



Crestron AirMedia Wireless Presentation Solution

THE PHRASES “easy to install” and “makes collaboration easy” can be found in just about every press release or product description. We decided to put Crestron’s bold claims about its AirMedia wireless presentation solution to the test — not in the tiny conference room we use at *Commercial Integrator*; we thought an integrator using the device to collaborate with its team would result in much better insight for our readers.

Indeed, the folks at Mode:Green were happy

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modegreen.com

› Wireless HD presentation for small meeting rooms that aren’t wired for an AV system

› Simple plug-and-play installation

› Enables wirelessly presenting of HD content from personal smart phone, tablet, or laptop

› Simple Ethernet connection from the AirMedia console to the LAN is all that’s needed; no additional software, AV equipment or control system needed

› Enables remote viewing from a smartphone, tablet or laptops

› Can collaborate and share content from up to four personal devices simultaneously on one room display

› Integrates with Crestron DigitalMedia

› Allows up to 32 users to connect at the same time in the same room

MSRP: \$1,600
Crestron.com

Can you describe the room in which you installed the AirMedia solution and how you use it?

The device was installed in a conference room that functions as our primary meeting space. It has a 55-inch Samsung display and seats 12 around a table. Four of us use this room primarily for sales and planning meetings. It functions to run clients through our services as well as hash through the engineering requirements for each of our projects as they come online

The solution is supposed to allow a company to deliver smartphone, tablet and laptop collaboration capabilities over Wi-Fi to rooms that aren’t wired for an AV system. How did it do?

Extremely well. I was quite surprised at how well in fact. We are an integrator so we

are typically tasked with making complex systems easier to use for the general public. The device was different as the setup was simple and it worked as advertised right out of the box with very little configuration.

It’s designed for plug-and-play installation. Can you describe the steps involved?

It truly is. The device plugs in to the room’s Ethernet network on one side, and the TVs’ either HDMI or RGB connection on the other. The device finds its own IP and displays a splash page on the TV. The splash page identifies the device and its associated IP address. The user simply needs to point a web browser to the displayed IP and the system walks you through the next few simple steps to connect to the device.

Can you tell us about a meeting in which your team shared content and collaborated while you were testing AirMedia?

There was a meeting with six of us collaborating over a design for a large hotel proj-

ect in the Cayman Islands. We were able to share drawings and renderings from each of our laptops on the screen without the need to swap cables back and forth.

The ideal technology for me in these environments is to forget it is there. Many times we as technologists get caught up in the cool factor of the technology rather than its functional purpose, forgetting how most users view these types of devices. This meeting was a good example of us using the device to seamlessly share and collaborate on a project rather than be focused on the technology.

The device allowed us to brainstorm on each other’s ideas without technology being the focus or slowing us down.

Have you had non-Mode:Green employees use the solution to present wireless?

I have. The simplicity of it was very well received, especially with regards to pulling information from mobile devices.

What’s the most number of users you had con-

to put to the test phrases like “simple plug-and-play installation” and “enables anyone to walk into a room, connect to the existing display over Wi-Fi and wirelessly present HD content from their personal smart phone, tablet or laptop.”

Although it's touted as an ideal collaboration solution for small, huddle rooms, Crestron says AirMedia allows up to 32 users to connect at the same time in the same room. It has a feature called Quad View that allows up to four presenters' content to be displayed simultaneously.

All in all, Crestron describes a robust collaboration solution that makes life remarkably easy for integrators and their customers. But enough about what we and Crestron have to say, let's see what one of your peers says about the Crestron AirMedia wireless presentation solution.



Watch for more on Crestron's AirMedia solution.

nected at the same time? Was it cumbersome?

We had five at once. It was fairly straightforward as whoever had something to show just engaged the system and popped in over the previous user.

The QuadView feature allows you to have four presenters displaying content simultaneously. Have you used it and how has it gone?

We have done this and the process was very simple. We used it to view spec sheets. As the display was not a very large one, the QuadView feature was not heavily needed. However, this feature as compared to the alternative to accomplish this in a wired, switched scenario is very powerful. To be able to do this in alternative ways is very, very expensive.

Crestron seems to recommend the AirMedia wireless presentation solution for smaller, huddle-style rooms where an advanced system might not be practical. Do you agree with that?

I suppose this makes sense due to the ease of switching from user to user. However, I don't think the device should be limited to those types of rooms only. It is very well suited for larger spaces as well.

Did you integrate it with Crestron DigitalMedia? If so, how did it perform?

We did not in our space, but I have in other installations. It works very well and simply eliminates so much of the clutter typically associated with these types of systems. With laptops becoming smaller and requiring so many adapter cables just to connect to a display, AirMedia is a welcomed change to most clients who are looking for a straightforward solution.

What are the three biggest benefits – pros – that you can envision for an integrator providing a Crestron AirMedia wireless presentation solution to a customer?

- Ease of installation. It is as close to plug-and-play as you can get.

- QuadView and streaming capabilities. These features are typically far more cost prohibitive.

- Price. Considering the normal requirements to simply send video from a boardroom table to a display, this device is very cost effective.

What are the three biggest negatives – cons – that you can envision for an integrator providing a Crestron AirMedia wireless presentation solution to a customer?

In scenarios where a company has split admin and guest wireless networks the device will need to be able to be accessible from both. This creates a little confusion with the IT staff as to how to secure this bridge. Involving the right people in the beginning solves this problem, but it should be a consideration going into the installation.

[Editor's note: When CI got Crestron's reaction to this "con," it indicated that it was in the process of posting a deployment guide that would provide examples of how to

overcome that. Search for it on Crestron.com.]

Audio streaming. This can be a bit more complicated than the video side of things as it may require some preference changes on the displaying computer.

I have had customers ask to be able to change the logo on the splash screen. Not a biggie, but would be a nice added feature.

[Editor's note: According to Crestron, the OSD is fully customizable and page 24 of the manual explains how to change it. Search for it on Crestron.com. However, the web pages are not customizable.]

Final thoughts?

All in the device is great. It is cost effective, easy to use and requires very little on the installation side. I was somewhat late in the game in seeing what this device would do initially, but since using it for the first time I have become a big proponent.

I have them specified into several new projects, and our clients to date that have been using them have really enjoyed them. ■

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