

CASE STUDY

PENDLETON COUNTY SCHOOLS

Overview

- K-12 school district wanted to use technology in classrooms for lessons
- District-wide technology was updated with E-Rate program funding
- School district plans to continue to grow their technology platforms



Pendleton County
SCHOOL DISTRICT



Pendleton County School District in Kentucky is comprised of four school buildings and serves over 2,600 K-12 students. In 2010, the district underwent a project to renovate its facilities. The renovation included new construction, upgrades to existing buildings, and a refresh of classroom technology, which focused on using streaming video as a teaching tool.

As part of the renovation project, the district decided to upgrade its video distribution system for all classrooms. Before the upgrade, the classrooms were equipped with VCRs and TV tuner cards that were used by the teachers to display programming in the classrooms. However, during the renovation, VCRs became missing or non-functional, standard definition (SD) televisions were becoming obsolete, and digital media requests were becoming more popular with the staff. That kicked off the process of finding a digital streaming solution that would allow them to deliver media to all classrooms seamlessly over the existing Local Area Network (LAN).

Action

Michelle Crowley, CIO for the district, was first introduced to the VBrick EtherneTV (ETV) system at a tradeshow. After further research, she discovered that the VBrick solution may be eligible for funding through the federal E-Rate program. The E-Rate program makes discounts available to eligible K-12 schools and libraries for telecommunication services, Internet access, and internal connections. Video equipment used for distance learning is eligible for the program and the VBrick equipment had already been pre-approved by the Universal Services Administration Company (USAC), the federal entity that oversees the E-Rate program. The E-Rate program was created through the FCC Telecommunications Act of 1996 to ensure that economically challenged schools and libraries would have access to affordable telecommunications and information services. Pendleton County Schools decided to implement the VBrick EtherneTV solution to provide streaming audio/video

distribution to all 200 classrooms. The VBrick solution gives each classroom access to live and on-demand content including TV channels, purchased media, and self-created content. Teachers have individual control from their laptops where they can select media content based on search criteria as it related to the applicable curriculum. The content can then be delivered over the LAN where it's displayed via projectors to screens in each classroom. Self-generated content such as classroom lectures being recorded, a class play, sporting event, or graduation can also be captured and uploaded to the system for on-demand playback.

Additional functionality was also added as Pendleton invested in several VBrick Express kits – a portable streaming solution that consists of a camera, microphone, encoder, tripod and switch mounted in a travel case. Students can use these kits for special projects in classes and webcast special events, student productions, and guest speakers. "It is nice to be able to share a guest speaker among the entire student body without having to gather in one central location," said Michelle.

The Pendleton students and staff have found the solution to be simple to use, easy to manage, and full of endless possibilities as it pertains to media distribution and management.

Additional applications are always being discovered, such as the ability to transfer older VCR tape libraries to the VBrick on-demand server. These assets can then be tagged, categorized, and managed according to user permissions and copyright agreements thanks to the system's Teach Act compliance.

Results

The Benefit: Improved Communication, Ease of Use and Expansion Possibilities

Students already had other types of technology available to them in the classroom, so the VBrick implementation was easy to learn and use. Teachers were very excited about the new media distribution system and immediately began using it to strengthen and deliver their curriculum.

The IDS team installed and configured the solution in just three days and provided training to the Pendleton network administrator, media specialists, and teachers. "The installation and training went very well; we have been happy with the install," said Michelle. Michelle has a solid game plan and anticipates getting maximum use out of the system. She intends to fully utilize the existing system capabilities and resources as well as ensure that 80% to 90% of teachers are using the system regularly. Future use plans include streaming morning announcements, board meeting recording, training session delivery, and distribution of other important events.

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MICHELLE CROWLEY
CEO

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