



University of Illinois at Springfield

The University of Illinois is the state's best and most comprehensive public university. It bonds together a family with three distinct campuses: Chicago, Springfield and Urbana-Champaign. These campuses are strengthened by intercampus cooperation and university-wide services, yet carry out their academic functions with a high degree of delegated authority and autonomy. Established as Sangamon State University in 1969, it became a campus of the University of Illinois in 1995. University of Illinois at Springfield (UIS) is a small, liberal arts university with 5,000 students. A technologically advanced university, UIS often serves as the prototype for the University of Illinois family – as well as many universities throughout the country - testing and incubating new technology that impacts learning. UIS was the first wireless campus with a strong online learning program, and 90% of their classrooms are Smart.

the challenge

UIS recently built University Hall for social studies and humanities, with nearly 40 classrooms to accommodate its growing student body. They previously used mobile projectors on carts in other classrooms throughout campus, but for this building, they wanted a true networked, wireless environment.

Albert Whittenberg, associate director of education technology and his team understood the impact this technology would have on student learning, and how it also could help generate positive exposure about the university's commitment to providing the most advanced resources and tools to help students get the very best education.

The major challenge was making this happen with a tight budget.

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the solution

Fox River Graphics, a leading audiovisual reseller, found the answer. Partnering with the SMARTer Kids Foundation (SKF), a national private organization that provides grants to equip classrooms with technology, they developed a solution with NEC, a leader in projector and plasma displays and the only large area display SKF partner.

Fox River and NEC worked with UIS to develop a special G-standard wireless environment, with two powerful installed NEC projectors that deliver reliable, vivid images to 32 classrooms. The application required the hardwire networking capability of an installed NEC multimedia projector with interactive whiteboards and PCM100 network cards to perform remote diagnostics of the projector from a Local Area Network (LAN) to ensure they are all working properly at all times. The power zoom and power focus of the projector make it easy to accommodate each surface and allow the user to switch screens and adjust image size on the screen being used - with a simple push of a button.

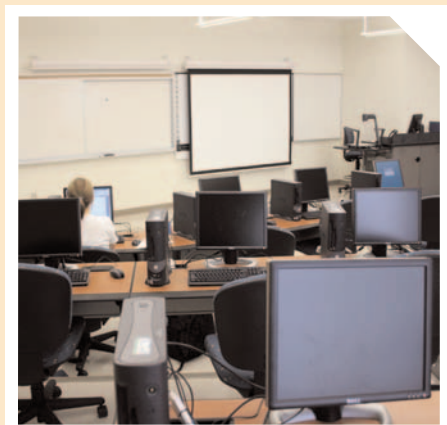
the benefits

Now students can quickly broadcast presentations on projectors without having to email them to the professor. Instead of using outdated blackboards or flip charts, interactive whiteboards powered by a powerful NEC projector store graphics and images from brainstorming. Video now appears “larger than life” and captures the attention of students.

The NEC projectors also are easy to set up and operate, in addition to being extremely quiet.

Now, Whittenberg and his team can easily monitor the networked computers, turning them on and off with from their office. This saves energy costs, reduces lamp replacements and enables the technology team to use their time more effectively.

“Students and prospective students are very excited about UIS’ commitment to providing the latest technology in our classrooms,” said Whittenberg. “Everyone else was way out of our budget – not even remotely close. The NEC/SKF grant made it possible for us to equip students and faculty with the best technology on the market – and serve as an example to other learning institutions.”



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