

Phoenixville High School

InfoChannel Helps High School Communicate

PHOENIXVILLE, PA – Not long ago, Phoenixville Area High School was a typical American high school in southeastern Pennsylvania where up-and-coming youth received a solid, yet conventional education.



Then, everything changed. Enhanced by Scala's InfoChannel 3 software suite, a new curriculum was written to support live broadcasting of school events and community calendars. Students are now involved more than ever, both during the school day and in an after school studio club, making Phoenixville a model for nearby communities and an inspiration to many regional educators.

This new sense of enthusiasm is largely due to their new Scala InfoChannel 3 (IC3) network that allows students and faculty to create and control three different broadcast "channels". One "channel" controls the plasma screen in the lobby, another channel controls

playback on a 36" TV in every classroom. The third will control the anticipated community access channel on the local cable TV system. Each broadcast system is generated by a dedicated PC equipped with Scala's IC3 Player software capable of broadcasting student produced content non-stop, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The systems can even be updated while on-air, making it a great learning environment for all involved.



"Since we installed our new Scala InfoChannel system it has really taken off, generating tremendous interest throughout the school," says George Frazier, director of technology for Phoenixville Area School District. "Teachers, like Art Carucci, have even begun to incorporate Scala software into their English and journalism classes." Using InfoChannel 3 Reporter, classes can turn traditional print reporting into a high-tech on-air broadcast with no additional learning curve.

The PCs running the IC3 software are inter-connected via the school's existing Ethernet LAN. The video output of the first IC3 Player is directly connected to the new 42" Plasma display located in the lobby. The second IC3 Player's output is fed directly into the school's existing RF (coaxial cable) system that delivers content to the TV screens located in all 90 classrooms. The third IC3 Player's output will eventually be hooked up to the local community's cable TV system headend. This will allow the school to produce and control the content for the local community access channel that can be viewed by the general public in the comfort of their own homes!



Every community in the state is actually entitled to a cable access channel, and Scala's InfoChannel 3 suite allows schools to manage them on a small budget while still maintaining professional quality.

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Tom Ramsey, video coordination consultant for the high school, explains: "We are very excited about the powerful new features and architecture in the third generation of the InfoChannel software. We especially like the fact that authoring and networking have been split into two different components [IC3 Designer and IC3 Network Manager] as it allows students to update the content while the faculty handles the distribution." Ramsey administers all three channels, each running unique content, using the new IC3 Network Manager. He is able to monitor the network status and control updates to the broadcasts to occur at broadcasts either at scheduled times or as new content is published.

To create and schedule the content displayed on each of the three independent "channels", both students and faculty use Scala's IC3 Designer with its legendary easy-to-use graphical interface. This tool enables both simple and sophisticated full productions to be produced in mere minutes, using a variety of media assets from printed material to videos. Output is always generated in full broadcast quality. Artists using IC3 Designer can also create templates for use with the district's five licenses of Scala's IC3 Reporter. These templates allow the artists to create a single, unified look. Writers, using IC3 Reporter's

simplified interface, can then focus on updating information by merely entering text into pre-formatted fields. The templates even maintain WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) editing and while still producing broadcast-quality output.

Iain Riley, a Phoenixville senior, exclaims: "Just type in what you need to get across to the entire community and hit enter – it's that simple!"

The end result is that Scala InfoChannel's easy – and even fun – interface is helping to inspire students like Riley to consider a career in broadcasting. Of course with Scala's special educational discounts, all schools can now afford to install an InfoChannel 3 network, offering students a new learning experience and helping them to follow their dreams while creating another avenue to involve the community in all school events and activities.

About Scala, Inc.

Founded in 1987, Scala pioneered the cable TV industry with software and services to allow users to create localized channels inexpensively. Today, Scala has grown to lead the corporate communications, retail dynamic signage, and interactive kiosk industries as well. With an unrivaled software suite to handle authoring, networking, monitoring, and logged playback, Scala has been the choice of tens of thousands of customers worldwide. Built on reliable and flexible network architecture, Scala software can support nearly any existing infrastructure from dial-up to LAN to Wi-Fi to satellite and terrestrial-based multicast networks. Scala's powerful and efficient store-and-forward design allows the control of unique content on a single cable headend or thousands of remote displays or kiosks from a single desktop PC without the constraints of streaming video.

