

Communication History in High Definition

Established in 1985, The Cable Center is epicenter of information of the cable industry including educational programs, library collections, archives, historical artifacts and other industry-related works. In spring 2008, The Center, located in Denver, embarked on a major project to rejuvenate the existing lobby structure. The centerpiece of the project was replacing an existing video wall that was out-of-date and not representative of where The Center and the cable industry were heading. The Center needed an innovative way to share video and information for events, educational tours and presentations.

The Cable Center knew they needed to replace the old 14 x 7 video wall, which had been constructed with 98 bulky analog monitors housed in deep cubbies with a more modern look. Paramount to deciding what type of flat panel would work best in a new video wall was ensuring that it had easy controls and the ability to upload content seamlessly. After reviewing several manufacturers' and integrators' work, The Cable Center selected LG Electronics and National Network Services as the best partners to handle the important installation.

With the Presidential campaign in full swing and the Democratic National Convention being hosted by the City of Denver, the renovation of The Cable Center video wall took on even more importance. In order to have a complete and ready-to-use event space by August 2008, The Cable Center needed to work fast.

Working closely with LG Electronics and National Network Services, The Cable Center revamped its outdated video wall and transitioned to a sleek, 11 x 4 flat panel video wall using 44 47-inch LCD HDTVs. The Cable Center chose these particular LCD HDTVs (LG model M4710C-BA) because of their built-in video wall application, easy controls, and 1366 x 768 display resolution. Using a unique IP-Cast™ Internet Protocol (IP) card system, The Center could easily customize content for events and control the system – individual screens or as a group – remotely.

For the actual installation, National Network Services planned on working with the existing steel structure that had been put in place with the original wall. However, the structure was created for CRTs which would not work with at flat panel LCD video wall. As a result, they worked closely with their engineers to create a new grid that would be capable of holding each of the 67-pound LCD HDTVs. Tracy Whitehead, program manager at National Network Services, and his team of engineers had to ask themselves these questions before they started the installation:

- How the new frame would integrate with the existing frame?
- Would it be strong enough to handle the weight load?
- Can they ensure it allowed for proper cooling of the panels and ventilation?
- Would it match the color and "feel" of existing structure?
- Does it provide flexibility for future technology needs and changes?

The engineers started with a solid iron grid frame that could be attached to the existing structure. However, the frame needed to be built offsite due to the number of events and galas held daily at The Cable Center. As a result the National Network Services team brought it into The Cable Center for installation. Over a period of four days, July 25-30, the team installed the new frame and integrated the LCD HDTVs into the structure. Instead of just building over the original frame, National Network Services made sure that the original cubbies that were built-in to the previous structure, used to hold the cords for each of the products and allow for easy maintenance.

Today, the LG video wall at The Cable Center is the center of attention. Often used during presentations, special events, VIP galas and more as an innovative way to share video and information, the wall has received enormous praise. The flexibility of the framework and the versatility of the LG displays also allow for future technology upgrades or other technological needs of The Cable Center. As the cable industry continues to face technology advancements, the video wall is a constant reminder of the importance of a how technology can deliver a message.