I Didn't Know Fleenor Did That.

At trade shows we frequently hear "I didn't know you did that". We are best known for our DMX512 distribution products (opto-splitters, A/B switches, Terminators) but we also make a wide variety of DMX solutions. So, once a month, we are going to feature a product in an e-newsletter titled *I Didn't Know Fleenor Did That*.

This is Apathy month. No, it's not thirty-one days of just not caring; it's the name of our single channel DMX512 console.

Apathy Minus

Apathy
Wall Mount

Apathy came about because Doug learned of a new microprocessor at a Microchip convention: a small, inexpensive, eight pin processor that could read an analog input (i.e. a slider or rotary pot), and appeared fast enough to generate DMX512. "I could make a console with that" Fleenor mused… so he did.

The console got its name from ETC's top-of-the-line console at the time, the Obsession. Obsession had many control channels, ours had one. Obsession was expensive, ours a little cheaper. Obsession looked futuristic, ours decidedly retro. So, being the opposite of the Obsession, we called it the Apathy.

The original Apathy patched all 512 DMX channels to the one rotary control. Useful for lamp checks and tripping main breakers, Apathy had limited usefulness other than as an alternate source of DMX for troubleshooting. Despite its narrow focus, Apathy caught on with many of Fleenor's clients… but they wanted more. So Doug added a single pushbutton which he claims is the industry's most *user hostile* interface.

With the channel level at zero, a single press of the button changes the patch from "all 512" to "only DMX channel one". Pressing the button twice (with the level at zero) patches "only DMX channel two" to the knob. Three presses: "only DMX three". Two hundred presses: "only 200". **JK** (just kidding). To get to higher numbered DMX channels, the user simply, in a mindful manner, and precise timing, keys in the channel by pausing between the hundreds, tens, and ones digit. For example, to patch DMX channel 51 to the level control, the user (with the level control at zero) presses the button five times, pauses, then presses the button once (Entering a zero requires ten presses).

But, you might ask, "what if the level control is not zero?". Well, if the level is above 20% a press of the button increments the DMX channel number. A looooong press of the button decrements it. What does a looooong press do if the level *is* at zero? It resets the patch to "all 512" (as does cycling the power).

Although adding the hostile button increased usefulness, it makes Apathy harder to understand. Hence, instead of calling it Apathy Plus, we call it Apathy Minus.

Apathy is rugged, featuring a metal shaft rotary pot and a tenth-inch aluminum enclosure designed to protect the knob. A nine Volt battery will power the Apathy for days because the processor powers-down between each DMX packet (power-down is defeatable if necessary). Apathy can also be powered with a variety of wall wart power supplies (not included). Four 0.2 inch holes and one half inch hole are provided for mounting the console. A wall mount version of the console (sans hostile button and LED) is available that fits in a single-gang switch box.