

Spectaveris Guides a Comprehensive Five-Year Upgrade of DCTV's Community Access TV Broadcasting Facilities



Challenges

For 21 years DCTV had been providing community access programming – produced by volunteers from the community – in Washington, D.C. By 2009, however, most of the production and broadcasting equipment in its studios was eight to ten years old, and its system was completely analog.

While it wanted to create a world-class community television network, the organization didn't have the budget to do everything it wanted immediately. It also wanted sophisticated production capability that was still user friendly, so that volunteer community producers could be easily trained.

Spectaveris Solution

DCTV brought in Spectaveris' Dean Stone to help. After listening carefully to what they wanted, Dean completed a detailed work flow study and wrote up a plan that would allow DCTV to reach its goals over time in affordable steps, using products that had already proven their reliability and offered the best cost/performance ratios.

In Phase I, new cameras were provided for Studio A, which was upgraded to HD.

Phase II saw the installation of a Master Control router, multi-channel viewer, and totally redesigned conference room system with remote access to all presentation devices. Later on the upgraded display devices would include a 60-inch screen for PowerPoint presentations and HD videos. The conference room is important at DCTV because it is used as a training classroom and can also be rented out to clients.

Phase III saw the conversion of Studio B to HD, the installation of an internal cable system, and new monitors for viewing the production process.

Phase IV included further upgrades to Studio B, a new switcher in Studios A and B, and another camera for Studio B.

When phase V is completed, DCTV will be a totally HD facility, with the potential to broadcast in HD over three channels via seven different cable companies in the DC area.

Results

DCTV has gone through a dramatic transformation. "Basically we've gone from eight-track tape to an iPod," jokes Bob Thomas, DCTV's Director of Operations. "But more importantly, we have the tools here to help our citizen producers produce better quality programming. Even though the tools are more sophisticated, they're very user friendly. It comes from Dean doing the research to determine how best to bring along not only the neophyte producers but also my team." DCTV instructor Mark Leeke agreed. "Dean was listening to everything we had to say and was very aware of what the user was going to need."

The heart of the new digital system is an HD router that ties together Master Control, Studio A, Studio B, and the





conference room. Six edit suites feed to the router, which greatly facilitates workflow. In contrast to the previous manual system, the router allows volunteer producers to access recordings made upstairs in Studio A by dragging and dropping them into an editor. When editing is complete, they can drag and drop their recording to a server to be played out over Master Control.

Master Control operators now have a viewer that allows them to see all 16 channels on one large multi-screened viewing panel.

The broadcast furniture was also chosen with great care so that access to cable connections in the back is easy when necessary. And an acoustical treatment helps mitigate ambient noise from rack fans in the Master Control room that can reach as high as 65 decibels.

Taken together, the changes represent “a good value to the city in terms of how we use their money,” said Thomas. “It puts us in the now, and gives us a plan that’s going to help us 5, 6, 7, 8 years from now.”



DCTV phase 4 Equipment Installed

Studio A

MFG.	Model	Description
For-A	HVS-350HS Type A	“Hanabi” HD/SD 1.5M/E Switcher with HVS-350U 20 Button Panel,
DNF	ST-300-SSM	VTR Controller (for AJA KiPro)
Mutec	MC-32	SD/HD Video & Digital Audio Sync Master Clock Genera

Studio B

DNF	ST-300-SSM	VTR Controller (for AJA KiPro)
NewTek	TCXD850CS	Tricaster 850 Control Surface
Yamaha	LS9/16	Digital Audio Mix Console
Yamaha	MY8 AEB	8-Channel AES/EBU I/O with Video Input
Sierra Video	804047	Router Control Panel 16x1 BPS
AJA	Ki Pro Rack	Ki PRO RACK Recorder



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