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THE CHALLENGE

The Southern Alberta Institute of Technology's vision is to be recognized as Canada's premiere institute of advanced technology by 2010. To help reach this goal, SAIT launched an E-Learning Initiative to incorporate the latest technology into the educational process. More than 1800 students were given laptops, and when SAIT expanded its main campus by building roughly 100 new classrooms, the institute looked to incorporate the latest projection technology into the new rooms as well.

SAIT sought to equip the new rooms with projectors that could be used with a SMART Board™ interactive whiteboard, but that could also project onto a larger pull-down screen as well. They turned to Apex Audio Visual Services, who recommended the use of NEC Solutions America projectors.

THE SOLUTION

Apex knew that NEC's GT1150 would be a perfect fit since it was one of the few products on the market with power zoom, power focus and power lens shift. These features made the projector flexible enough to be installed in the ceiling and be able to project onto an interactive whiteboard or onto a separate, larger screen.

SAIT was able to afford this technology thanks to the SMARTer Kids™ Grant for NEC Visual Presentation Products, one of the educational awards developed by the SMARTer Kids Foundation. This Grant assists educators in the purchase of NEC visual presentation products.

“ SMARTer Kids Grants bring the price of the projectors down for us significantly,” said Gord Nixon, vice president of academics at SAIT. “ They allow us to purchase higher-end machines for our classrooms at the same price that other manufacturers sell their base machines for.”

SAIT also felt confident in turning to NEC for this project because it was already using NEC projectors for a variety of applications throughout its campuses. NEC's lightweight LT Series projectors were being used by SAIT instructors for sales presentations and contract training on the road for business and industry. And NEC's MT and VT Series projectors were already installed in a variety of classrooms. MT Series projectors were even being used attached to carts for room-to-room use.

The institute was looking to standardize on a single projector manufacturer so that its instructors could feel comfortable with the technology no matter what classroom they entered, so NEC was a natural fit for the new expansion.

“ We've tried a number of manufacturers,” said Nixon. “ We like NEC due to its high quality, low maintenance and ease of operation. We've also been pleased with the product line and durability of the NEC product.”

THE BENEFITS

By using the GT1150 projectors, SAIT has been able to give its teachers flexibility in their teaching by allowing them to display educational content on a SMART Board interactive whiteboard or on a larger screen. And thanks to the bright 3000 lumen light output of the GT1150 projectors, SAIT was also able to allow for significant ambient light in the design of the new classrooms since they knew that the projectors would work even in a bright environment.

SAIT found the projectors so bright, in fact, that they have opted to operate the new projectors in Eco-Mode™. This technology enables users to select a lower light output option, resulting in a significant increase in usable lamp life and thus a lower total cost of projector operation.

Through the SMARTer Kids Grant for NEC Visual Presentation Products, they've also been able to find the right technology for a variety of applications on the SAIT campuses at the right price.

“ SMARTer Kids Grants are available for everything from a basic low resolution NEC unit up to deluxe installation models and even plasmas,” said Connie McEgan, visual communications consultant for Apex Audio Visual Services. “ This has enabled us to provide SAIT with solutions for a variety of projects that have been tailored to their specific needs and budget requirements.”

In addition to saving money by choosing NEC projectors, SAIT has also benefited from NEC's industry-leading service and support.

“ NEC and Apex have provided us with training for our technical and support people as well as providing product,” said Nixon. “ Repair requirements have been minimal, but anytime we've required work in that area, both Apex and NEC have been there to meet our needs. Our partnership with Apex and NEC has allowed us to enhance learning on campus. We look forward to future initiatives with NEC and Apex.”



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