

With the need to upgrade their automation system to one that would manage eight channels efficiently and cost-effectively, WNEO turned to VCI Solutions and turned on autoXe MC.

Western Reserve Public Media located in Kent, Ohio had a funding opportunity to upgrade their servers and automation system for their eight channels running on three servers. They were operating two of the three play-to-air servers on an NT platform, which needed to be upgraded to XP.

Because of the server upgrade and funding, they decided to upgrade their existing Airo 9 Automation System from Odetics (now VCI Solutions) as their needs had increased from what was specified in their Automation System in 2002. For example, they needed an Automation System that would control their HD broadcasts.

“We needed to upgrade our servers to Windows® XP, which wouldn’t accommodate the automation system running on a Windows® NT platform. In an effort to be forward-thinking, once the servers were upgraded, the automation system was also upgraded,” said Rick Patterson, Maintenance Engineer for Western Reserve Public Media.



A few of the capabilities that the team at WNEO really likes are:

- autoXe MC runs on its own server
- Can make global changes from any workstation
- Schedule Director application
- Manage multiple channels on one screen
- Ease-of-use

Even though the engineering team evaluated several automation vendors (Pro-bel, Sundance, Floralca, and VCI Solutions) while at the NAB Show in Las Vegas, they decided to stay with a company they came to rely on and chose the autoXe MC from VCI Solutions.

A significant factor in the decision making process with VCI Solution’s autoXe MC solution was the historical relationship with the automation system and team from VCI Solutions. Patterson commented, “We did realize a cost benefit for staying with the same automation company. We also knew that the autoXe MC would work well with the other components in our system because we had confidence in VCI Solutions from our prior experience with them.”

In addition to working with a company they had established a trust with, there were cost-efficiencies in upgrading with VCI Solutions. They found that autoXe MC overall offered the ability to manage multiple channels in one screen on a workstation for less cost per channel. The engineering team liked the ease-of-use and how intuitive the system was for an operator, which decreased the learning curve and the number of people needed to continually operate the system manually. This in itself is a huge savings; allowing operators to focus on the various other tasks as hand. Rick and his team really enjoy the new Schedule Director application - it provides a quick snapshot for all activity in one glance, which is unlike anything else on the market. If there is a problem, it brings it to the operator’s attention rather than have them go looking for it – this is a huge time saver in the operational efficiency.

Additionally, operators appreciate that they can close out ALL workstations. The previous system had a workstation on a server, which prevented them from being able to close all workstations for fear of shutting down the entire system. The autoXe MC runs on its own server. Rick also relies on a significant feature of the autoXe MC system: he can make global changes from any workstation within the system.

Rick added about his experience, “I’m traditionally not a fan of being on the bleeding edge of technology, but the experience with this automation upgrade has been terrific. Anyone can call anytime day or night with a question and the VCI Solutions people are extremely courteous and prompt. They have worked well with our team.”

Note: Western Reserve Public Media was known as PBS 45 & 49 until October 1, 2008.