

Mercer County Community College One Mission Many Channels

Mercer County Community College (MCCC), based in West Windsor, New Jersey serves approximately 30,000 students with credit and non-credit courses. They also program a local educational television channel that is carried by the county's three cable system operators: Comcast, Cablevision and Verizon FiOS. Initially the programming for the channel was handed off via 18GHz microwave links or sub-band coaxial backhauls, but over the years each system has converted to a baseband fiber backhaul for the channel.

Before engaging TelVue[®], MCCC used tape-based media playout systems to broadcast programming for 25 educational programs. This was a labor-intensive process that required one full-time engineer to handle the playback and switching. The challenge of supporting the channel was exacerbated by periodic failures of videotape machines and tape jams. Automation was not viable due to the high capital costs of tape automation systems, but lack of automation created additional labor costs for running repeats of the 4-hour programming blocks. As budgets shrank and programming demands grew, MCCC needed to come up with a more efficient way to support the varying needs of their campus and county constituents.

Benefits Of File-Based Playout

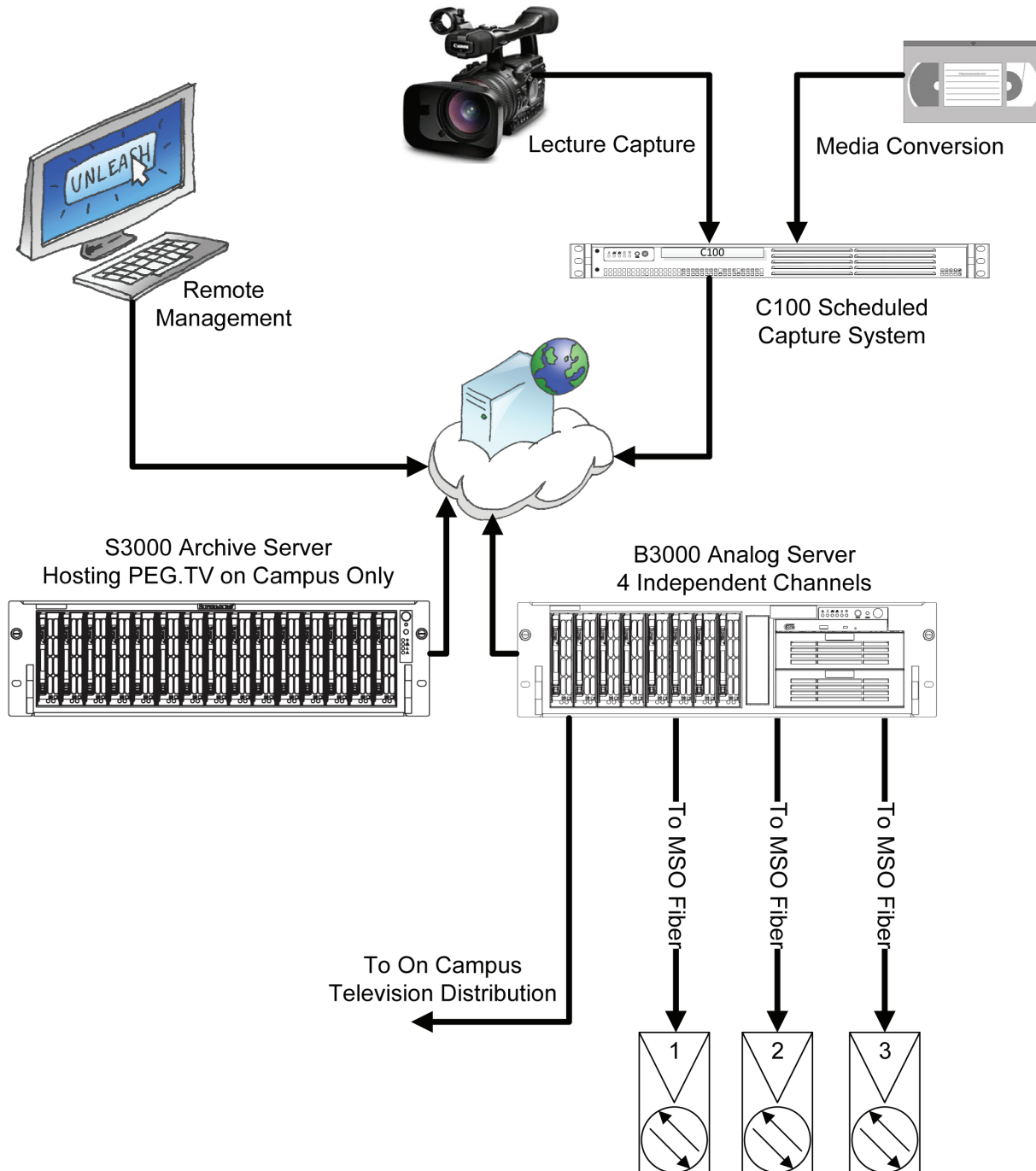
After the TelVue[®] engineering team demonstrated the programming efficiencies that could be achieved by switching to a file-based playout system, MCCC purchased and integrated their first digital video server—a B1000-Analog with three independent playout channels. This single rack unit high server eliminated a half-rack of baseband playback gear and dramatically improved workflow and reliability. With the new server in place MCCC began to encode its legacy, tape-based content for playout. Now they could manage their file-based content, automate the scheduling, and free up the equivalent of one full-time job to help develop more original content.

Platform To Build On

Later, when the college developed a degree program in television production and started offering digital film courses, they sought to enhance their content capture capabilities and implement a new playback channel that would only be seen on campus. To accomplish this goal, MCCC purchased a TelVue[®] B3000 server with multiple capture cards. This enabled new student-produced content—a news show, a cooking program, and high school sports tournaments—to be created at the college. The new content capture capability also enabled the college to record guest speakers and classroom lectures for use at a later time.

In total, thousands of hours of content produced at MCCC and acquired from other educational institutions are now archived and available to students throughout the campus. Lectures can be pulled on-demand for review, and marquis speaking events can be incorporated into classroom teaching.

Tony Bruzaitis, MCCC's Director of Media and Instructional Technologies, believes that the multi-screen broadcast capabilities provided by the TelVue® platform will play an increasing role on the MCCC campus to permit students to access video on mobile devices such as tablets and smart phones. "Being positioned for HD and mobile media delivery is key," he said, "In selecting a technology partner, once you are comfortable with the stability and reliability of equipment, you have to decide who is going to position your institution for what is coming next."



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