

Troubleshooting massive digital displays with Axis.

Sensory Interactive uses Axis network cameras to pinpoint maintenance issues for large-scale electronic billboards.



Organization:

Sensory Interactive

Location:

Baltimore, Maryland, USA

Industry segment:

Commercial

Application:

Remote troubleshooting

Mission

As a consulting firm that designs and implements massive digital media projects for companies around the globe, Sensory Interactive's role in its projects does not end with the installation. To ensure clients continue to receive the full value from their investment, the operations team monitors the displays around the clock for any performance issues – from diode failures and computer glitches to unexpected obstructions and vandalism. The impracticality and enormous cost of stationing technicians at each site 24/7 led the company to seek network video cameras that would help them maintain quality control remotely.

Solution

For the largest formats and most challenging locales, Sensory Interactive turned to a portfolio of rugged Axis HDTV-quality pan/tilt/zoom (PTZ) network cameras. The Axis cameras are generally mounted on buildings in the vicinity of the digital displays to provide the widest coverage.

Video streams over the Internet via a Cat5/Cat6 cable or wireless connection. For optimum flexibility, the operations team monitors the live camera feeds from their desktops, laptops and smartphones using a combination of AXIS Camera Station, open standards software and mobile applications.

Result

The Axis cameras have allowed Sensory Interactive to validate changing display content, pinpoint recurring issues for LED screen manufacturers to address and diagnose/debug operational problems from afar. In many instances, this saved clients the significant cost and time of flying in technicians for onsite service calls.



Maintaining the digital experience

Since its founding in 2004, Sensory Interactive has been developing, launching and providing operational support for large-scale digital media platforms for a variety of vertical markets – including sports arenas, hospitals, convention centers, retail malls and education facilities. Projects have ranged from massive revenue-generating advertising walls to fully immersive and interactive entertainment environments and wayfinding touchscreen kiosks.

With projects across the United States and elsewhere around the globe, Sensory Interactive needed a cost-effective way to remotely monitor their clients' projects to ensure they maintained their quality performance post-installation. Sensory Interactive augmented several of these projects with high-definition Axis PTZ network cameras that stream video of the digital displays in real time to the company's operations team in both their Dallas, Texas and Boston, Massachusetts offices, or to other operational staff that may be on call.

"The beauty of having remote monitoring on these properties is that it really doesn't matter where we are," said Chris Graefe, Assistant Director of Content for Sensory Interactive. "We offer our clients 24/7 support. It's all about protecting their image and their brand. If part of the display isn't working or there's a problem, we need to know about it and fix it as soon as possible. The video cameras give us consistent eyes on the project to do that."

Sensory Interactive selected AXIS P5534-E PTZ Dome Network Cameras and AXIS Q6044-E PTZ Dome Network Cameras for several outdoor installations in New York City's Times Square and Broadway areas as well as the Verizon Center in D.C. Ruggedized for long-term outdoor use, the automatic day/night cameras provide Sensory Interactive with a full range of high-speed PTZ capabilities and deliver sharp 720p HDTV-quality images. Being able to remotely manipulate the 12x digital/18x optical zoom on AXIS P5534-E cameras and the 12x digital/30x optical zoom on AXIS Q6044-E cameras helped technicians expedite troubleshooting and repairs.

"The Axis cameras help us quickly pinpoint any anomalies, whether it's a failed LED, someone messing with the devices or an object blocking the display," said Jason Cox, Associate Director of Operations for Sensory Interactive.

Cox also felt the ability to adjust camera frame rates was a major plus. "In some situations we don't have wide-open pipes to push data through," said Cox. "With the Axis cameras we have the flexibility to scale up and down to accommodate the bandwidth available to us."

Zeroing in on elusive problems

Because the Axis network cameras provide both macro and micro views of an installation, the operations team has been able to discover the source of elusive problems large and small.

Technicians sent multiple screen captures of a content issue on the digital wall at D.C.'s Verizon Center to the wall's manufacturer. "We had a suspicion that it was a recurring problem," said Cox. "The cameras proved exactly where a fault was occurring so we could resolve it."

During a summer heatwave in New York City, Sensory Interactive's content management systems showed a digital display was in perfect working order, but the cameras told a different story. The display was completely black. "Without the insight from the cameras we wouldn't have known there was a problem," said Cox.



Sensory Interactive also uses Axis cameras to verify content being managed on the digital platforms. "A lot of content we test on these displays is interactive," said Cox. "We're remotely integrating a lot of information feeds streaming from different data sources and social media. The cameras help us monitor the transitions and make sure everything is working."

Mining valuable environmental data

While the Axis cameras won't prove the effectiveness of a digital advertising wall, they can indicate the size of the crowd being drawn to the space. "We can show clients what's happening at any given hour, how many people are seeing their message," said Cox. "That gives them some insight into traffic patterns and may help them fine-tune their campaigns."

Complementing a successful business model

Sensory Interactive recommends products for installations based on how effectively they meet a long list of requirements for performance, durability, quality, price and warranty coverage. "The Axis network cameras have met or exceeded these requirements for our most signature projects," Graefe noted.

Axis cameras are an integral part of the Sensory Interactive business model: delivering exceptional quality control without the high cost of travel or maintaining a service team in every city. "The cameras give us multiple eyes on a project at any given time," said Cox. "Being able to monitor these digital displays remotely has been a huge benefit to our business model."

"With the Axis cameras we can zoom right in on the problem. If we can't fix it remotely, we can at least figure out what's going on before we send the technician out there. That saves a lot of prep time on site and expedites fixes."

Jason Cox, Associate Director of Operations for Sensory Interactive.



About Axis Communications

Axis offers intelligent security solutions that enable a smarter, safer world. As the market leader in network video, Axis is driving the industry by continually launching innovative network products based on an open platform - delivering high value to customers through a global partner network. Axis has long-term relationships with partners and provides them with knowledge and ground-breaking network products in existing and new markets.

Axis has more than 2,100 dedicated employees in more than 50 countries around the world, supported by a global network of over 80,000 partners. Founded in 1984, Axis is a Sweden-based company listed on NASDAQ Stockholm under the ticker AXIS.

For more information about Axis, please visit our website www.axis.com.