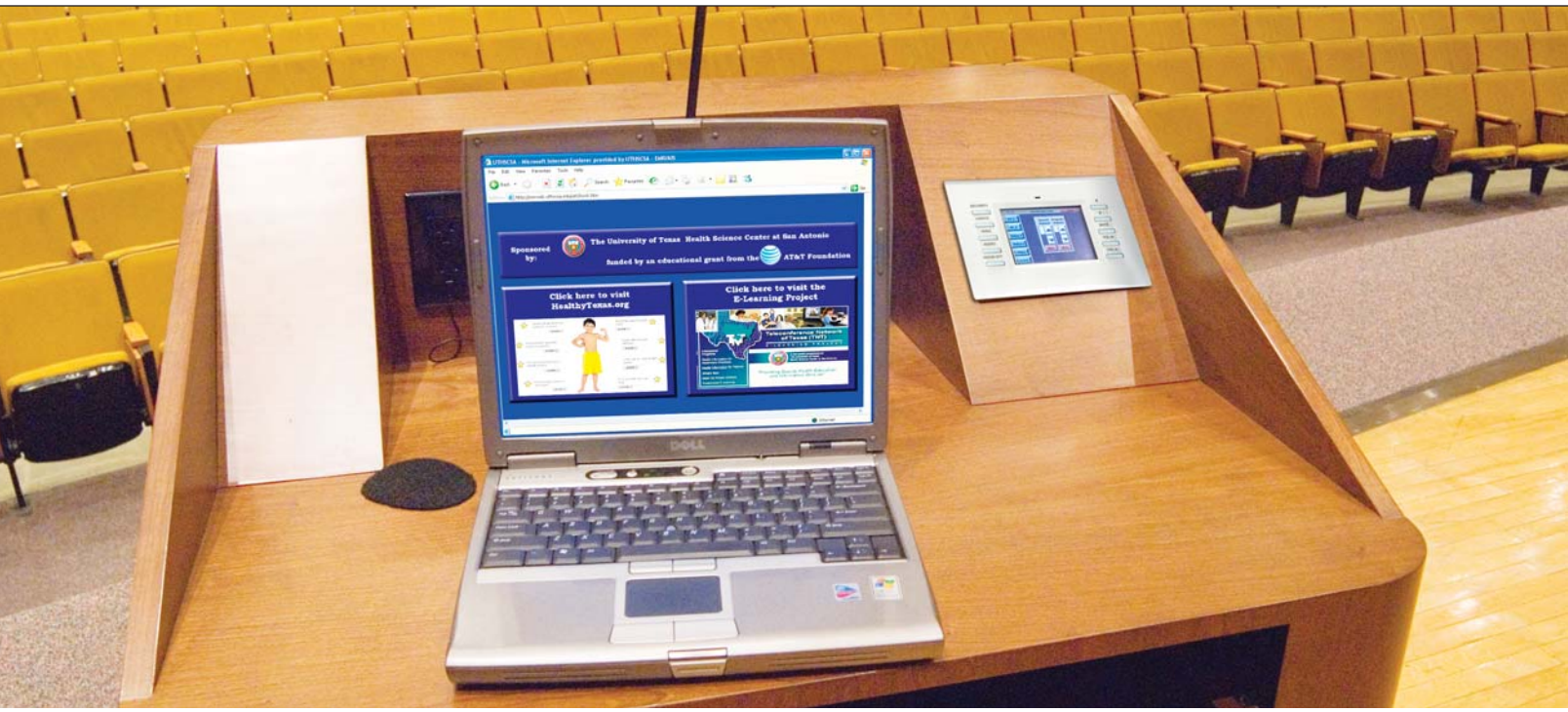


The Standardization Solution

Getting all your systems onto a single technology platform has many benefits

Organizations of all sizes around the world endeavor to gain greater control and management of resources. No longer can technology decisions be localized. Once each office, department, or school could assess its needs, request a budget, and implement an AV or IT solution. Now that everything is information on the network, from computers and printers, to audio and video, and even lighting and thermostats, managing disparate systems and assets is a challenge facing every institution on the planet.

The first step to gaining control over this chaotic cornucopia of legacy systems is to standardize on a technology platform. Standardizing on technology enables consistent implementation of devices and control interfaces, which provides ease of use, efficient maintenance and support, and optimal enterprise management and control.

Standardization has many benefits for the IT department in any institution. For example, standardization increases efficiencies related to system design, installation, and programming, which, over time, exponentially reduces costs and increases ROI. Additionally, standardization reduces the need for training and technical support, while increasing use of technology and information sharing.

Technology standardization is more than simply having a predetermined array of AV devices. An effective standardization solution should be scalable, flexible, and networkable. In order to connect every room and every device to the managed network, the platform selected must include a combination of hardware and software that can be implemented across multiple levels of size, sophistication, and budgets.

Technology fragmentation occurs for several reasons, but it usually happens due to systems growing organically over long periods of time, purchasing not being centralized, or planning that is segmented. The first two realities are self-explanatory. The solutions are basic, although not easily implemented. Converting legacy systems can be arduous and difficult to get approved, but some vendors have programs in place to facilitate the transition with trade-in deals and assistance with installation and training. Changing the purchasing process requires internal organizational remodeling.

Segmented planning is taking a narrow view of technologies and categorizing them based on function, price, or quality. You might hear IT managers say, "Oh, that's our low-cost system." Or "that's our switcher solution." This type of thinking results in different hardware solutions installed in different types of rooms throughout a facility, institution, or global enterprise.

Standardization in the Real World

Supporting disparate systems in dozens or hundreds of rooms throughout a campus or enterprise is even more challeng-

ing. Industry leaders such as Lehman Brothers and Microsoft understand the value of global technology standardization, so the thousands of rooms in hundreds of buildings in multiple countries around the world can be monitored, managed, and controlled from any location with a computer and a network connection.

"When we began our Classroom Technology Initiative, only about 40 of our nearly 160 classrooms were fully equipped with end-to-end AV solutions. However, none of those classrooms were standardized on a single solution, so you had dozens of operating instructions floating around for the various systems on campus," explains Omar Cantu, director of video services, University of Texas-Pan America. "A few were outfitted with AMX, Extron, and Crestron, but mostly they were just legacy component remotes. It was difficult for faculty who spent time teaching in one classroom to go to another classroom — they would find an entirely different setup."

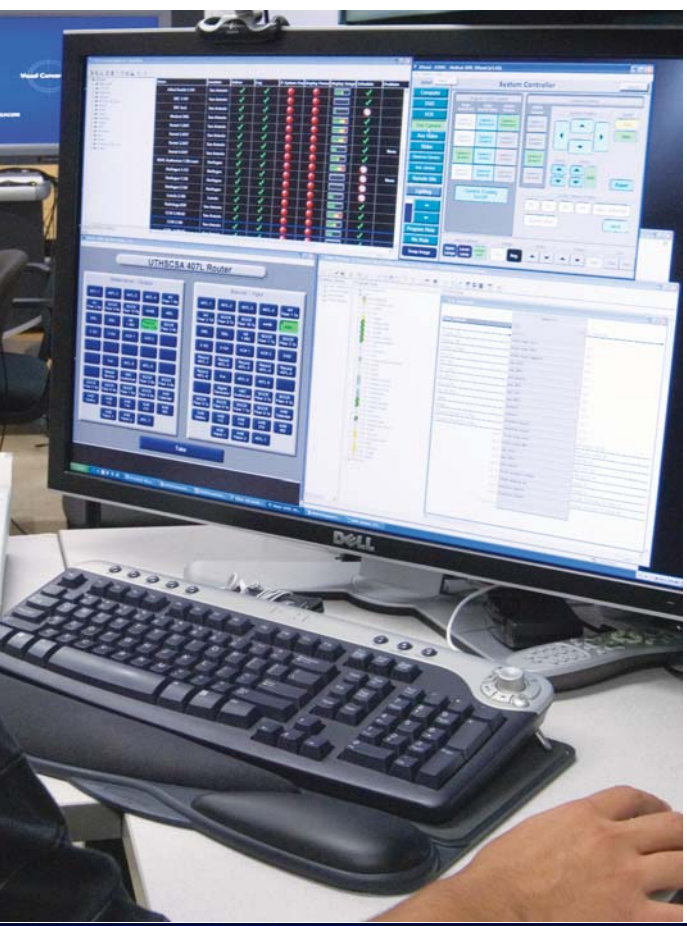
The University of Texas-Pan American settled on Crestron QuickMedia™ in every classroom and auditorium.

All the newly equipped classrooms are connected on the network to the Video Services Department's Support Services via Crestron's RoomView® Management and Scheduling Software. RoomView allows the technical support staff to troubleshoot, control, and maintain the systems remotely in real-time or in a web-based environment.

The Crestron Solution

Crestron is a reliable standardization solution because it offers a wide variety of products built on the same technology platform, which can be consistently implemented in every room regardless of size, specifications, and budget. iMedia provides very basic switching and control at a low price point for rooms with just a projector, screen, and maybe a microphone. QuickMedia is a scalable product line that provides a broad range of functions including audio mixing, video processing, and control. Of course, Crestron offers a complete line of interfaces, including dozens touchpanels, keypads, wall mount, lectern mount, and handheld controllers.

All Crestron hardware features e-Control®2 IP-based control and communication, so all Crestron equipment, and any device or system connected to a Crestron controller, is linked to the managed network.



Crestron control systems also feature SNMP support so that more than just audio and video equipment can be monitored and managed. In fact, all lights, shades, screens, thermostats, and IT network devices can be monitored and controlled from a single software interface. Crestron RoomView software provides a global view of the entire network, and offers real-time help desk functionality, advanced scheduling, reporting, and asset management. Crestron e-Control2 can even turn any web-enabled device, such as a laptop or Blackberry, into a Crestron control interface.

The goal is to choose a technology provider that offers solutions across the board to ensure a consistent user experience in every room, and to connect every device, room, and building to the network to achieve real enterprise management and technical support both locally and globally. ■

CONTROL IT ALL WITH ROOMVIEW

Crestron offers the broadest range of AV, environmental and control hardware and ties it all together with RoomView® enterprise management software, providing an ideal standardization solution for organizations of any size.

Crestron provides simple, intuitive one-touch control. Simply connect a laptop to an iMedia transmitter and push the "ON" button to automatically lower a screen, turn on the projector, select the appropriate input, and open the local microphone.

Remotely perform diagnostics, troubleshoot, and even control any device connected to a Crestron controller using RoomView software. Firmware updates are also uploaded through the network from any location.

Interactive help desk capabilities enable local presenters or instructors to send help requests directly from their touchpanel or web browser. RoomView provides full two-way messaging between support staff and local rooms for real-time technical assistance anywhere in the world.

IT managers and technical support staff can receive email messages regarding established alert conditions. For example, if certain equipment goes off-line or power is interrupted, an email notification is sent automatically.

RoomView is built on Microsoft® NET technology and integrates with Microsoft® Exchange Server, providing robust management and scheduling capabilities. In addition to tracking projector lamp usage, RoomView features Windows® Event Log and generates powerful reports. Asset management tools can also track and schedule routine maintenance.

Microsoft® Outlook calendars can be displayed on any Crestron touchpanel on the network to view specific room availability or the status of all rooms, schedule a meeting for an open room, and cancel scheduled meetings as necessary.

Advanced plug-in modules are available for hot lists, action items, Instant Messenger, and web cameras, making RoomView an ideal system management tool. RoomView integrates seamless within a Crestron control environment to manage and control every room and every device from any computer, and schedule rooms from any touchpanel.