

University Creates Scheduling Simplicity, Unique Partnerships with Meeting Room Manager

Technology partnerships result in world-class technology center and access for students, faculty and staff

When it came time for the University of Tennessee-Knoxville to upgrade its 50-year-old business school building, school officials knew they also wanted it be the ultimate technology center for students.

By the time the James A. Haslam II Business Building was complete, it had 75 offices, 34 classrooms, 35 team rooms, four conference rooms, four special event spaces, a collaboration center and an investment learning center.

There were also LCD screens and high-definition video capabilities for presentation rooms — the ideal high-tech environment for a respected, competitive business school.

Integration without headaches

But reserving the rooms while also ensuring student and building access security was another issue entirely. And for that, Ramsey Valentine, director of technology for the College of Business, needed something more than a database system.

“We needed a way for students to reserve rooms and get access without a phone call, without having to carry a second student ID card and without having to manage another account, while also integrating with multiple campus systems,” explains Valentine. “We didn’t want access to the rooms to be a logistical nightmare.”

Above all, whatever scheduling system the college chose had to be convenient for every user, whether they accessed it using the Internet, existing student IDs, passwords or known campus ID cards.

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THE UNIVERSITY of TENNESSEE 
KNOXVILLE



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Meeting Room Manager is the easiest-to-use, most customizable, room, resource and appointment scheduling software available.

Meeting Room Manager provides administrators with tools to automate the entire scheduling process, and customize it to meet their organization’s unique requirements.

Serendipity and teamwork

Valentine discovered AsureSpace™ Meeting Room Manager and was immediately attracted to its reasonable cost and its customization features. He installed the system, trying it first in the Executive Education Center where it more than satisfied the Center’s scheduling needs.

The next challenge was to integrate the capabilities of Meeting Room Manager for Web and door access – and that required customization. Coactive Systems had already developed a database framework that could bridge both Meeting Room Manager and Cardax using middleware they called “Janitor Joe” to integrate the two SQL systems into a single system that would work as one for the new building.

“The whole idea of putting the scheduling system and disparate pieces together was looking challenging,” recalls Valentine. “But Steve Hicks, an engineer with West, Welche, Reed Engineers in Knoxville had worked with Gallagher Security Management Systems, and Gallagher had worked with Coactive Systems, a custom software company. It was serendipity that it all came together.”

“Triple-play” for seamless results

The result is a “triple-play” partnership and an end-to-end room reservation system that integrates access, security and scheduling.

“This project is unique in that it brings security and room management together in the IT infrastructure as a fully integrated solution,” says Brad Green, president of Coactive Systems.

From a sleek, modern design with the university’s logo on 42 scheduling kiosks throughout the building, to the ability to schedule on-the-fly or reserve classrooms, team rooms and presentation rooms in advance, the University of Tennessee’s College of Business and Executive Education Center now has a unique and powerful scheduling and security system.

“This truly integrated system combines complementing technologies into a unique solution for the college, encompassing far more than the access control,” said Guerry Bruner, regional manager for Gallagher Security Management Systems. “It isn’t just another approach to security – it’s a solution to a business need for the university.”

As for Valentine, doing what many didn’t think was possible is satisfying indeed. Future plans include tweaking the systems to allow for even more flexibility when it comes to scheduling.

