



SP Controls Case Study

Standardizing Classrooms for Ease of Use

Chabot College is an accredited community college located in Hayward, California. Home to over 13,000 students and offering more than 100 associate degrees and certificates, the college offers technical and career-vocational programs; transfer programs to four-year universities; general education; ESL programs and community / continuing education programs.

Fifteen classroom buildings comprising 84 classrooms were outfitted with room AV control systems from SP Controls. “Our instructors were asking for consistent, simple control of AV equipment in the classrooms,” said Don Fuller, Instructional Systems Tech in Chabot College’s ITS department. “We wanted to make sure they were happy with the system, so we began the project by setting up four test classrooms using a variety of control products.” “None of the test rooms had SP Controls in them. However, at some point we got a demonstration of an SP Controls-enabled classroom, and were impressed enough that we decided to make it our standard.”

Each classroom uses an identical set of control components in the SP Controls PixiePro line:
A PixiePro control panel, which requires no programming and can learn and replicate commands for almost any IR-controllable device;
A Networked Room Controller (NRC), an independent, browser-based controller for any display device;
Control Pucks for the NRC providing RS232, infrared and relay output contacts to equipment;
An Audio Follow Video Preamp Plus (AFVP+), a 5x1 audio switcher and volume control device.

The NRC, AFVP+ and control pucks are all able to be installed out of sight. Because of their small size, they fit easily in a cabinet, under a table or on a wall and take up no rack space. The only thing an instructor sees is the modular PixiePro panel, which contains buttons for equipment selection, navigation controls for DVD players and other devices, volume up and down, mute, and other functions. A single set of on/off buttons activates the AV system in the room. “This User Interface is very intuitive and allows easy familiarization with the user group,” said Don. He noted that a wide variety of products are managed with the SP Controls System. “Our classroom technology includes data projectors, flat screen LED monitors, DVD/VHS combo players, Blu-Ray players, projection screens, power sequencers and A/V switchers.”

All SP Controls systems on campus are set up to be managed via SmartView software from SP Controls. Designed for use with the NRC, SmartView allows management of the system from any web browser on the local network. “We use SmartView to monitor and manage the classrooms,” Don said. “This includes a universal ‘OFF’ command at a set time every night to preserve the equipment life span. Any configuration or equipment change programming is done through SmartView also.”

Don said the instructors are very happy with the system. “They like the fact that no matter what building they are teaching in, the control systems all have a very similar look, feel and functionality. They wish that the ancillary equipment was as reliable. Our department is also very happy with SP controls. The reliability of the control systems, and the responsiveness of SP Controls on support questions, has allowed us to concentrate on training and new technology testing and support.”



The PixiePro by SP Controls offers a wall-mounted, centralized access point to room AV equipment. Because the control panel is the same from room to room, instructors are able to operate the equipment no matter where they are teaching that day.

Chabot College is now exploring the use of Doceri by SP Controls – a tablet-based tool for control and annotation from anywhere in the classroom.

For more information, contact:

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