



Digital Debut

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About 18 months ago, Scott Hetzler, president/chief Engineer at **Contemporary Research**, zeroed in on the need for a pro-AV-grade digital HDTV modulator. Well-respected for their analog tuners (they also have digital products), Contemporary had never made a modulator before.

However, in addition to a growing sense of a market need, Hetzler says there were the near-daily customer phone calls describing what would develop into the **QMOD-HD**. There were few consumer digital HD modulators and none from the traditional pro AV manufacturers. Broadcast modulators are expensive and not designed for pro AV applications. It's not a simple piece of gear to design, so it wasn't in danger of becoming a commodity immediately.

Further, the addition of digital tuners to HD displays suggested a shift in the economies of networked digital display and signage that opened up new possibilities. So Hetzler decided to make the investment to build the \$2,400 HDTV modulator. You can get specs from our site or theirs. Note the power specifications (just 9W).

Hetzler is committed to low power usage in no small part because power translates to heat, which translates to stress on components. And he hates fan noise. He's proud that Contemporary Research uses no fans in any of its products.

And he's bullish on RF: "We think HDTV is big, and we think that RF is the way to do it—it's the biggest pipeline around with 130 digital channels, and within the channels you can get up to three times that again. There's no way you could do that over Cat-5. You'd be lucky to do 30 channels." He starts to riff, and I remember why I like talking to engineers who mostly work from their passions.