

# LETTERS

Write to Letters, *Electronics Now*, 500-B Bi-County Blvd., Farmingdale, NY 11735

## AUDIO BUYING TIPS

I have enjoyed Larry Klein's *Audio Update* column very much over the years. He provides a breath of fresh air in a field often fogged by the strong odor of addled logic. Larry's coverage of the 1991 AES Convention was also enlightening because he drew attention to the significant psychophysical research concerning what we really can or cannot hear.

I'd like to add a few buying tips for consumers from my article "Can You Trust Your Ears?" *AES Preprint 3177*. Because humans have such a strong tendency to hear sounds that might never have occurred, audio equipment customers should be aware that even the best receivers, preamplifiers, CD players and amplifiers cannot be reliably evaluated under controlled conditions. (I am assuming that this equipment is being operated at its specified power limit and all cabling meets the manufacturers' requirements.)

Second, it is practically impossible to conduct a fair listening evaluation even in a studio-equipped retail store with all components matched and compensated. Finally, you are not stupid if you don't understand everything the salesman tells you. When you are tempted to buy a product but still unsure of yourself, wait until the next day to make a decision. There's a good chance that you'll decide you don't need whatever it was that was being pitched. *Caveat emptor*.

TOM NOUSAINE  
Cary, IL

## NETWORKING CORRECTION

As a long-time reader of **Radio-Electronics** and a data-communications professional, I was pleased to read the first part of Gary McClellan's series entitled "From Not Working to Networking," in your August issue. Unfortunately, the section entitled "Connecting net-

works" positions bridges, routers, and repeaters in the incorrect layers of the ISO/OSI model.

It is generally accepted in LAN networking that a repeater operates at layer one, a bridge operates at layer two, and a router operates at layer three of the ISO/OSI model.

I trust that statement clarifies Mr. McClellan's information, and I look forward to reading the remainder of the articles in his series.

SHELDON H. DEAN, CET  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

## THE BOTTOM LINE

As panelists in a seminar entitled "Strategies to Guard Against Productivity Loss" during PC Expo on June 25, we were astonished to find that of the thousands of industry professionals at the show, only one decided that a session on productivity enhancement was important enough to attend.

The show's management found the topic compelling enough to sponsor the seminar, and experts on the subject were ready to talk. But it seems that the individuals in the industry—vendors, customers, and managers of corporate computing resources—did not find it important enough to learn more about the link between technology and productivity.

Members of the industry do seem to find glitz, power, and speed interesting. They seem to fixate on the question: "Can we make it bigger, faster, or better than our competitors?" The name of the game seems to be "hardware for the sake of hardware" and "software for the sake of software."

We forget that senior management, which controls the purse strings, cares about return on investment, productivity and profit. They don't care about chip speed or power. Who in our industry is thinking about vital productivity issues such as education, training, and

support? Is anyone thinking about the need to re-engineer products to take advantage of developing technology? Is management afraid to find out if there really is a positive return on investment in computer technology?

Until the computer industry stops to take stock of where it has been and where it is going—particularly the relationship between computer technology and the bottom line—the promise of technology will *not* happen. We should be concerned with how the technology can change the workplace, improve corporate competitiveness, and help us to meet our national economic goals.

None of this is glamorous stuff. Making technology deliver on its promise is tough, tedious work. It certainly does not offer the fun of playing with the latest and greatest graphics user interface. But it is where to find productivity increases. Productivity is the responsibility of people, not just machines. It seems that those attending PC Expo were looking for something other than strategies to prevent losses in productivity.

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I'd like to respond to the letter by Stephen Schleich, "Seeing the Light," (June **Radio-Electronics**.) In my opinion, as a technically trained person Mr. Schleich should have been better able to understand the point made by his "rocket scientist" friend. Mr. Schleich's anger at his friend is unwarranted, but he is correct in what