

The “SYNERGY” Solution

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The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey has implemented a creative solution to maximize their return-on-investment in their SYNERGY Media Management system.

Installed at Stockton in 1995, SYNERGY was the “cutting edge” of media management and control. The SYNERGY system performed well and was used daily by 600 faculty, adjuncts, and staff to schedule and facilitate room control of approximately 90 teaching spaces at the main campus.

The company that distributed and supported SYNERGY made a decision in May of 2000 to no longer continue development or support of the ten-year-old SYNERGY software program. What they did do was to post the source code as “Open Source” (www.sourceforge.net) allowing third-party developers to have access to the program.

With such an extensive install-base and large number of trained users, Stockton went looking for a developer to work with the college to support and upgrade the SYNERGY product. After several failed attempts to enlist a programmer or developer, Stockton found XOLUTIONZ. (www.xolutionz.com)

Shane Burke, a programmer/developer, founded XOLUTIONZ to provide support and continue development of software to incorporate a new control system, NETLINX, into the existing open source code.

The Xolutionz product, PHOENIX, is a successor product to SYNERGY that provides an upgrade path retaining all the existing databases and scheduling functionality of SYNERGY, using the existing AXCESS hardware, while incorporating the added features of NETLINX.

Most notable of these features is the ability to have IP-based scheduling and control at remote locations. Stockton added two off-campus buildings and needed a way to control and monitor these spaces. Phoenix/Netlinx addressed both these issues.

Initially faced with the daunting task of finding a different system and retraining 600 users, Stockton elected to move forward with the upgrade to the PHOENIX system. The upgrade was accomplished over a two day period and is described in the “Real World” section of Xolutionz’s website. (www.xolutionz.com) Additional functions were programmed into the existing system to address specific academic support needs.

User response to the upgraded system has been positive and the new system has worked as advertised.

Richard Stockton College has also upgraded the automation system for their Educational Access Channel using PHOENIX.

The conversion to PHOENIX and NETLINX has been a win-win-win situation. Since upgrading to PHOENIX Stockton has added 5 NETLINX masters in various buildings, has not had to retrain the 600-plus users, has not had to retire any of the installed AXCESS hardware.

The PHOENIX product is not associated with, or part of AMX.

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