Case Study

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Colorado State Emergency Operations Center Achieves Real-time Disaster Monitoring with NEC Display Solutions

Facility:
- Colorado State Emergency Operations Center

Vertical:
- Command and Control

Location:
- Centennial, Colorado

Challenges:
- Attain enhanced, real-time visibility into emergency situations

Solution:
- NEC Display Solutions X464UN-2

Result:
- Ability to display a much wider and greater volume of information

Date of Installation
- June 2014

When it comes to responding in a swift and unfailing manner, the Colorado State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) realizes the stakes are high. It is the central hub for all tribal, local, state and federal agencies to coordinate responses to hazard events, incidents and disasters throughout the state. Additionally, a steadfast rise in the volume of information from various outlets has made it necessary for the SEOC to monitor many different sources simultaneously.

The Challenge

Operations Section Chief Chris Sorensen and his team dealt for years with closeout equipment installed when the organization subleased the building that houses the SEOC. It consisted primarily of six-foot drop-down projector screens, overhead projectors and three 42-inch plasma screens. By 2014, much of the equipment was either non-functional or faced a dwindling life span.

Additionally, the former setup obstructed the view of some team members in the emergency operations center space. The room is roughly 25 x 60 feet with 9-foot ceilings, providing space for about 50-60 work stations. This set-up made it difficult for some team members to see the important information being displayed because the space lacked the signal replication capabilities that a video wall can offer.

Visibility issues extended to the projected images, which were not bright enough for team members to view. And lowering the lights rendered the environment adverse to video conferencing, which is a feature team members use for their day-to-day activities.

The SEOC desired the ability to replicate signals from one side of the room to the other, in order to provide redundancy and increased angle of use. This would enable all team members in the emergency operations center space to view the content regardless of the side of the room where they sat. With a video wall, the team would also be able to place different images on the displays that comprised the wall.

The Solution

Ed Kern, Director of Installations at CCS Presentation Systems, oversaw the process of selecting equipment for the SEOC's upgrade, which had an exceptionally tight timeframe. CCS recommended NEC Display Solutions products because it found the displays easy to install and calibrate during a similar project where NEC was installed. Sorensen and his team agreed readily, based on NEC's stellar reputation and the ultra-narrow bezels featured on its X464UN-2 displays, which were an important consideration for the video walls

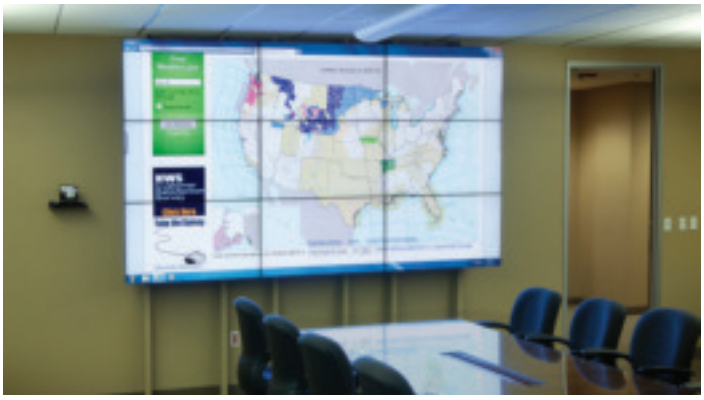
it envisioned. NEC offered a level of support that the timeframe of the project demanded, as well.

"We worked together with the SEOC electricians, the IT department, management and facilities staff to execute the installation in a timely manner. Everyone jumped through hoops to make it happen. NEC was also extremely helpful," Kern said, adding, "Our contact, Eric Fatovic, was stellar in reserving product for the task, as we had no room for error in delivery. He also ensured that NEC would ship the displays to us in a timely fashion, which they executed successfully. Without NEC's support, we could not have made that commitment to the state."

In June 2014, CCS installed a total of 45 monitors to create two video walls. The

larger wall in the emergency operations center space is a 12 X 3 and consists of 36 monitors, while the smaller configuration in the policy room is a 3 X 3 and consists of nine monitors.

The video walls have become an integral part of the operations of the SEOC. The state holds meetings and trainings at the SEOC facilities on a regular basis, using the video wall as a display in those scenarios. The video wall is also helpful in emergencies when the SEOC needs to use different situational awareness tools. Colorado also has a platform it leverages statewide, in accordance with local and state agencies, to record what happens during an incident. The content ranges from broad-based overviews to flash reports, all of which the



SEOC can easily display on the video walls. Satellite feeds are another use, for measuring local and national media which is displayed on the video walls for the team members to view. Finally, the SEOC also connects to a video conferencing center that allows it to monitor emergencies in real-time – for example, a fire – as they unfold.

The main display wall is one piece of a fully integrated setup in the center. The technology routes a feed from interactive displays to the video wall, as well as non-NEC displays bordering the perimeter of the room. A central interface makes it possible for team members to easily select information sources and outlets, and to make new selections at a moment's notice.

Sorensen has been thrilled with the results so far. The world has changed dramatically in terms of emergency response tactics. As a result, the demand to display a much wider and greater volume of information has increased exponentially. According to Sorensen, the SEOC can do just that with the NEC video walls. The ability to divide the video screens into three to four sets of screens, even breaking it down into individual screens if necessary, has proven highly valuable. For example, the team can now access footage from a traffic camera that provides a view of an incident on one screen, and review mappings generated by units on another screen.

"We could not do anything remotely close to it with the old equipment. NEC Display video walls allow us to display a wider variety of information in formats that make more sense, and to access it on-the-fly," Sorensen said.

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