

guidePORT brings biblical stories to life

Wedemark / Bruges, June 2007. The new “Bijbelhuis” museum in Bruges, Belgium, is only a few square meters in size – but the abundance of videos, texts and musical recordings in the small “Bible House” convey the feeling of standing in a huge theme park. This multimedia experience has been made possible through guidePORT, Sennheiser’s interactive audio system which automatically provides visitors with interactive content whilst they walk freely around the exhibition.



Religions are currently experiencing a renaissance and all the more so when theology is conveyed so contemporaneously as in the new Bijbelhuis in Bruges. Although the historical building only covers a diminutive area of 5 x 10 meters it surprises its visitors with a multitude of exhibits and state-of-the art technology.

It all kicks off as soon as you arrive in reception where every visitor receives a Sennheiser guidePORT. The electronic companion consists of a small receiver and feather-light stereo headphones. “Whether it is the Creation, The Old or New Testament, the origins of the alphabet or Jewish feast days, the interactive system brings the story to life through sounds, speech and music“, explained Jean-Marc Volon, Installed Sound expert at Sennheiser Belux.

What is remarkable is that unlike in most museums the Bijbelhuis guided tour does not follow any fixed route but the inclinations and mood of the visitor, with guidePORT delivering all the relevant information “in passing”. “As soon as the visitor enters a specific area, the multimedia content is



automatically played back," said Jean-Marc Volon. "So the visitors are free to just wander through and listen if that's what they feel like and should they want a more in-depth tour of discovery, then additional explanations for numerous exhibits can be retrieved manually." Overall, there are about one hundred stored texts available. In addition, real-time transmissions and 24 dubbed, lip-sync films lead the listener directly into the Biblical events.

All audio content can be started or interrupted at any time. The underlying electronics based on a Sennheiser radio system sort out the rest. The frequency range of 2.4 GHz guarantees the best sound at consistently high data rates – irrespective of how many users are utilizing a guidePORT receiver at any one time.

The automatic media recordings are released through small boxes called identifiers. They are invisibly mounted next to the exhibits or hidden in the floor, and trigger the recordings as soon as a visitor passes their detection radius. What seems like magic for the visitor requires very precise planning on the engineering side. For example, many induction loops and identifiers had to be installed in the very small area of the Bijbelhuis. One of these is used for an anti-theft alarm for those guests who do not take the divine Commandments quite so seriously...

guidePORT

The Bijbelhuis in Bruges is the third guidePORT installation in Belgium. The innovative audio system has now been installed in more than 100 installations across the world, including the Maya Theme Park in Cancún in Mexico and the Asian Civilisations Museum in Singapore. Its radio-frequency technology has been acclaimed many times. In addition to guiding visitors, it enables the transmission of simultaneous translations, live presentations and announcements in real time plus individually tailored addresses to specific groups. guidePORT also provides exhibition designers with feedback on the use of the facilities, for instance which routes and which exhibits are particularly popular with the visitors, and as a result important indications on how exhibitions can be further improved.

Bijbelhuis

The Bijbelhuis (Bible House) is a joint initiative between the Bruges Bible Service and the Sint-Andries Abbey Zevenkerken. It uses multimedia settings to inform the visitors about the Old and New Testaments and about non-Biblical content such as related Gospels. The arrangement of the individual exhibits deliberately does not follow any chronological principle but the significance that they have today for religion and believers. The museum is open Saturdays and Sundays from 2.00pm to 6.00pm. www.bijbelhuis.org

As one of the world's leading manufacturers of microphones, headphones and wireless transmission systems, the Sennheiser Group with its headquarters in Wedemark near Hanover, Germany, had total sales of about €300 million in 2005. The export share is 82.5%. Sennheiser has a total workforce of more than 1,650 employees, of whom about 60% are employed in Germany. Sennheiser is active worldwide and, in addition to other partnerships, has its own sales subsidiaries in France, the UK, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, India, Singapore, Canada, Mexico and the USA.

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