

## ➔ Challenge

A poorly designed AV system was preventing the effective use of a new conference room.

## ➔ Solution

A virtual floor plan to control a total Crestron solution that includes DigitalMedia™, AirMedia™, and Crestron audio.



## Moment of Insight



When a user picks up the iPad, the floor plan with the tables, projector, cameras, and inputs is displayed. Now, simply tap on the image of the projector on the laptop, and the laptop image instantly shows up on the projection screen.”

— **Chris Kane**  
*Casaplex, LLC*

*Research firm Econometrica upgrades its conference rooms to Crestron technology*

“Where do the defining moments happen for your company?”

That’s Chris Kane, Director of Sales and Operations at Casaplex, LLC, talking about how productive a well-designed, professionally-implemented conference room can be.

“I’ve been in some beautiful meeting rooms but realized that people didn’t want to use them. The technology was difficult to operate, didn’t really work, and was definitely in the way of the flashes of insight that a great meeting can produce.”

Such was the case at Bethesda, Maryland-based Econometrica. The company’s frustrated IT manager called Kane to fix the poor work performed by another AV integrator.

Kane and his design team analyzed the situation and recommended a solution based on Crestron technology, which proved so successful that the client brought them back in to design a second conference room, and then make further refinements to the first.



## The 10th floor conference room

Econometrica is a private, Washington, D.C.-area research and analysis firm that works mainly for the federal government.

The firm studies a wide range of issues including healthcare, energy, housing, transportation, and homeland security, offering government and commercial clients high-quality, cost-effective data collection, analysis, modeling, and economic evaluations.

Experiencing rapid growth, Econometrica completed a move last year into a new headquarters on the 10th and 11th floors of 7475 Wisconsin Avenue in Bethesda. Their new conference room would offer a place where staff could meet to discuss ongoing projects, as well as host a variety of training sessions and departmental meetings.

“The original contractor was not very proactive and slapped together a system that was not going to work for us,” says John Mucciardi, IT Manager. There were a number of problems with the room. “First, the projector was terrible. This is a big room with windows all around it. The projector just wasn’t bright enough for the space.” Also, there was no control or automation system, and so the technology was very difficult to use.

Kane brought in several alternative projectors for Mucciardi to consider, and they settled on a 7500



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lumen WXGA unit from Digital Projection®. Kane recommended that they install a Crestron DMPS-300-C DigitalMedia™ Presentation System to control the projector, sound, lights, and shading, and to provide audio and video switching capabilities. It uses an iPad Mini® with the Crestron app as the main user interface.

“After that, people started using the room constantly and they loved it,” Kane recalls. “We got a call back from John, and he told me they were expanding and would be adding another conference room on the 11th floor. I took the opportunity to ask what they most liked about the first room and what they now thought might improve it.”



There were three requests. In the 10th floor room, there were multiple laptop connections, all hard-wired with conduits running under the tables. Consequently, users could not reconfigure the room setup. First, Mucciardi wondered if Kane could suggest a way where they could move the tables where they wished, yet still send signals to the projector from anywhere in the room.

Second, he asked if there was some way to simplify the note-taking that takes place at meetings and training sessions.

Finally, he said that IT was still getting some calls from users unsure of how to operate the technology. He asked if the control interface Casaplex had designed could be simplified enough to eliminate them.

## An all-Crestron solution

Kane says the meetings he had with Mucciardi led to several recommendations.

“First, Crestron had introduced AirMedia since we designed the earlier room, and we thought it might add a lot of flexibility to the room layout, since laptop connections to the projector could now be wireless. I especially liked the fact that AirMedia can show up to four presentations on the same screen, which would be great for comparing data sets during project meetings.”

“Another great thing about AirMedia is that it allows connections from tablets and smartphones, so if the

staff decides they’d like to present from their mobile devices, they’ll be ready to go.”

Kane proposed that, in this new room, they use Crestron FreeSpeech® wireless microphones, and Saros® 8-inch ceiling speakers, to provide very high-quality audio, as well as a simpler setup of the DigitalMedia Presentation System.

Kane also recommended that Econometrica install a Crestron Capture HD® device to enable the organization to automatically record meetings and brainstorming sessions. That way, if there wasn’t anyone available to take notes, or if they wanted to check the notes they had taken, they could simply play back the recording. “They loved the idea, not just for notes, but also to capture training sessions so they don’t have to repeat them. Nobody likes to have to do the same thing twice.”

The user interface was the biggest question for Kane, however, and he thought long and hard about how he could best simplify the use of the new room. “We decided to set up a virtual floor plan. Now, when a user picks up the iPad, the floor plan with the tables, projector, cameras, and inputs is displayed. Now, simply tap on the image of the projector on the laptop, and the laptop image instantly shows up on the projection screen.”

In the same way, if someone taps an image of a light bulb or a window shade on the floor plan, the lighting or shading controls appear. If they want to stop or start



recording with the Capture HD system, they just tap on an image of a camera.

“The new interface is really slick,” Mucciardi says. “It’s great for people who are not particularly technical, and it minimizes the need for hand-holding.”

Kane says everyone loved the interface so much that, within a month of the room becoming operational, Mucciardi came back and asked him to add the floor plan interface and an AirMedia device to the 10th floor conference room.

## Reaching its full potential

Kane says that, given the chance to design the new conference room AV system from scratch, it was a no-brainer to use Crestron as the total solution for the audio, video, and automation systems – everything, in fact, except the projector and screen.

“Our mission at Casaplex is to enhance the way you live, work, and play, and that’s exactly what Crestron helps us do,” he explains. “Crestron offers an extremely powerful platform that’s easy to upgrade as a client’s needs change. So, for example, if John asks us to add some new features next year, or maybe a technology that’s not even available now, we know we will be able to take care of it.

“It also makes it easy for us to stand behind a solution because we have one manufacturer standing behind



us. Everything belongs together – it even looks like it belongs together – and if we have any kind of a problem, Crestron will help us solve it quickly.”

It goes back to Kane’s idea that a conference room can be a magical place where new ideas and crucial insights are encouraged. “Some integrators may cheat their customers out of that possibility, but we believe that our clients deserve the full experience that Crestron offers, and we won’t settle for anything less.”

Integrator  
Casaplex, LLC  
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