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USER REPORT

Leightronix Pushes All the Right Buttons

by Richard Cory
Station Manager
WBRW Tri-Community Cable 6

ROMEO, MICH.

My story is probably quite typical of most people who work in local TV. One day in 1986, I walked into an old vacant kindergarten room and was told it was going to become a cable access channel facility—no equipment, no furniture, no programs and no heat. The space did, however, have a future.

Today, the facility transmits on local cable Channel 6 and serves southeastern Michigan's Bruce Township, the Village of Romeo and Washington Township. The studio provides training, facilities and equipment to community residents, students and organizations for local TV production. During the last 20 years, Tri-Community Cable has aired more than 500,000 public service announcements, trained 1,000 volunteers, produced more than 10,000 hours of local programming, broadcast more than 700 sporting events, and received more than 40 national and local awards.

EARLY ADOPTOR

The workflow at first was very simple: shoot someone doing something, put it in a VCR and hit "play." This went on for about a month, after which we thought we should try to find a way to make our VCRs play and rewind by themselves. Our quest led us to Leightronix.

We purchased a Leightronix Mini-T-IR Event Controller, which provided us with automated, unattended playback. We were no longer tied up with pushing buttons on a VCR, and this allowed us to spend our valuable time covering more community events.

We were not technically savvy, so the Mini-T-IR became our little friend, as it just sat there and did its job. That little black box never failed us in 20 years. It had a perfect attendance record, never took vacation time or even work breaks and had no personal problems. The best thing about it was how easy and simple it made programming our channel.

We stuck with the Mini-T for two decades, as it never failed and there was no need to change it out. Alas the digital age and hard drives came knocking on our door and entered our building. So we said goodbye to the Mini-T-IR and purchased the Leightronix Nexus video server and system controller. This was quite a machine. Similar to the Mini-T-IR, the Nexus has VCR/DVD device control, built-in A/V switching and the bonus of a digital video server.

Richard Cory

CAN NOW COVER LOCAL SPORTS

Now we can shoot a Friday night football game and get it on air by 10 p.m. We shoot with mini-DV cameras, capturing directly to portable hard drive. The footage is brought back to the studio, quickly imported into our nonlinear system, and then output to the Nexus for playback. This carriage of local sports has been a big hit.

Between programs, the Nexus reverts to its virtual channel—a looping sequence made up of a variety of video/audio sources. The virtual channel displays local weather, road reports, switches to our external bulletin board and then repeats the cycle. The Nexus video messaging function also allows us to display instant messages, Amber Alerts, our station bug overlay and any information on what is happening in our area at the present.

The Leightronix people make the programming side of our job easy and simple. It seems like everyday we find a new function on the Nexus to make our station look like a network channel. It really makes us look great.

Richard Cory has been with Cable 6 since its beginning 20 years ago, starting as a volunteer and later moving up to the position of station manager. Richard is a graduate of Specs Howard School of Broadcast Arts. He may be contacted at www.wbrw.org

For additional information, contact Leightronix Inc. at 800-243-5589 or visit www.leightronix.com.

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