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USER REPORT

Burk Controls CBS Boston Transmitters

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BOSTON

The combination of Burk Technology GSC3000 hardware and Lynx 5.1 software has produced a flexible and reliable transmitter remote control system for the CBS Boston group of television stations.

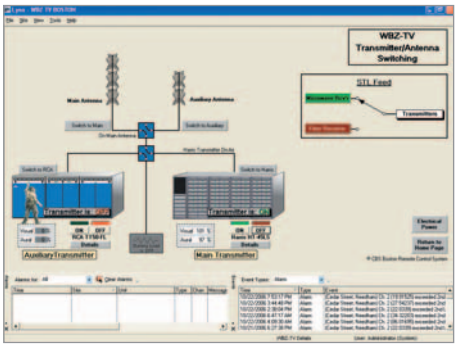
The GSC3000 hardware is a modular system of components, allowing us to add capacity in groups of 16 channels (command, telemetry and status).

Each group consists of one I/O, two relay and two wiring-interface units, which occupy a total of five rack units. Up to 16 of these groups can be assembled for a total of 256 channels per transmitter site. Our system consists of three sites, with seven units at one (112 channels) and three at the other two (48 channels each).

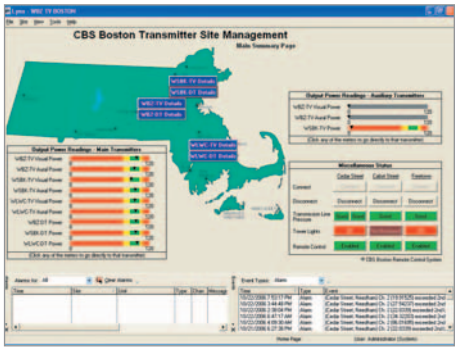
We maintain a redundant system, with two complete sets of GSC3000 units, communication lines and computers at the studio. Communication to the sites can be achieved via dedicated or dial-up telco lines, or using the optional Web interface unit, via IP on the Internet.

The Lynx software is graphically oriented and gives our master control operators access to three geographically separate transmitter sites in Massachusetts. While it can provide simple out-of-the-box monitoring of the GSC3000 units, Lynx's real power lies in user-created custom views. Burk provides many standard graphic images to allow these views to be assembled via an easy drag-and-drop editor.

It provides bar graphs for metering, pushbuttons for control, LEDs (round and square) for status and more. Burk graphics can be combined with custom images using nothing more sophisticated than the Windows Paint program.



Burk Technology Lynx 5.1 software provides users with customized views of transmitter systems being controlled.



Burk Technology Lynx 5.1 home page.

Operating Lynx is very similar to using an Internet browser. As Lynx allows an unlimited number of custom page views, a system can be created as simple or complex as desired. We use the home page to show the overall state of our six main and two auxiliary transmitters.

From here the operators can work their way to other pages in what Burk calls a "drill-down" method, to see additional details. A page can link to any other, just as in a Web site, so the flexibility of the system is only limited by your imagination when setting it up.

While the Lynx software runs on a personal computer, the remote control system is not dependent on it or its connection to the remote site. Each GSC3000 unit contains its own processor and memory, allowing it to run autonomously.

Meter and status logging and alarm conditions are maintained in the I/O unit at the transmitter site, so a loss of communication will not result in a loss of data. Using a cut-down form of the BASIC programming language we can create macros to take automatic action based on current conditions or time.

EXCELLENT SUPPORT

Finally, a system as large as ours needs support, and our experience with Burk Technology has been excellent. Hardware needing repair has been typically shipped back within a day of receipt, and software problems, if not solved immediately over the phone, are always followed up.

Robert Yankowitz is RF systems manager for CBS Boston, and is responsible for one radio and three television station transmitter sites (WBZ-TV/DT, WSBK-TV/DT, WLWC-TV/DT, and WBZ-AM) in Massachusetts.

The opinions expressed are solely those of the author. He may be contacted at rbyankowitz@cbs.com.

For additional information, contact Burk Technology at 800-255-8090 or visit www.burk.com.

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