

PhillyCAM: A PEG Success Story

The advantages of starting a “born digital” station.

SITUATION: On February 8, 2012, [Philadelphia Community Access Media](#) – better known as PhillyCAM – went live for the first time from a shiny new studio in the heart of the city. Although the resources for a community access station in Philadelphia had been earmarked since 1983, it took more than a quarter of a century of political wrangling to make it happen. But there is one silver lining to being a late-comer: when PhillyCAM finally got the green light, it was spared the analog legacy that burdened much of the PEG world. PhillyCAM was free to design a [digital only operation](#) from the ground up.

PhillyCAM first went on the air (Comcast channels 66/966 & Verizon channels 29/30) in October of 2009 with a mix of pre-recorded programming. At first they had no physical facility at all, and then set up shop in temporary quarters at an art center, while plans for the new headquarters were taking shape. In 2009 PhillyCAM had one employee: its Executive Director and longtime champion, Gretjen Clausing. Negotiating the political gamut was hard enough; now Clausing had to navigate the technical hurdles of putting a channel on the air with no facility, little equipment, and a few dedicated volunteers.

SOLUTION: With limited resources, a turnkey solution to getting a TV channel up and running was what attracted PhillyCAM to TelVue. TelVue’s “TV channel in a box” solution had already helped hundreds of PEG stations make the transition to digital. Even the station’s less technically-minded people could learn how to upload and schedule programming with ease.

PhillyCAM went on the air in 2009 with a [TelVue Princeton[®] B3000 broadcast server](#), located directly at the Comcast head end in City Hall. Because the B3000 has an Internet-based programming interface, PhillyCAM’s Programming Director, Debbie Rudman, is able to schedule an unlimited amount of programs from anywhere, even her smartphone. “The interface enables us to have good control over sending out programs over multiple platforms,” says Rudman.

When PhillyCAM moved into temporary quarters, it expanded its capabilities with a [TelVue[®] Turbo[™]](#), which transcodes the B3000’s MPEG-2 files into the web-friendly H.264 format and loads them into [TelVue’s PEG.TV[™] service](#), a hosted content management solution that creates video streams for viewing online, on smartphones, and most recently, on Over-the-Top (OTT) boxes like [Roku[®]](#).

It may have taken PhillyCAM 25 years to get on the air, but it took less than a year to reach a global audience.

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