



# Viewpoints

v o l u m e 2

## 20 questions

**B**efore purchasing a visual communications system, you might explore the following questions. Your answers can help determine the type and quantity of system components you need, and serve to inspire benchmarks for measuring the success of your visual communications campaigns in the future.

1. On average, how many people are you attempting to reach with your communications?
2. How many audiences do you have (faculty, staff, students, visitors) and what technologies do they use for communications, information and entertainment?
3. Do you track the success of communications on your campus? (How many people open email announcements? How many people visit Intranet or Internet postings? What percentage of your students attend events that you promote?)
4. On average, how much activity, attendance or revenue does each campaign generate?
5. If you could better target marketing efforts, do you think you could increase the likelihood of attendance, satisfaction or cross-selling opportunities? What increase would you expect?
6. How much time is spent each month managing traditional communication mediums like print, Intranet, Internet or email campaigns?
7. What is the average cost per labor hour? How effective are these media?
8. If you implement a visual communications system, can it replace any of these existing media?
9. What would the cost savings be for eliminating them, including production time, printing, delivery and disposal?
10. How frequently do you change printed signs, bulletin boards or schedules? What are the associated costs?
11. Have you considered the environmental impact of printed communications?
12. Is there any value in delivering announcements and alerts instantaneously?
13. How can this technology fit into your emergency preparedness plans?
14. Could you use existing TVs to deliver more than just video, cable or satellite signals?
15. If you were able to better educate and entertain your audience, do you believe that you would increase the overall sense of community on campus? Could that change contribute to student recruitment and/or faculty retention?
16. Would it be beneficial to raise awareness of your school's involvement in the local community?
17. What would it be worth to you to update or modernize your school's brand image?
18. Would it be valuable to use the same visual communications displays for teleconferencing, web-training and or video announcements?
19. Are productivity or safety measures important to your audiences? What communication techniques do you use to improve productivity and safety?
20. What media do you use to recognize outstanding performance by individuals or groups?



### ABOUT VISIX, INC.

Visix provides a suite of software applications that allow users to create, import and manage their visual communications from anywhere and to deliver those messages to virtually any endpoint.

We offer digital signage software, room and event scheduling solutions, and applications for targeted messaging to desktops and portable devices. Each of our products works independently or can be integrated into scalable deployments from a single display to large networks. Our comprehensive approach to on-time communications - from concept to delivery - provides systems including software, hardware and distribution accessories, as well as multi-tier service and support options to manage and maintain dynamic visual communications.

Our mission is to help communicators better reach their audience. By providing innovative and powerful software tools that are easy-to-use and easily accessible, we aim to improve the value of visual messages and to involve a greater number of people in the communications process.

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# Communications for your CAMPUS



## Break through the clutter and be heard.

Whether they're large universities, specialized technical schools, or community colleges, campuses are using visual communications to break through barriers like audience attention span, information overload, and even language and literacy. No matter how mobile, diverse, or busy your students and staff may be, you can reach them like never before.

And we can prove it.

In the following pages, our higher education clients speak out about Visix technologies, sharing their challenges and applications for improving their visual communications.

## contents

We've talked with users in a range of educational settings about how Visix software has improved their communications:

- 4 American University
- 5 Bryant University
- 6 Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
- 7 Georgia Perimeter College
- 8 Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
- 9 Lander University
- 10 Montgomery County Community College
- 11 Stamp Student Union (University of Maryland)
- 12 University at Buffalo
- 13 USC Viterbi School of Engineering
- 14 University of Virginia
- 15 Virginia Commonwealth University

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**"Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one." - MALCOLM FORBES**

## **American University: Expanding Information Delivery**

Northwest Washington, D.C.'s American University (AU) has an impressive library: 1,035,000 volumes, more than 1 million microfilms, 36,900 sound recordings, 21,055 electronic journals, 13,600 musical scores, 11,400 films and videos, 2,900 print periodicals, and 65+ newspaper subscriptions. "We wanted to present information to people as they enter the library," says Evgeny Bisk, Team Leader, Systems for the AU Library. "All we had was a desktop computer on the front desk running PowerPoints®."

Bisk and his team "saw how easy it is to create, publish, alter and display content" with AxisTV. They purchased the Professional Edition, two channel players and a Software Maintenance Agreement (SMA).

"We put up a 42-inch plasma in the main lobby," Bisk tells us, "to send information on library classes and initiatives, and library policies – like 'no cell phones, please'. Displays point users to the lower levels, where they can check out laptops if the desktop computers are all full. We also utilize the Screen Saver option, to communicate if we haven't caught them at the entrance."

The primary plasma display shows relevant content in three windows, with a cable feed in a smaller window and weather updates.

"We also liked the emergency ticker option," continues Bisk. "Students gather around the display to watch the CNN feed and then they get the other messages at the same time."

AU also added AxisTV to the entrance point in the Anderson Computing Complex, a state-of-the-art facility with over 160 internet-ready computers and five electronic classrooms.

Because the software is browser-based and intuitive, AU gets messages up fast. "The ease of content creation, because it's web-based, just couldn't be easier," explains Bisk.

An in-house graphic designer does a lot of the content creation, as does the Webmaster, mainly using PowerPoint® and custom graphics made in PhotoShop®, with the occasional Flash® animation. "We also have two or three other people working on content and may expand soon, to, for example, the reference desk."

The AU library plans to add more displays and channel players, install room signs, tie into their event scheduling application, and integrate the Web Page Capture option. "I want to show how many computers are currently free so people will know upon arrival whether to go to the computing center or head downstairs and check out a laptop."

**"content creation, because it's web-based just couldn't be easier"**

## **Connect. Collaborate.**

Our new online community provides a safe, collaborative platform where Visix software users can share ideas, ask questions and discuss experiences. [visixforum.com](http://visixforum.com) offers multiple ways to learn and converse:

- . Forums to hold conversations
- . Blogs by Visix staff
- . Photo galleries with sample graphics, facility photos and more
- . Online training modules
- . Technical documentation
- . Sample AxisTV policies
- . AxisTV tools
- . and more...

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## Bryant University: "Student-Centered" Communications Savvy

Bryant University, in Smithfield, Rhode Island, has prided itself on being a "student-centered" university since its founding in 1863. With 400 graduate and 3200 undergraduate students from 31 states and 32 countries on a 420-acre campus, communications are critical for preserving that focus.

The entire university campus is Wi-Fi enabled and students are issued laptops for the duration of their studies. Even the student lounges have large video wall displays to engage and communicate with the student body. "Technology is an important tool in this highly interconnected global economy," stated Ronald K. Machtley, president of Bryant.

Bryant has not always been the "wired" leader it is today. A particular challenge in the past was communications, as most announcements were delivered in print via overcrowded bulletin boards. Three years ago, a bulletin board was set on fire and caused significant damage. Bryant knew that the current system wasn't working – the school administration banned paper notices and turned to Visix and AxisTV.

Visix and Bryant worked to implement a paperless solution that would meet communication needs for the administration, while reinforcing their "student-centered" philosophy by providing a straightforward channel for delivering student notices.

The challenge was met with the AxisTV Professional Edition software application, paired with a comprehensive hardware package including channel players, a content management and Web-hosting server, a supporting network infrastructure and audiovisual signal distribution to peripheral displays.

The school installed digital display stations around campus in popular high-traffic areas such as lobbies, corridors and lounges. Each digital display station includes two plasma screens – one for administrative use and one for student notices. The administration uses AxisTV to deliver class schedule information, school bulletins, and public service announcements.

Students have actively embraced the technology, and most new content comes from their side of the equation. Student messages include information about university-sanctioned organizations and clubs, sports teams, theatrical productions, student union notices, guest speakers, fraternity and sorority events, and more.

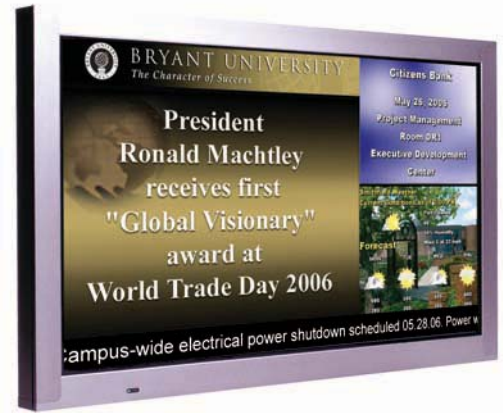
"The system is so flexible," commented Roger A. Acosta, Internal Media Coordinator at Bryant University. "There's constantly something new going up, circulating around the system, being commented on, inspiring others to make their own contributions."

Bryant has also strengthened student-administration cooperation by publishing standardized policies on how to access, create and schedule messages in AxisTV.

Any student can submit a bulletin for display using a lab workstation paired with an authorized password provided by the appropriate Bryant advisor. A library of backgrounds and text editing tools allow students to express their creativity when designing communications. The AxisTV system holds the bulletin for approval by the department head, who then approves it or suggests changes. "Even though the technology is virtually instantaneous, with approval policies it can take a couple of days to get messages up on the system, so we ask people to plan ahead," said Acosta.

Acosta and other Bryant administrators have been extremely pleased with the results of integrating AxisTV into campus life. An obvious advantage is the speed with which messages are delivered. "If there's an emergency, everyone can be notified immediately," stated Acosta.

AxisTV also interfaces with CollegeNet's R25 – a campus-wide class and event scheduling software application. The two systems work together seamlessly to communicate room and event schedules.



Also popular is AxisTV's capacity for video and audio input communications. Streaming video is pumped directly into the corridor displays and through the university's cable TV system in classrooms and dorm rooms. AxisTV also allows for short audio clips to be attached to bulletins.

There have been some significant unexpected benefits of the digital signage integration at Bryant. Unauthorized advertisements from credit card companies and solicitors that used to clutter bulletin boards have been eliminated. Also, paper banners and their remnants often used to litter common areas. "It looked like a flea market," said Acosta. "This new system is clean – it's all digital so there's no mess at all."

**"if there's an emergency,  
everyone can be notified  
immediately"**



**"The great aim of education is not knowledge but action." - HERBERT SPENCER**

## **Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University: Reaching Students with Big News and Small**

When a tornado struck the Florida campus of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in late 2006, Brian Wilson and his team began working in earnest to expand their use of AxisTV.

"The tornado took out a couple of buildings on campus, and people had to be relocated," explains Wilson, Classroom and Lab Support Technician. "Right after students came back from holiday break, we used the AxisTV system, posted signs and set up computers and monitors in different areas just to get information out."

Getting updated communications to areas not using AxisTV during this impromptu set up was largely manual and time consuming. Wilson believes AxisTV would have made the difference if the system had been more extensive. "We knew if we had this tool implemented across campus, we could get the information out in about three minutes."

Wilson and his team are fans of AxisTV since they successfully replaced a bulletin board for printed student advertising with digital signage. They've also tied AxisTV into the school's cable TV system to broadcast notices for student organizations.

The school's College of Aviation has expanded their digital signage system with AxisTV's Professional edition. The college has three plasma displays showing a split screen with half devoted to campus-wide communications and the other half broadcasting messages specific to the College of Aviation. The campus-wide and student organization playlist is run by the school's Information Center through the Dean of Student Life on Campus, and it presents the same content that runs on its campus cable channel.

Wilson set up the college's AxisTV access so that people could update content on their own. "They are loving it," offers Wilson. "They can put up whatever they want. Maybe a notice about a guest speaker, reminding students they need to register, a welcome for visitors. And they can update it right from their offices."

Wilson elaborates, "Right now the main content creator at the college is the Administrative Assistant to the Dean. It took me about four minutes to train her on how to post. She had a couple of follow up questions but she was up and running quickly."

"A favorite feature is AxisTV's scheduling interface that allows bulletins and postings to come off playlists automatically. The Dean's Office schedules events anywhere from three months to a year and half out. They create welcome screens for when they're going to happen in the future, and it's nice not having to go back and delete them after the fact."

Embry-Riddle runs three Visix channel players - two at its Daytona Beach campus and one at its campus in Prescott, Arizona. "They have their own channel player there, connected to our server here, and they update their content remotely." Visix's Screen Saver feature helps Wilson monitor communications coming from the Prescott campus. "I run the Screen Saver and pull content from our channel player in Arizona."

The channel player in Prescott feeds a 63" plasma in the school's visitor center. One channel player in Daytona is connected to a plasma and LCD in their student union and feeds the school's cable channel, so messages can be seen everywhere on campus. The third channel player feeds three 42" plasmas at the College of Aviation.

**"we knew if we had this tool implemented across campus, we could get the information out in about three minutes"**

"We are in the process of putting up a new building for our College of Business. We're also moving our main computer lab there, and we're debating one channel player for the college's lobby, or maybe two in order to have one for the college and one for IT to run information for the computer labs."

"We're also kicking around some ideas on how to integrate AxisTV into the Web, and possibly the optional feature where you can show Flash® content. That would be attractive for students when they're at home off campus. For example, if I'm on the crew team and I log into email, I may see a notice on the portal's main page that the meeting is cancelled. Or if there's another tornado," Wilson stresses, "I can see when classes will be rescheduled."



## **Go Ahead. Show Off!**

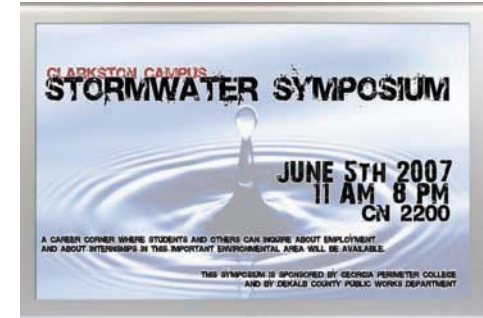
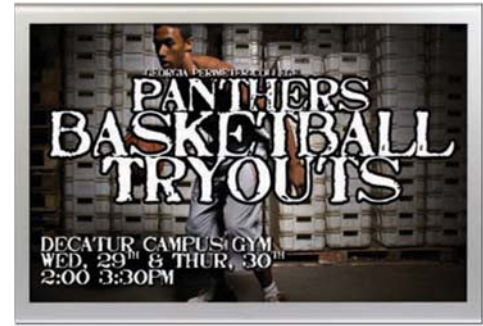
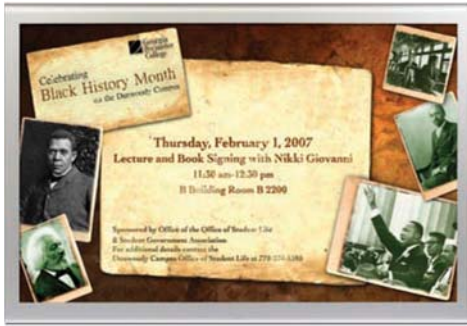
Visix clients produce terrific content every day.

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The Visix Expression Awards annually recognize our clients' accomplishments in still design, animation and video, published policies and communications campaigns.

The call for entries is issued in our monthly e-newsletter.

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## Georgia Perimeter College: Bringing Multiple Campuses Full Circle

When Assistant Director Glenn Sierko explains why Georgia Perimeter College implemented AxisTV at its four campuses around the metropolitan Atlanta area, the answer is simple. “You have to keep up with the times. It’s what’s expected by students.”

Yet the students weren’t the only ones looking for something better. High-definition screens had already been installed at various locations, and the time had come to make the most of the investment. The school’s new media team was using Enscriber for a distance-learning channel on cable TV and VideoNet for screens at one campus, but they were hoping for a simpler and more consistent process for delivering content. After just a little searching, they found the decision easy: AxisTV.

“There were some, but not as many as you would think that were providing that level of product and that level of integration with other products,” says Sierko.

“You’d be amazed as to what our earlier legacy system was charging us just to maintain a VideoNet-based system.”

Adding to the cost, software updates were getting lost because they were still being sent through a traditional phone line and modem. The school switched to an IP-based phone system, and they had to recreate a modem line just for the updates. It wasn’t working.

“We needed something that was network-based and that was up-to-date. AxisTV seemed to be the best product that we could easily see,” adds Sierko.

Today, GPC uses nine Visix channel players in thirteen buildings to send content to large-screen displays, and it’s a more immediate communication vehicle for all four campuses. To help faculty and staff get the word out about campus events, Sierko’s team created a media request form on the employee Web page where they request AV equipment.

“If you’re having an event that requires additional equipment, there’s a chance you would want to advertise it,” explains Sierko.

On the request form staff can request publicity on AxisTV, and what would have been a printed poster gets displayed on LCD screens throughout campus. “AxisTV allows you to schedule, and the request form tells us how long they want it played. The calendaring program is neat because there is no need to remove slides after the event,” adds Sierko.

“I think it’s nice to have what are essentially posters as well for events,” adds New Media Designer Garrett DeHart, who takes the content sent by school staff and formats it for the screen. “We can run many of those at the same time and not spend the money for big glossy posters that we would have done otherwise.”

Perimeter’s use of AxisTV is just beginning. They are exploring integrating video, using screen space for cable news, and adding the Screen Saver option in the school’s many computer labs. Sierko and his team are also looking at tying the AxisTV system to their R25 room-scheduling software and emergency broadcast capabilities.

“Visix has a knowledgeable sales staff. They had good clear view of what the product could do and what it could do in future,” concludes Sierko.

**"you have to keep up with the times. it's what the students expect"**



"the web interface is really easy and brings down the training barrier"

## Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis: Communicating Large

Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) is an urban research and academic health sciences campus, with 22 schools and academic units which grant degrees in over 200 programs from both Indiana University and Purdue University.

IUPUI was created in 1969 as a partnership by and between Indiana and Purdue Universities, with IU as the managing partner. With over 29,000 students representing 49 states and 122 countries, IUPUI is the second-largest campus in the Indiana University state-wide system.

IUPUI has been using digital signage to communicate with students and faculty for a little over five years. "Originally, we turned to digital signage as an alternative to the classic bulletin board system," says Nathan Byrer, Technology Director, University College. "The boards always had outdated postings and messages got lost in the clutter."

The university switched to AxisTV from an outdated legacy system. "AxisTV allows us to expand up instead of out," continues Byrer. "We had another provider, but they didn't update their product. There was no expansion of its features or capabilities, and it worked on old push technology."

Visix's regularly scheduled and published updates for AxisTV held huge appeal for Byrer, who is continuously looking to enhance and expand the system's capabilities. The built-in integration for Dean Evans and Associates EMS Enterprise® scheduling software was another solid advantage.

"AxisTV provides everyone on campus more opportunities and greater access to information," says Byrer. "We're working to leverage technology to maximize our communications."

IUPUI is currently running thirteen channel players driving content to a mix of plasma screens and 17-inch computer monitors mounted in corridors and gathering places throughout University College and the Library. *JagTV* – as their AxisTV system is branded – is also piped into dorm rooms using a campus cable feed.

"Our focus is on student services," says Byrer. "We use digital signage to direct students to the Career Center, the Mentoring Center, Academic Advising, International Affairs and Rec-Sports." Bulletins, tickers, PowerPoint® and event schedules all contribute to *JagTV*. Content includes room schedules, student organization notices and general communications.

IUPUI newsletter content is republished in a bottom ticker. They also use the External Graphic Link option to pull weather maps and information from the Web.

"Manageability is fantastic compared to competitors," says Byrer. His team heads up the creative process, but other departments have direct access to publish their messages.



The Communications and Marketing department contributes content for one of three windows on plasma displays. The large window holds graphics created by Byrer's team, with the third window displaying bulletins from other departments. "The Web interface is really easy and brings down the training barrier."

Student organizations currently work through a request and approval process to publish their communications.

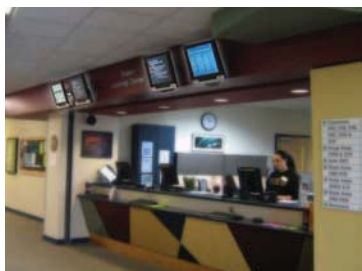
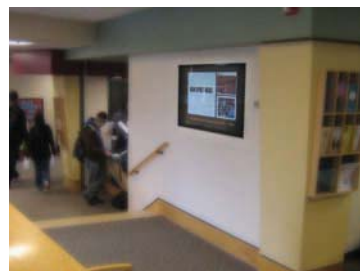
"We're exploring the idea of letting design students create AxisTV content as part of their course work. The projects would benefit our programs, and allow the students to build their portfolios," comments Byrer.

IUPUI is looking at several options to expand their visual communications program. They'd like to deploy between 25 and 30 new displays. Dining Services is also looking into digital signage and a new Campus Center scheduled to open in early 2008 is considering installing 10 to 20 displays running AxisTV.

One exciting new option under consideration is the Visix Text Messenger application which sends AxisTV ticker and bulletin text out to registered cell phones.

"We surveyed students and got a positive response," says Byrer. "It seems like everybody has a cell phone, so it could be a good fit. We can have students subscribe to the service by signing up during orientation." The service could go online as early as next semester.

Other universities often solicit IUPUI to learn how digital signage can help them. Byrer's advice – "I tell them to compare the options like display integration, channel players and add-on features. I also strongly advise them to determine if a provider is committed to regular, scheduled technology updates. If they do all of that, I believe they will find a lack of true competitors to AxisTV."



# “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” - W.B. YEATS

## Lander University – Small Size. Big Plans.

Situated in Greenwood, South Carolina, Lander University calls itself the small school with big opportunities. The college, founded in 1872, offers traditional liberal arts and science programs and professional programs in business, education and nursing. Notwithstanding its size, the school is technologically progressive with a wireless campus, more than fifty "SMART classrooms", student laptops and a digital signage system to rival big campuses anywhere in the United States.

With more than 3000 students, the administration and 120+ faculty members constantly seek tools to aid campus communications. When traditional methods such as bulletin boards proved ineffective, the university sought a technology to complement their tech-savvy approach.

The goal was to continue to use technology to attract students to a small but growing school and to improve university-to-student communications by delivering relevant content - student activities, sports information, cafeteria menus, wayfinding directions, curriculum changes and department specific information - throughout the campus.

Wayne McMahan, Computer Installation & Repair Manager for Lander, was familiar with Visix's AxisTV digital signage software from a previous university and championed its adoption. Both the turnkey nature of the package – software, hardware, implementation, training and support in one bundle – and the ease of integration into the existing network were key AxisTV selling points. The impressive Visix client list further bolstered confidence in the product and its supplier.

Lander's AxisTV system delivers content to plasmas in hallways, lobbies, and vending machine areas in twelve buildings.

Communications are created by fifteen different user groups including student affairs, admissions, and various other faculty and administrative staff. "It's working well and appears to be getting students' attention.," comments Matt Braaten, Director of Academic Web Based Communications, who's been managing the application side of AxisTV for the university.

Lander employs a Professional Edition content server, managing and delivering communications to remotely located channel players, some of which are mounted directly to the back of plasma displays.

Multiple content blocks with unique play lists and multiple screen tickers provide a variety of display layouts and delivery choices. The university uses the Video Window option to overlay live or pre-recorded video – such as CNN and ESPN - in order to "hook" students and draw their attention to informative bulletins.

Natural for a small entity, the University was concerned about return on investment. "It's starting to pay off," says Braaten, who believes the school is starting to reap the benefits of their digital signage investment.

The main attraction of AxisTV for both Lander's content creators and viewers is the immediacy of the information – communications that take just minutes from concept to delivery.

"All new building plans include AxisTV as an option, along with Wi-Fi and SMART solutions," confides Braaten. In the future, Lander may place digital signage in student dorms and other existing buildings. Further plans include live broadcasts of university sport matches, and the Cultural Center Auditorium may use vertical plasmas as "poster" displays to advertise performances to both the university and the surrounding community.

"We're still experimenting. We're still learning the system and what we can accomplish with it," says Braaten.

This small university with big plans will continue grow and offer big opportunities through careful planning and skillful technology choices.

## Six Tips for Simplified Facility Scheduling

Whether you're booking space for student activities or internal departments, you want to make the reservation process quick and painless – both for them and for you.

Here are some tips from Dean Evans & Associates for simplifying the reserving of rooms that will leave both the host and the hosted smiling!

- 1. Solo Searching** - Provide an online means of searching for existing events and determining space availability
- 2. Show and Tell** - Allow online access to information on rooms, including pictures, room attributes, etc.
- 3. By the Book** - Post detailed facility use policies and procedures on your website
- 4. Request Convenience** - Allow event organizers to submit room requests directly from the internet
- 5. A Reassuring Review** - Email a detailed confirmation to the requestor
- 6. Remember Reminders** - Send email reminders in advance of their program

Learn more about EMS scheduling solutions at [www.dea.com](http://www.dea.com)



# "True interactivity is not about clicking on icons or downloading files ,

## Montgomery County Community College: Growing With the Needs of the Community



Montgomery County Community College (MCCC) prides itself on being a place "where the future is created – a place where desire and knowledge are combined to yield opportunity."

Throughout its history, MCCC has found innovative ways to address communication needs. Serving the community in the twenty-first century requires sophisticated communications for this institution.

When MCCC began exploring digital signage solutions that would balance the communication needs of faculty and students with the budget of a community college – AxisTV became the clear choice.

Michael Knight, Manager of Multimedia Services, examined several messaging systems and chose AxisTV as the best candidate to meet and grow with the college's digital communications delivery needs. Knight explains, "We're a small team and we like to keep integration in-house. Visix provided us with a system that met our needs in terms of communications delivery, ease of implementation and budget."

Knight has managed the AxisTV system since MCCC implemented it in 2003. The college started with one channel player delivering content to a series of 36-inch computer monitors repurposed as digital signs.

"AxisTV has made it a lot simpler to disseminate information to our students. As opposed to email blasts that get lost in the clutter, the information is right there for all to view. You see people stopping to look at the screens all the time. The best part is the immediacy of it," says Knight.

Over the years, AxisTV has provided MCCC the flexibility to grow its visual communications initiative. Originally, the college wanted to deliver event schedules using Astra Schedule® from Ad Astra and message content to multiple endpoints. At one time, the output was being delivered not only to monitor displays, but also encoded as a stream and delivered out over their local area network.

The system has developed to include seven channel players delivering content to two campuses and over twenty displays. MCCC upgraded from the older Connect System to AxisTV Professional and plans to install a video display wall to feature AxisTV messages.

MCCC continues to rely on AxisTV's event schedule display to import daily class schedules from Astra using an automatic text adaptor to capture event data and format the information into viewable bulletins. They also use the Screen Saver option to deliver content to public PCs in lobbies, hallways and libraries.

**"AxisTV has made it a lot simpler to disseminate information to our students"**

Knight is excited about the new Display Device Control option installed to remotely control their plasmas. "In the past, we had to physically make our rounds to turn displays on or off in multiple buildings and campuses. Now I'll be able to turn displays on and off via the Web." This is particularly valuable with the two campuses being thirty-five miles apart.

Along with growing the hardware and AxisTV infrastructure, MCCC is concentrating on fine-tuning their communications procedures. Policies have been implemented to ensure users can create relevant content quickly, with faculty creating their own course advertisements and student groups submitting bulletins for approval through established channels.

Designated multimedia staff members post emergency notices, using AxisTV's alert mode when such notices are necessary. Knight continues, "It's the beauty of a self-service system. The user does it (*bulletin creation*) themselves. It cuts down on time for them and for my staff, in terms of moving from an idea to the delivery of information."

MCCC and AxisTV will continue to grow together to meet the needs of faculty, students, administrators and the IT staff. Knight concludes, "I'm very happy with the system and the service. If I need support, I send an email and I get a call or an email within two hours. I wish other vendors gave us that kind of service."

## Publish Your Policies

By publishing some standardized policies about how to create, manage and deliver your visual communications, you can streamline workflows and improve content. Consider these policy tips:

- . Include identity guidelines for fonts, colors and logos
- . Discuss appropriate and inappropriate content
- . Give some basic design tips (contrast, colors, etc.)
- . Outline acceptable file formats to be imported
- . Clearly define the submission and approval process
- . Explain distribution channels and display options
- . Include user names and passwords
- . Provide contact information for questions

Publish your policies in a printed handout or on the web, if you have an Intranet with easy access for all users.

To see sample Visix client policies, visit our user forum at [www.visixforum.com](http://www.visixforum.com)



# it's about encouraging communication." - EDWIN SCHLOSSBERG

## Stamp Student Union: Pulling Students In

Stamp Student Union at the University of Maryland is a bustling center for activities and is visited by over 20,000 students a day. The University has over 40,000 undergraduate and graduate students.

With nearly half the student body coming through the doors each day, the Stamp Student Union marketing team is constantly looking for ways to grab, inform and excite their visitors.

Stamp IT personnel chose AxisTV after viewing a product demonstration at a conference. The system replaces an old, outdated product installed by another manufacturer. Andy Musko, Marketing Coordinator for Stamp, is a fan of both the form and functionality of the AxisTV digital signage solution. "The system is clean and modern."

Boasting five restaurants, a food court, gallery, arcade, bookstore, food co-op, copy center, banking, bowling, billiards, and the popular Hoff Theater, Stamp has a constant stream of events, announcements and advertising to deliver to their audience.

**"the plasmas create visual excitement.**

**students stop in their tracks to watch"**



One of the primary challenges met by Visix system was the need to improve communication to the student body in both an efficient and effective manner.

Mrusko comments, "Our goal is to keep the student union alive and to pull students in. AxisTV helps by drawing more students to us who are interested in what we're delivering."

Two marketing assistants create the bulk of the bulletins, with a few departments publishing directly to the system. The user-friendly nature of AxisTV has made it a hit with the people who are responsible for managing such a large amount of content.

Marketing Assistant Karlena Walker comments, "AxisTV is so easy to use. We often create bulletins in PowerPoint® or PhotoShop® and then import them into AxisTV. Kristie Pope, our other Marketing Assistant has a design degree. I have some layout experience, but am not formally trained." She continues, "AxisTV has the capability to deliver so much information in such a timely and creative manner. It really pulls people in."

Stamp is currently running AxisTV on seven plasma displays placed throughout the Student Union. A Professional Edition Content Server and two channel players deliver communications to the plasmas, and to a dedicated cable channel that feeds every student dorm room and classroom. The Video Window, Graphic Link and Schedule Display options allow the marketing team to incorporate videos, external graphics and event schedules extracted from Scheduler Plus® by PeopleCube.

Events are extremely important to the success of Stamp's AxisTV strategy, with one content block dedicated to schedule information. Approximately one-third of bulletin topics come from Student Union department announcements, while the bulk concerns upcoming events that are advertised right up until their start time.

"Our marketing has become refined to the point that we get an overwhelming response from students," says Mrusko. "Students prefer to check the AxisTV system for information."

Mrusko's team has standardized AxisTV policies and is considering allowing students to submit content for approval and publishing. Live original programming in the form of 15-30 minute "TV shows" produced by campus groups began broadcasting in early 2007, and the marketing team plans to exploit the Video Window option by offering more motion content, specifically theatrical previews for the in-house cinema.

Mrusko continues, "The plasmas create visual excitement. Students stop in their tracks to watch." Walker adds, "AxisTV is a great resource. Every university or institution needing to get a lot of information out to a large number of people should have it."



"New knowledge is the most valuable commodity on earth." - KURT VONNEGUT

# Visual Rules

## Design for the Human Eye

Developing messages for digital displays is a fun, creative process that lets you experiment with the design elements of color, contrast, text and arrangement. In order to retain readability within an artistic, impactful presentation space, several basic rules should be understood.

### Contrast & Legibility

The best message may be lost if the viewer cannot easily see the information displayed on the screen. Contrast is the primary factor for legibility: Poor contrast reduces legibility. Good contrast improves legibility. Contrast background and foreground colors.

### The 3x5 Rule

Words on the screen are there to communicate clear concise information. Remember to keep messages uncluttered. Keep the type size large for legibility at a distance, and present only the most important ideas. Try not to use more than 3 lines of text with 5 words each OR 5 lines of text with 3 words each.

### Text Styles

Unless you are duplicating a brand or logotype, keep the font simple and legible. Never use more than two font styles in a single message and use italics sparingly, as they can be hard to read from a distance. Larger text size and the use of bold can help improve readability.

### Color & Perception

Color creates good contrast and color choices should place foreground elements perceptually in front of background. Basic understanding of color is important for appropriate color selection in message creation.

### Focus Techniques

Use various techniques to pull the viewer's focus to critical information first. Guide the eye and provide visual hierarchy by utilizing the tips we've provided on text styles and color. Graphics, flow and white space also give visual "clues" to guide viewing patterns, as do juxtaposition and size.

### Previewing

When previewing your messages, consider where your eye goes first and adjust your design to ensure that the most critical elements take priority. Stand back from your monitor at least five feet – this simulates your audience's perspective for viewing digital displays.

## University at Buffalo: Seeing the Possibilities

Andy Koenig, Senior LAN Analyst for the Office of Medical Computing at the University at Buffalo (UB) had a small problem – digital signage hardware is useless without good content management software. "We had a dozen or so flat-panel 42-inch plasmas just sitting around, so we thought we'd put them to good use."

Koenig was at the State University of New York's Genesee campus and saw their AxisTV system. "It seemed to work for them and the user interface is basically as simple as it gets – it seemed really do-able for us, so we bought it." Within a couple of days, they had purchased AxisTV Professional Edition.

UB's South Campus houses the School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, Dental Medicine, Public Health and Health Professions, and the School of Nursing. The displays at the main entrances show layouts split into three windows – one for long-term information, one for weather and Doppler radar maps, and one with the building directory – and a text crawl at the bottom for general information.

End-users from different departments send Koenig and his team an email with the graphic or text file and they then create and publish the graphic. "We put out a lot of images – PowerPoints®, JPEG captures, Photoshop® images," Koenig tells us. "The main advantage is we can get information out that you can't do in any other way. It's quick, up-to-date and visual."

UB recently expanded the system to include the Web Page Capture feature. "We have a couple of calendar systems publishing info to a web page and then we use the web capture to pull it out and display it."

They also interface AxisTV with listserves and Blackboard®, a content management system. "Currently," says Koenig, "all class notes are printed and distributed to students. The dental school actually has the whole course on DVD and the students have laptops. We also videotape all our classes. I hope to use AxisTV in the future to broadcast streaming feeds."

"It sure works – students show up where they are supposed to, even with last minute changes in scheduling," continues Koenig.

Other schools in the State University of New York system have expressed an interest in AxisTV after seeing it in action at UB. "Even the food service people want in. They want five displays to display their daily menus as well as a video feed," says Koenig. "We may have to expand to the Enterprise edition before too long."

"it sure works - students show up where they are supposed to, even with last minute changes in scheduling"





## USC Viterbi School of Engineering: Making Sure They Get the Message

They adapted the legacy software to the newer technology by importing data with AxisTV's schedule bulletin feature. "The flexibility of AxisTV allowed us to add on versus replace," says Dziegielewski.

The school has published their procedures for requesting, creating and scheduling ads. Departments generally create graphics in PhotoShop® and then import them into AxisTV. Student groups create their own content and submit it to umbrella organizations for authorization. Six administrators can approve and publish content. "We're always getting calls from people asking 'Why isn't my event up there?' From word of mouth and experience, I can tell you that people are definitely paying attention to the screens."

USC and Viterbi promotional ads also run on the screens for the benefit of campus visitors. "In the case of visitors, the system is a PR tool in addition to a communications tool." Dziegielewski expands, "It gives that wow factor that we want to project to prospective students and visitors. It shows that we're technologically advanced, and that we don't just advertise what we do. We do it."

Future plans focus on both expanding the capabilities of the AxisTV system, as well as the overall digital signage presence. "We're looking for ways to incorporate more content and different content. We're investigating the best ways to automate our processes."

Dziegielewski is considering delivering Screen Saver messages to classrooms so students can see bulletins while they wait for class to begin. He's also looking into running self-produced videos as well as video feeds.

A "Me, too!" attitude has also developed within Viterbi, with the desire for digital signage catching on with other departments who now want their own systems.

**"it gives that wow factor that we want to project to prospective students and visitors"**

The University of Southern California Viterbi School of Engineering in Los Angeles has approximately 3800 graduate and 1800 undergraduate students pursuing degrees. USC's graduate program in engineering is consistently ranked in the top 10 in the U. S. News and World Report rankings.

The school has come a long way since the first classes in engineering disciplines were offered in 1906. Jason Dziegielewski, Digital Communications Manager took time out to discuss their AxisTV system.

"One of our overriding communications philosophies is: How can we re-distribute our existing content in multiple places and through multiple delivery channels?" explains Dziegielewski. "I inherited a brand new building with displays and an AV distribution system, but no way to get our content to these screens and manage it. AxisTV matched our needs. It's one of many distribution channels we're leveraging to deliver as much information as possible, to as many people as possible, in as many ways as possible, in the environment they're most comfortable with."

Ronald Tutor Hall has fourteen 42-inch LCD panels displaying AxisTV. There are four more panels with interactive SMART Board™ capabilities that revert to AxisTV bulletin screen savers, ensuring no messaging opportunities are missed.

"Student services is the main focus of this building's first two floors, so it's a high traffic area. Faculty, staff, students and visitors all get their first impression from the digital signage," comments Dziegielewski.

Two channel players drive content to café and common building feeds which broadcast to screens throughout the facility. Displays are mounted in hallways, lounges, offices and outside of classrooms. Olin Hall of Engineering, which houses graduate student affairs on the first floor, is also running AxisTV on a 50-inch plasma.

Message saturation and reinforcement is the focus. "The more times someone is exposed to a message, the odds of retention are greater," continues Dziegielewski. "Our various methods of delivery allow us to reach audiences with different preferences and viewing patterns. For example, our event calendar is on the Web, on AxisTV screens, sent in weekly emails and delivered via an RSS feed. People are bound to get the message."

Over eighty percent of the school's AxisTV content is sourced from automated feeds. Bulletins are primarily event related, with schedules being pulled from PerlCal® – a system the school has used for over ten years.



# "The task of a university is the creation of the future." - ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD

## University of Virginia: Prestigious History With A Focus On The Future

Charlottesville's University of Virginia (U.Va.) certainly has a prestigious past. It was founded by Thomas Jefferson in 1819, and boasts an impressive list of alumni, including Woodrow Wilson, Robert and Ted Kennedy, Edgar Allen Poe, Georgia O'Keefe, Walter Reed, Richard Byrd, three US Supreme Court Justices and NATO Secretary General Javier Solana. But last year, the current crop of students started looking ahead to the future.

The U.Va. student council approached the administration with an idea to replace printed student materials with digital signs. "We have a very active student body," says Bill Ashby, Associate Dean of Students and Director of Newcomb Hall and Student Activities. "They are usually a few steps ahead of us on technology issues."

The council had three main issues to address. The first was creating a more efficient means for student groups to get their messages out to the more than 20,000 students on campus. The second was fueled by green concerns. "We have a generation of environmentally conscious students, who wanted a sustainable way to deliver information," says Ashby. The third was preserving the look of their historic campus, called "the proudest achievement of American architecture in the past 200 years" by the American Institute of Architects and the only American university designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

"The system needed to be user-friendly and simple, yet robust and Web-based," Ashby explains. Some students already knew AxisTV and suggested it as the perfect solution.

AxisTV's Enterprise edition offers U.Va. the largest feature set and maximum scalability for up to 500 endpoints. "Our campus is pretty spread out and AxisTV is a technological tool that can connect those decentralized parts."

U.Va. started in their Newcomb Hall Student Center with three channel players running 46-inch LCDs on all five levels - near the main entrance, in the large dining area on the second floor, at entry points on the third floor where there are meeting rooms, and in the basement movie theater where AxisTV is channeled through a high-end digital projector and runs current content on the screen as a pre-show display.

The displays use a three-window layout - one window taking up half the left side with student organization notices and advertisements, another window with building events and schedules, and a third with a video feed - usually CNN. They also include a weather ticker at the bottom of the screen.

"One great thing is that you can use AxisTV with any display at the front end - we aren't stuck with only one kind of display so different departments can use what they already have."

They next outfitted three of their libraries and four recreation centers with one channel player in each location feeding content to LCDs. They added two players each in the Commerce School and the Engineering School - all running to 50-inch displays located in the lobbies. "One of our best indications of success is that five or six other departments have seen AxisTV working and are clamoring for it as well," Ashby says.

Like many educational facilities, U.Va. was shocked by the shootings in April 2007 in Virginia. "After 4/16, it became very necessary to have a far-reaching emergency response plan in place. It's a real benefit to have something like this that can be used as a part of such a plan," continues Ashby. AxisTV has already become a key component in their updated emergency response system and looks to become even more integrated in the near future. "We are in the midst of installing Enterprise broadly and will be implementing the Screen Saver and Desktop Messenger options in the near future."

"Students are keen on it being so easy to use and so much more efficient than the old paper flyers, not to mention ecological as well," explains Ashby. "If you want to use more environmentally sustainable methods to reach students, you basically have two options. The first is punitive - you know, 'No Posting!' and then going after violators. The second is to use modern technology to try and change the culture. That's what we decided to do."

To further this 'less paper, more bytes' approach, Ashby is building an online archive of messages. "It is sort of an electronic version of those flyers with little tabs at the bottom that you can tear off. Students can review older content and print out a flyer on their computer. That way they don't have to stand there and wait for something they saw to cycle back through the playlist."

"Our main measure of success is that the total number of submissions each semester keeps going up, plus the change in the behavior and the culture."

"Digital signage hasn't totally replaced old communications methods yet - that stuff will die hard, but I estimate it has reduced our paper usage by 10 to 15 percent. We hope we are changing the culture."

Ashby concludes, "Our goal is that, in three to five years, we can take down the last of the bulletin boards and use only the Visix system."

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"I estimate it has reduced our paper usage by 10 to 15 percent"



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## Virginia Commonwealth University: Emergency Preparedness 101

Virginia Commonwealth is the largest university in the state, and the first major American research facility to offer a BA program in Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness.

With 30,000 students and more than 17,000 full and part-time faculty and staff to inform and protect, VCU practices what they teach.

When Assistant Director of User Services Sam Kennedy and his team started shopping around for a digital signage solution, they were offered a grant from the Department of Homeland Security if they used their system to develop public emergency communications. This enabled VCU to purchase a unified software solution from Visix, which is the centerpiece of a sophisticated, campus-wide visual communications system delivering news, announcements and emergency alerts across 15 buildings and over a television network connected to the RF (CCTV) system.

The human element is crucial to Kennedy, who sees the system as an important means of getting communications where they need to be in a timely fashion. "To communicate, you've got to use multiple channels because different people perceive messages differently. We have a wide-focus communication plan that assists word-of-mouth. People must be integrated into the solution or it ultimately has no meaning," says Kennedy.

The unified software solution from Visix gets information to VCU's audience wherever they are, delivering crisis communications to thousands of overlapping endpoints.

At the click of a mouse, AxisTV Enterprise edition pushes information out to 40 channel players sending content to 50 displays plus Visix publishers: Desktop Messenger, Text Messenger and RSS Publisher broadcast to desktops, cell phones and RSS enabled devices.

The system was first implemented in residence halls near security check-in desks. "These desks are staffed 24/7," explains Kennedy, "and the displays have small sirens on them that can sound a tone in case of an emergency, drawing attention to the display."

Sirens are also placed around the campus. In the event of an emergency, these will alert people to the fact that there is something happening and cue them to check displays for information.

The school supplements notices on digital signage displays with messages sent to cell phones, PDAs, smart phones, iPods®, and desktops as pop-up windows and screen savers. The goal is to alert people and to get them talking, sharing and mobilized.

Visix software isn't relegated to just an emergency warning system – VCU uses the AxisTV to deliver announcements, event schedules, news and weather across the University on a daily basis.

Each school on campus uses Visix software to reach their audience with their own content, but Kennedy and his team can override the entire system if they need to broadcast emergency notices about severe weather or security warnings.

Because the software is browser-based, Kennedy and his team can activate AxisTV's alert mode from any PC, PDA or cell phone with access to the web to alert the entire network.

"The breadth of AxisTV gives us opportunities to grow," Kennedy told us. Future installations of AxisTV include displays in administrative areas and external signage, such as in parking decks and lots, and outdoor signs near the most popular campus access points.

Laptops purchased by students via VCU's G2GMobile@VCU mobile computing initiative program will come loaded with the Desktop Messenger client and the University plans to survey students to find out what works and what can be improved in order to keep the system evolving and attention-grabbing.

Kennedy concludes, "We always had to fight the noise, but digital signage is clearer and more dynamic. Plus, our ability to push information beyond displays to PCs and portable devices is invaluable. We're in year one of a four-year process – not the tech part, that's done – but the human aspect. Now that we have the tools, we just have to do the training and the drills to keep people on their toes."



"we always had to fight the noise, but digital signage is clearer and more dynamic"





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