



Extron MediaPort 200 and Zoom Facilitate Worldwide Collaboration at Santa Clara University

“Using the Extron MediaPort 200 with Zoom instead of a hard codec system is saving us over \$200,000 each year.”

Joel Bennett
Manager of the Media Services Group at SCU

Challenges

At the Santa Clara University campus in California, each building's hardware-centric videoconferencing systems were inadequate and costly to maintain. The university wanted a new solution that would support sharing of a wide variety of modern as well as legacy media and technology resources.

SCU found that hardware-based codec installations were fairly expensive systems to operate and maintain. The existing VTC system design was complex, and included multiple related servers, call managers, bridges, and video border proxies. These back-end infrastructure servers and annual service contracts had an extensive impact on the University's bottom line.

The University contracted with Avidex to explore alternatives that would be more affordable and meet the needs of the project.

The new videoconferencing solution had to be flexible enough to work in classrooms, lecture halls, seminar rooms, and collaboration spaces. The Edward M. Dowd Art and Art History facility, the Leavey School of Business, and the new Charney Hall of Law, which includes interview rooms and a moot courtroom, along with University Operations at Alameda Hall would be using the new videoconferencing systems.



Zoom software and the MediaPort 200 USB scaling bridge provide complete videoconferencing capabilities within each learning environment.



The MediaPort 200 sends a mix of HDMI audio, program audio, USB playback audio, and input from the microphone system to the computer running Zoom.



The videoconferencing system is easily activated and controlled from the lectern using an Extron TLP Pro TouchLink® Pro Touchpanel.

The University had high standards for the new systems. In each room, the cameras had to allow the whole space to be seen. The microphone system needed to support clear speech from one or more locations, regardless of the videoconferencing capabilities on the far ends.

The three-year project completion goal was aggressive for such a comprehensive campus-wide overhaul performed during breaks.

Solution

A computer running Zoom software and the Extron MediaPort 200 HDMI and Audio to USB Scaling Bridge replaced each hardware-based videoconferencing system. The MediaPort® was selected to enhance audio and video quality because it supported professional-grade videoconferencing PTZ cameras, boundary microphones, and sound reinforcement systems. Video processing technology specifically engineered for optimized image scaling and frame rate conversion preserves detail and legibility of source content. The USB connection provides a 4x2 channel audio interface. Also, an AEC output reference and built-in audio processing tools such as gain, mixing, filtering, and ducking enhance audio quality.

The MediaPort 200 enables the microphones and cameras to interface with the Zoom application that bridges the near and far ends. The application can run on the dedicated computer or a laptop that is brought into the room.

A USB connection between the computer running Zoom and the USB scaling bridge provides connectivity among the local and remote participants. Using generic audio and video drivers, the MediaPort 200 designates the AV, camera, and audio equipment as USB devices on the computer. This allowed Avidex to skip loading proprietary drivers when making connections, which streamlined integration.

Results

SCU is nearing the end of the three-year campus-wide project. During the summer break, the final 21 systems in the Charney Hall of Law will be commissioned. The AV system upgrades in the existing buildings are complete.

Students and instructors alike have commented on the enhanced learning experience. This is directly attributable to improved videoconferencing capabilities enabled by the Zoom Video Communications technology and Extron's MediaPort 200 HDMI and Audio to USB Scaling Bridge.

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