



How Shelby County Schools uses Wirecast to live stream graduations and events

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–John H. Best, Shelby County Schools (SCS), Department of Broadcast Services,

With over 100,000 students and 8,000 teachers, Shelby County Schools (SCS), located in Memphis, TN, is the 19th largest school district in the nation. To engage the community in its many activities and events—such as football and basketball games, graduations and school board meetings—the SCS Department of Broadcast Services launched a TV station called C19tv, which produces video programs carried by local cable.

Considered The Voice of Shelby County Schools, the SCS Department of Broadcast Services now also produces a new video service, with original programming that’s streamed live and on-demand from its website. They chose Telestream Wirecast for video production and streaming because it’s user-friendly enough for faculty, students and other non-video professionals to produce and stream high-quality video programs for the benefit of fellow Shelby County residents, and beyond.

Challenges

When the SCS Department of Broadcast Services embarked on its new streaming media initiative in 2015, their Operations Advisor, John H. Best, needed to find a solution capable of live HD video production and streaming, with a workflow that was:

- Simple to learn
- User-friendly to operate
- Easy to configure
- Cost-effective



A streamlined workflow is essential to teaching SCS' diverse student population about live video production and streaming, while affordability enables the technology to be deployed to as many schools as possible, and ultimately, throughout the district. Wirecast uniquely satisfies these wide-ranging requirements.

Solutions

For the SCS Telecommunications Center, where the C19tv operation is based, Best chose Wirecast after evaluating other market options. Today, Wirecast's real-time HD streams look better than the SD video that runs on cable TV. After watching a few online tutorials about Wirecast set-up, Best configured an end-to-end workflow comprised of:

- Telestream's Wirecast and Desktop Presenter software
- Four MacBook Pro computers with 64GB RAM and 3.5GHz 6-core Intel Xeon E5 processors
- One Blackmagic Design Thunderbolt Intensity Extreme mini-capture cards and three Blackmagic Design Intensity Extreme Cards/Thunderbolt
- Three Sony EX3 cameras for multi-camera production
- A Mackie audio mixer and several Sennheiser microphones
- Wowza media servers

Wirecast has been running reliably since it was installed, with no technical obstacles to overcome.

Key Capabilities

Attesting to its ease of use, a 16-year-old SCS student used Wirecast to produce and stream the Southern Heritage Classic football game in September 2015—an

important sporting event with a 25-year tradition—and she handled all aspects of the live production herself after only being shown once how to operate it.

“As more and more of our students discover Wirecast, they also want to learn to operate it, and experience the pride of producing programming that serves as The Voice of Shelby County Schools. Besides using it as a tool for teaching broadcast production skills, we also hope to integrate it into the classroom so that students in our poorer districts can benefit from watching video of our district's best teachers.” —John H. Best, Shelby County Schools (SCS), Department of Broadcast Services, SCS Telecommunications Center, in Memphis, TN.

Results/Benefits

With Wirecast as its streaming media platform, the SCS Department of Broadcast Services can live stream any programming they deem valuable to the community, including graduations.

This year, SCS live-streamed 36 school graduations, which took place at six different locations—and in some cases concurrently—across the district. These graduation webcasts were watched by a total of 64,502 families, a significant increase from last year's audience of 42,000 families.

“Now people that can't attend school events, such as graduations and sporting events, can watch them live or on demand using their preferred device. Wirecast has made a tremendous and valuable contribution to our school district. We're just beginning to tap the power and potential of Wirecast and it's awesome.”

—John H. Best, Shelby County Schools (SCS),
Department of Broadcast Services, SCS
Telecommunications Center, in Memphis, TN.

Find out more by visiting:

The SCS website: <http://voiceofscs.com/c19tv/>