CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY:
CANON PTZ CAMERAS PAVE THE WAY TO MORE ENGAGED FOLLOWERS

The Dawoodi Bohras community brings members closer together than ever, thanks to immersive, engaging live streams in 4K delivered by Canon's PTZ cameras.

Company Name: The Dawoodi Bohras of London
Industry: House of Worship
Founded: 1997
Location: London, UK
Services: Community building
Website: uk.thedawoodibohras.com
Products purchased: CR-N300 (4 units), CR-N500 (1 unit), RC-IP100 Controller
Canon installation partner: ProAV

Objective

- Deliver professional high-quality streams of regular congregational events on a budget
- Simultaneously distribute live footage within a house of worship as well as online
- Upgrade to an easy-to-use, versatile PTZ solution that volunteers could operate
- Connect with community members at home who can't attend in person post-Covid
- Keep viewers engaged through a more immersive experience without distractions

Challenges

- Overcoming limitations of heavy, conspicuous camcorders including downscaled image quality and too much cabling
- Distributing the picture to several 7m LED screens without losing quality
- The pressure of high expectations to deliver a world-class flagship event with thousands in attendance
- No professional expertise – a reliance on volunteers to operate the camera system

Approach

After winning a bid to host a milestone international event in Ealing, London, The Dawoodi Bohras mobilised volunteers from around the world to plan. For the first time in history, Ashara Mubaraka was being held in Europe, so expectations were high for a world-class production. However, the London community lacked the facilities and infrastructure. With all eyes on London, they needed an upgrade. They contacted supplier ProAV who recommended exploring the new Canon PTZ range. At the 2022 Media Production & Technology Show, they tried out the PTZ cameras, before opting for the CR-N500 and the RC-IP100 Controller.

Scope

Established since the 1960s, the Dawoodi Bohras in London is a 1,000-strong community, which gathers regularly for various events including sermons, prayers, and recitals. Some major annual events are attended by tens of thousands, both in real life and online. The wider network comprises of nine communities around the UK.

Canon

Results

- Revolutionised the community's ability to capture and stream video in a professional way via Vimeo
- The 4K image improved on-going production quality with great feedback from members
- Number of viewers online grew
- Streamlined workflow with reduced cabling and less visible cameras
- Volunteer operators are excited to try out the accessible solution

"Due to ill health a few years ago, I used to remotely view what was going on at the community centre. I'd feel put off by what I could see. The image quality was poor and the delay between audio and video meant it was hard to concentrate. You end up disengaged," admits Taher Abidali, a volunteer operator at The Dawoodi Bohras London, who had first-hand experience of the production challenges his community faced.

Then in 2022, the Dawoodi Bohras of London won the bid to host the biggest event in the international community calendar. They were tasked with welcoming 18,000 members from around the world to West London over 10 days. A big deal for the local community.

"This was the catalyst we needed!" says Taher. "We all work normal jobs during the day, so we are volunteering at the charitable organisation. Therefore, we're limited in terms of resources. When we won the bid, it was a massive milestone, unlocking funding to help us deliver a world-class event for the first time in Europe."

With all eyes on London, expectations were high. Taher and his community wanted to go above and beyond to put on the best community programming yet. "We decided to set a new standard of quality and relay a 4K image, which no one had perceived before," he says.

Despite previous hosts using good cameras, the image was always downscaled to HD via RCA technology, compromising the quality and negatively impacting the viewing experience.

"In London, we were using camcorders on fixed tripods beforehand. This was cumbersome and required a lot of physical manoeuvring to get everything right. We were unable to effectively capture everything we wanted as this was very limited and involved a lot of manual labour and cabling. The Canon CR-N300 and CR-N500 PTZs have revolutionised our ability to capture and process video feeds."

A turning point

Having purchased a set of CR-N300s, one CR-N500 and a RC-IP100 controller, the volunteer team now had the tools to capture, record and display footage in a more immersive way.

The impact was profound. The image quality, captured in stunning 4K resolution, was streamed to screens in all areas of the community centre, providing a clear view for those not directly facing the speaker. Members who couldn't attend experienced an enhanced online stream, and in turn, felt less isolated post-Covid.

"The incredible quality of the picture and the versatility of the zoom has been amazing. There are various different events that are streamed or captured throughout the year and these two features have allowed us to capture all events really well.

"Even if you are far from the speaker, you still feel engaged and part of the event when you can see them on a large screen in great detail. You don't feel like you are missing out on the experience," Taher adds.

Additionally, the PTZ cameras meant less bulk and less mess. "Before we had a big camcorder that was right in the eyeline of the speaker and blocking the audience's view. That can be off-putting. The PTZs are far more discreet. When you don't notice the camera is there you perform more naturally." The power over ethernet has also reduced the cabling around the space, creating a cleaner, less distracting environment.

Whether at home or in person, The Dawoodi Bohras community expressed their appreciation for the improved clarity, stability, and professionalism of the coverage.

Easy for volunteers

Utilising mainly a three-camera setup, consisting of a main camera facing the speaker, a back wall camera for hymn recitals, and one on the side wall for additional sweeping perspectives, allowed for comprehensive coverage.

The RC-IP100 Controller enabled a team of non-professional volunteers to seamlessly switch between different angles, ensuring that not a moment was missed. To achieve this, the cameras are connected to a Black Magic ATEM,

"Using the Canon PTZs has revolutionised our ability to capture and process video feeds"

which feeds into a Teranex to convert the signal. This 4K camera feed is then encoded to h264 over RTMP to stream via Vimeo.

"We used to operate with a single volunteer. Now we have a team of around 10 individuals volunteering in our AV team who are eager to try out the system as it's a lot more accessible. Before they were intimidated by the tech. Now it's a lot more difficult for something to go wrong. Typically, there are two camera operators, a director, a media controller and a runner. Now everyone wants a go!" jokes Taher.

"The ease of using the PTZ cameras is unsurpassed. The fact that they are simple to control, they're out of obvious view of the reciters and that they have a better range of angles than before is a huge bonus to us."

Setting a new standard

Viewership has increased multi-fold for those unable to attend. Regardless, the Canon solution has helped further strengthen community ties and relationships.

The success of their upgraded system has sparked interest from other community centres around the UK. The Dawoodi Bohras community is actively sharing their positive experience and advocating for the adoption of similar PTZ solutions.

"Using these cameras in London has set the standard for our fellow members elsewhere. It is now the expectation for community centres to have these types of cameras as part of their AV setup, even built-in where they're still in design phase," Taher concludes. "We advocate for Canon's cameras as they are of exceptional quality whilst remaining affordable."

Canon

Canon

The Canon Solution

CR-N300 PTZ Cameras:
- 1/2.3 Type CMOS Sensor
- 4K UHD Image Quality
- 20x Optical Zoom with Image Stabilisation
- Hybrid Auto Focus
- Multiple in-built protocols such as RTMP and NDI|HX
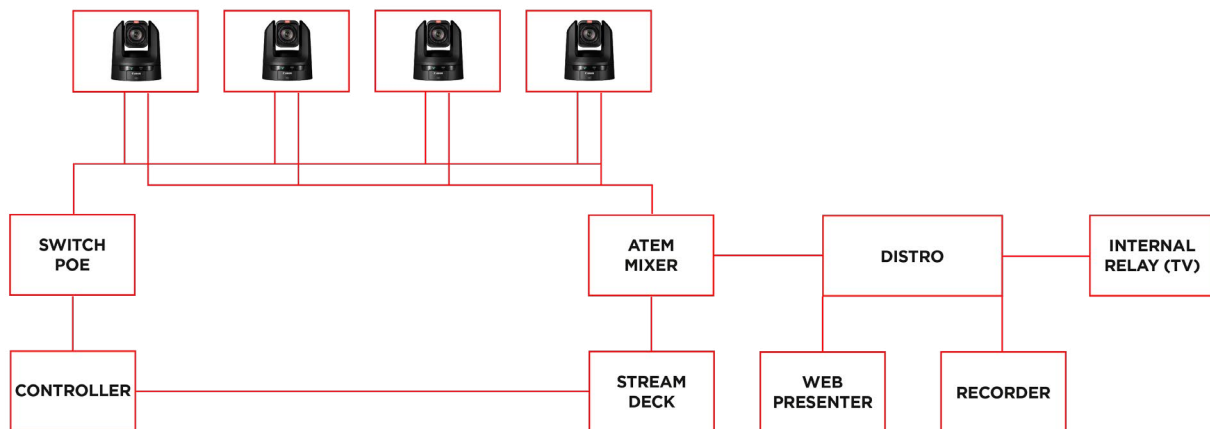- HDMI, 3G-SDI, IP and USB-C Connectivity

CR-N500 PTZ Cameras
- 1 Inch-Type CMOS Sensor
- 4K UHD Image Quality
- 15x Optical Zoom with Image Stabilisation
- Dual Pixel CMOS Auto Focus
- Multiple in-built protocols such as RTMP and NDI | HX
- HDMI, 3G-SDI and IP Connectivity

RC-IP100 Controller
- 7-inch touchscreen
- Multi-function joystick
- Professional zoom rocker
- Customisable controls
- Flexible connectivity

SYSTEMS WIRING DIAGRAM

```
[CAMERA]  [CAMERA]  [CAMERA]  [CAMERA]

[SWITCH POE]              [ATEM MIXER] — [DISTRO] — [INTERNAL RELAY (TV)]

[CONTROLLER] — [STREAM DECK]   [WEB PRESENTER]  [RECORDER]
```

/Canon

/Canon

/Canon Emea

Canon