

KEYWEST TECHNOLOGY HELPS MAJOR MIDWEST COMMUNITY COLLEGE UNIFY CAMPUS WITH DIGITAL SIGNAGE NETWORK USING OVER 100 DISPLAY SCREENS

A new, extensive Keywest Technology digital signage network employed by Johnson County Community College is helping to bring students and faculty together, letting special-interest college constituencies get their message out and providing fast, flexible messaging in the event of an emergency.

Johnson County Community College (JCCC), the Overland Park, KS, based educational institution serving some 35,000 students living in the Kansas City metropolitan area, is relying on an extensive digital signage network to keep students and faculty alike up to date on information impacting their daily campus life.



From conception to implementation, Keywest Systems Group provided a turnkey system with over 100 digital screens to create the communication network, which is fed by more than 30 channels of digital signage programming to buildings located throughout JCCC's 234-acre campus and to remote locations off campus where the community college offers various academic and career-oriented courses of study. To effectively control such a vast number of signs, Systems Group installed the MediaZone digital signage system with the enterprise-level InfoZone server. Various support staff were tapped to create



and maintain special-interest channels as well as a main channel serving the general interest requirements of the community college.

CASE STUDY

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Whether it's "Orange Barrel Alert" announcements of ongoing road construction affecting thoroughfares frequently used to access JCCC, recognition of visiting high school seniors considering attending JCCC or any one of hundreds of announcements informing students of tuition due dates, the availability of academic tutoring labs, where and when to sign up for financial aid or even the schedule for upcoming athletic events, the new digital signage network helps to unify students and professors dispersed across the campus and satellite locations.

Originally, the community college planned to deliver the master channel throughout the campus along with 8 local channels, but the project

quickly grew as various college offices and departments recognized the benefits of communicating via digital signage, says Mike Waugh, director of the JCCC Video Production Department.



According to Waugh, who runs the office that coordinates training of those responsible for the local channels, the local channels have been appealing because

they allow those on campus with specific missions to communicate information that's pertinent to their areas of interest. "Local channels are used by counseling and career planning, the Regnier Center (a 5,000-square-foot conference and meeting center), the JCCC gym, the school's Children's Center, Police Academy and in many other locations," he says.

Content creation, scheduling and management for the local channels are handled by one or two staff members in the areas served by each channel. For example, Michelle Heffron, an administrative assistant in the JCCC Student Success Center, is responsible for the digital signage channel serving the needs of the Counseling Department as well as the channels dedicated to the Student Information Service, the Financial Aid office, the JCCC Testing Center and Registration.

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Heffron, who makes and schedules playback of the digital signage screens for the Student Success Center, receives completed digital signage pages from the other departments and schedules playback of the channels.

Relying primarily on Keywest Technology's MediaCreator professional character generator application and Microsoft PowerPoint, Heffron typically schedules about 40 screens in her playback set. The company's Editor program then is used to populate on-screen zones with

graphics, text, images and media. Heffron times her schedule so the messaging in all three zones is coordinated. "We have two rectangles with information in them and a scroll at the bottom of the screen," she says.



"It's all timed so that, for example, on the left will be the hours of the Testing Center, on the right will be all of the slides that have to do with the Testing Center which

cycle through and at the bottom of the screen text will scroll across presenting information about the center," she explains.

While Heffron admits to having a natural aptitude for learning new software programs, she says mastering the Keywest Technology programs was simple and straightforward. "MediaCreator is a very fun program," she says. "I didn't have any trouble learning it. I found it to be very easy."

Melodee Blobaum, JCCC internal communications editor, another point person for several of the community college's local channels spends about 10 to 15 hours per week creating content and playback schedules for 16 MediaZone players driving local channels.

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Like Heffron, Blobaum has divided her screens into three zones. One is devoted to video playback of CNN or a video produced in house, another displays current information and events, such as bookstore hours or information about special student exhibitions, and a third is reserved for a text crawl across the bottom of the screen.



The ability to schedule playback well in advance is greatly appreciated, says Blobaum, who divides her time between producing internal employee communications and developing an online news bureau for the community college. “The digital signs can’t take all of my time,” she says. “The MediaZone Scheduler lets me build a page a week in advance and schedule it to show up when I want it, which makes it easy. It’s nice to be able to work ahead like that.”

At the heart of JCCC’s digital signage system is an extensive wide area digital signage network based on Keywest Technology’s MediaZone and InfoZone software. Running under the control of the company’s InfoZone enterprise level management and monitoring software, the MediaZone systems offer both control of local channels and a simple, effective way to receive and display the college’s main digital signage channel.

Thus, while individuals, such as Heffron and Blobaum, build and maintain local channel content and schedules, overarching digital signage network control and monitoring rests with InfoZone.

With InfoZone’s Dashboard software, JCCC can monitor every display in the digital signage network and control playback. A special RS232 serial control feature even allows every monitor in the network to be turned on and off from a central location - a feature that ensures no displays are left on overnight.

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InfoZone also provides monitoring and control of two MediaZone systems used offcampus via the community college's wide area network. Stationed several miles from the main campus, these MediaZone systems are used to playback local channels supporting the activities and programs offered by JCCC's Adult Basic Education and Cosmetology schools. Plans also exist to extend the digital signage network to the JCCC satellite location in Lawrence, KS.



Support for emergency preparedness messaging is another vital component of the JCCC digital signage system. Using MediaZone in conjunction with the InfoZone Dashboard application, the community college can quickly take over the digital signage network to reach students and faculty with emergency messaging and make sure the warnings are delivered.



The community college, which is located in the region of the country known as "Tornado Alley," placed a priority on emergency alert messaging as part of its new digital signage network to help ensure the safety of students and professor, says Alisa Pacer, JCCC emergency preparedness manager.

According to Pacer, the rollout of the emergency messaging component of the digital signage network coincided with the launch of a campus-wide emergency public address system that debuted in March. "The digital signage system mirrors whatever emergency message is spoken over the PA, which is important for the hearing impaired," she says.

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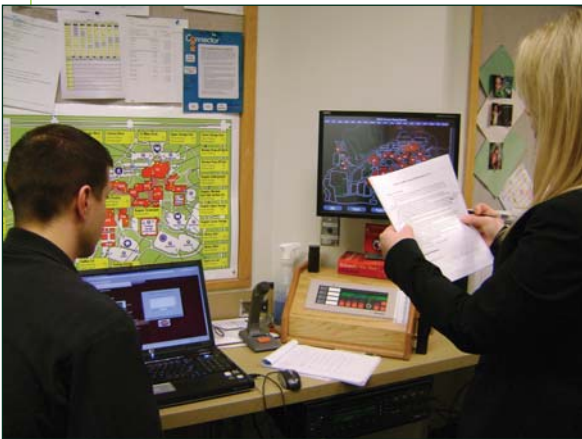
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With the help of Keywest Technology, JCCC has optimized its emergency messaging system by preparing screens with predetermined messages for standard emergency conditions, such as severe weather, fire, lockdown and generic emergency conditions while retaining the ability to modify existing or create new emergency messages at a moment's notice, says Pacer.

Using InfoZone, Pacer, the community college police chief and assistant chiefs, police dispatchers and other authorized personnel can take control of the entire digital signage network from any location with an

Internet connection and trigger immediate release of emergency warnings, she says. Then, relying on the Dashboard application, Pacer and others can monitor the playback of each digital sign across the campus to ensure warnings were delivered and displayed.



Pacer's experience with Keywest Technology mirrors that of other JCCC digital signage users. "Keywest worked really well with us to customize pre-loaded emergency messages," she says. "They worked with

us so we have the ability to preview emergency message screens before we send them."

"Keywest Technology has been so good," says Waugh. "They are great people to work with -great response. They have delivered the service and the end product we asked for." Perhaps Heffron sums it up best: "I've gotten lots of great support from Keywest."