Conceptron *Associates*

T E C H N I C A L • S E R V I C E S

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AV PROJECT PROFILE

Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, Vancouver, Canada

International conference and meeting facility.

July, 1998 to September, 2000

In 2002, SFU re-hired us to design another project for them: the **Segal Centre** – an e-learning centre to be the home of the university's MBA Program.

Summary: Design, specification, tendering, contract administration, and acceptance of audio visual systems for a large-scale international conference facility. Design and mechanical layout of custom delegate control panels and custom wall plates. This project involves audio, video, projection, simultaneous translation, conferencing, and control.

Site Statistics: Part of **Simon Fraser University**, the **Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue** is an international conference centre and meeting facility located in downtown Vancouver, BC (Canada). It provides 16,000 square feet of high-tech meeting space on four floors: eleven meeting rooms, two strategy rooms, and a 6,500 square foot dialogue hall with seating for 154 conference delegates. The AV budget was about $800,000 CDN, exclusive of the infrastructure.

Asia Pacific Dialogue Hall

The show-piece of this international conference facility is the **Asia Pacific Hall**. The design mandate was to facilitate interaction among participants. Up to 154 delegates can be accommodated in five concentric rings of seating.

Each delegate has a curved stainless steel panel built into their desk featuring: a conferencing microphone and speech reinforcement loudspeaker, basic conferencing controls, voting/polling buttons, simultaneous translation system (for up to seven languages), 100 Mbps internet and LAN connections, and AC power for notebook computers. A computer-controlled conferencing system automatically queues speaker's microphones in the order of their request to speak – this can be overridden either by the chair or by an operator with a control panel. Voting (typically three to five choices) can occur interactively in real-time, with results projected in a variety of graphic formats such as bar or pie charts.

Six strategically located delegate positions also have additional presentation capabilities which allow their notebook computers to be interfaced into the AV system for projection and audio program reproduction. Two electric projection screens and data projectors are provided to ensure that all participants can view the presentations. The 16-foot high heritage windows on both sides of the hall are equipped with electrically operated black-out blinds. A custom camera-control system, four pan-tilt-zoom cameras, and one fixed camera allow for automatic selection of a head-and-shoulder shot of the current speaker or an overview of the chair or main panel. All aspects of the room's systems can be controlled by an operator in a glassed-in booth in one corner of the room.

The simultaneous interpretation system is fed by translator's consoles in mezzanine booths overlooking the hall. The conferencing system, SI system, and translation booths are all compliant with stringent IEC international standards so that the facility can be booked for international conferences.

Participants in the hall may be linked to one or more remote sites via videoconferencing. In addition, the audio and video feeds from the hall may be routed to other rooms in the facility, to recording devices, and to multiple audio and video outputs for the media.

AV Infrastructure

The key to making a high-tech conference facility adaptable and flexible is the provision of a very flexible infrastructure system. Central equipment rooms on each of the four meeting floors are linked together with audio and video tie-lines landing on patch bays. Fibre-optic runs are also provided from floor to floor, and between the facility and the University's downtown campus across the street. A number of Triax camera lines are also linked from floor-to-floor and to a broadcast panel that can be accessed by mobile television units parked on the street outside. Each meeting room has a number of wall and floor outlets with audio, video, computer graphics, and data connections. Any type of AV signal from any room can be routed to any combination of other rooms.

Control Systems

Four independent control systems (in addition to the camera control system in the Asia Pacific Hall) are provided in the building – one per meeting floor. Each of these systems controls everything on its floor – projectors, screens, black-out drapes, audio levels, lighting, signal routing, audio visual sources, etc.. Wireless touch panels are provided for the meeting rooms, and a wired control panel is mounted in each equipment room. The four systems are linked together, and can be accessed by computer workstations in the technician's room and the Technical Co-ordinator's office. From these workstations, the technical staff can verify the status of the equipment and operate any function or component – allowing for rapid "help desk" troubleshooting of a client's presentation or meeting, without having to leave the technical area.