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UNIVERSITY ROLLS OUT RACKLINK

CASE STUDY

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>
> *- Brennan Watson*
> *Class Tech Design Engineer*

CHALLENGE

NC State University, a land-grant institution in Raleigh, serves more than 36,000 undergraduate and graduate students and employs over 9,000 faculty and staff. They are breaking ground in many fields, and AV pros would be well advised to check out the James B. Hunt Jr. Library's facilities. They're pretty amazing.

The campus sprawls across nearly 2,100 acres! The NC State tech team has strategically placed help desks across campus to be able to provide a quick response if and when AV equipment causes issues in a classroom, killing the momentum of the lesson. Recently, with many students being off campus, the shortage of student workers for the AV tech team has also been problematic. The tech team relies heavily on student workers to help troubleshoot issues that arise. On top of that, planned and unplanned power outages can be rough on staff and equipment. Even the greatest planning is no match for the occasional squirrel with a mission to cause a power outage.

NC State does have planned power outages for upgrades around campus. In preparation, the tech team would have to unplug everything in person to protect the equipment, sometimes with hard-to-access equipment.

"We have regular scheduled power outages on campus," said Brennan Watson, Class Tech Design Engineer. "We wanted to be able to quickly and easily power down or power up systems."

After installing new Vaddio PTZ cameras the prior year, they were well aware of the benefits of remote management, and were looking to similarly update their AV systems power solutions.

SOLUTION

NC State selected Middle Atlantic's Premium+ Power Distribution Units (PDUs) with RackLink™ to provide a solution. RackLink remote power management has varying features to support AV applications, from individual outlet control and monitoring to environmental monitoring and data logging.

When AV devices in the classroom freeze, the most common solution is a hard power reset. Now the tech team can remotely turn an outlet off and on from a computer, mobile device, control system or cloud service instead of physically going to the unit. AutoPing, a unique feature of the chosen solution, can constantly proactively monitor the network status of connected devices and reboot them automatically if the devices no longer respond – allowing the AV team to work on other projects with a greater return on the time investment.

Other features of the chosen solution include external temperature and humidity sensors that can trigger responses like turning on fans within the rack. Not a lot of rooms have adequate airflow into the equipment cabinet, said Kevin Ficker, Class Tech Programmer, adding it's a nice feature to have in his back pocket if they run into an issue where they think temperatures are causing equipment failure.

RESULT

They've installed 200 rooms so far with the RackLink PDUs and moving forward will be using it as the standard.

"We are blessed that we are able to standardize across campus," Ficker said. "It helps with support and helps faculty to know what to expect.

We made sure every room was capable of lecture capture and use RackLink to cycle power remotely."

Products used:

Premium+ PDU with RackLink™

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