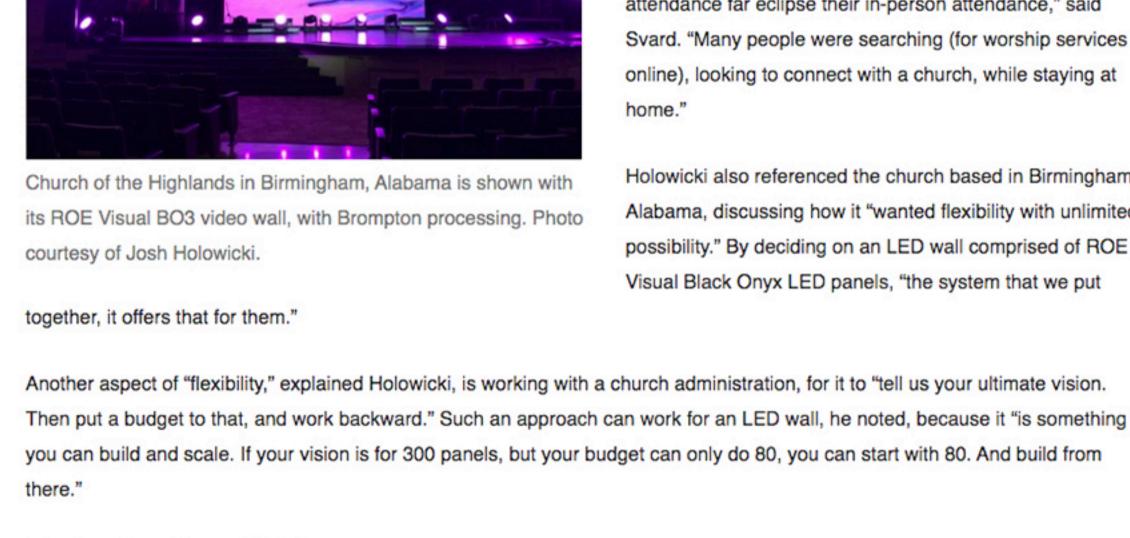
See related Liberty Square Church Picks Digital Projection Radiance for Youth Worship Room Redesign

Flexibility also makes sense when thinking long-term. Or as Holowicki described, "There's only so long, when continually

The demands to improve a church's streaming or broadcasting experience go beyond providing content to a congregation watching from home, noted Svard.

"What quality standard are people expecting?" said Svard. "At the Church of the Highlands, (prior to COVID) they had a

society that has become accustomed to a very high production level of video and audio. It's not a secret for churches which have that (are benefiting)."



Svard. "Many people were searching (for worship services online), looking to connect with a church, while staying at home." Holowicki also referenced the church based in Birmingham, Alabama, discussing how it "wanted flexibility with unlimited

possibility." By deciding on an LED wall comprised of ROE

Visual Black Onyx LED panels, "the system that we put

In recent months, the church has seen "their broadcast

attendance far eclipse their in-person attendance," said

Recognizing that a number of churches entered the

pandemic without streaming, Svard explained, "We live in a

## disappear. Where they want it to roll up and go away."

Issues

Projection Possibilities

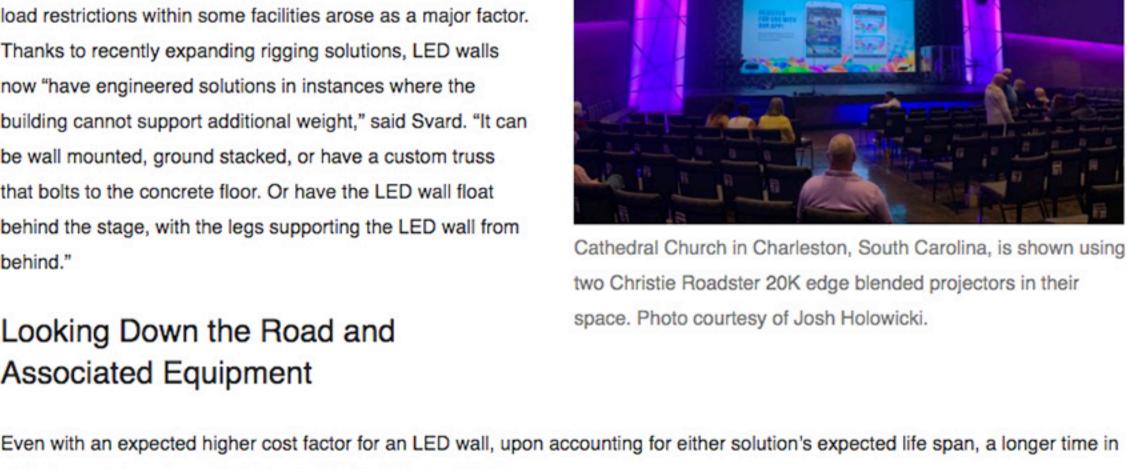
And for churches that simply don't have the budget to invest in an LED wall, Svard suggested a church "then buy a 3-chip laser projector. One that has the appropriate brightness for your screen size." Increasing Options Reduce Rigging

How projection can offer a level of flexibility for a house of worship, explained Svard, would be "where you need a screen to

load restrictions within some facilities arose as a major factor. Thanks to recently expanding rigging solutions, LED walls now "have engineered solutions in instances where the building cannot support additional weight," said Svard. "It can be wall mounted, ground stacked, or have a custom truss that bolts to the concrete floor. Or have the LED wall float behind the stage, with the legs supporting the LED wall from behind." Looking Down the Road and

Projection was often the choice over an LED wall not too long

ago, for reasons beyond cost. Concerns over rigging and



# Associated Equipment

attaining an extensive value from an LED wall is most likely. "With a broadcast LED wall, you will have a 10-year-plus life span," noted Svard. "A typical projector life span runs five to seven

years, but a projector's image quality will significantly degrade as they age." Beyond just deciding on an LED wall or projection for the space, the associated gear should play a large part in the final decision.

"Other things to consider include what are the video capturing devices? Or where are they delivering content to?," asked Holowicki. "It's a bigger picture than, 'Do I have a video wall?' They should all have a value when making a decision on either an

LED wall or projection solution."

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