

## PROFILE

**Name:** St. Petersburg College  
**Location:** St. Petersburg, Florida  
**Students:** 4,000  
<http://www.spcollege.edu>

## CHALLENGE

St. Petersburg College sought to produce cinematic worthy presentations that would allow the college to display several windows worth of presentation materials simultaneously from multiple offsite speakers.

## SOLUTION

Make the investment in leading edge technology with three Epson Pro Z Series projectors, to create a presentation space capable of producing world-class events.

# The Big Picture at St. Petersburg College

## Epson Pro Z Series Projectors with Built-In Edge Blending Help College Produce World-Class Events

Clyde Butcher shoots big. The renowned nature photographer captures gaping canyons, the spreading foliage of the Florida Everglades, and wide ocean vistas in black and white. When community members and students from Florida's St. Petersburg College (SPC) attended a recent campus talk by Butcher, they got to see the artist's work at a scale usually reserved for the photographer himself, thanks to the projection capabilities in the special-events auditorium on SPC's Seminole Campus.

The Digitorium, as the presentation space is known, offers a wide range of multimedia capabilities. The college recently invested in three Epson Pro Z Series projectors, capable of projecting a seamlessly blended image over a 10' x 44' space. The projectors, which offer best-in-class 3-chip, 3LCD technology, allow the college to display several windows worth of presentation materials simultaneously from multiple offsite speakers. "We like to say that you can bring anything in, and we can send anything out. It's a great place to do everything from award ceremonies here on campus to big national meetings," said Dr. James Olliver, the provost for SPC's Seminole Campus.

The range of events held in the Digitorium is impressive: the space has been used to stage local debates, host campaign stops during the 2012 Presidential Campaign, and serve as the venue for the annual student film festival. All of these events have been significantly enhanced by the edge-blending capabilities of the three Epson projectors. "We want people to come in and think, this is an incredible space," said Dr. Olliver. "We're not above being proud of the technology we use. It's pretty spectacular."



## Reaching Beyond the Conventional Classroom

The flexibility of the space makes the Digitorium especially useful for the vast St. Petersburg College system. SPC is a very large, multi-campus institution serving over 65,000 students, in person and via distance learning programs. The Digitorium is a key part of the college's effort to serve this large and varied population.

The projection system in the Digitorium also allows the college to connect students with campus happenings in exciting ways beyond the classroom. "We have an honor society that's open to all students that make a certain GPA along with a certain academic record," said Dr. Olliver. "There was a ceremony honoring those students in the Digitorium, and a student

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– DR. OLLIVER, PROVOST FOR SPC SEMINOLE CAMPUS

connecting remotely from Alaska was able to see his name projected onto the screen during his honor in the ceremony.”

Community members frequently make use of the space as well. In addition to local debates, where the PowerLite Pro Z projectors are used to project the question at hand and integrate remote speakers into the proceedings, civic groups and artists make use of the space to reach students and community members alike.



## An Economical System with High Impact

The three Epson Pro Z Series Projectors installed in the Digitorium offer significant economic advantages to St. Petersburg, providing the ability to create a very large, multi-window image without the expense of installing a video wall consisting of projection cubes or thin-bezel displays. The projectors' high, 7,000 lumen color brightness and 7,000 lumen white brightness also allows the college to project directly onto the white, curved front wall of the Digitorium, without the expense of a custom-made, 44' wide screen.

Given the variability of events held in the Digitorium, it was important to St. Petersburg that the projectors offer a high degree of color accuracy. Because the Pro Z8455WU use 3-chip 3LCD rather than 1-chip DLP technology, the projectors deliver the same color and white brightness lumen ratings for best-in-class color and contrast, regardless of whether they're displaying remote guests or large-scale nature photographs.

Input to the system is handled by an RGB Spectrum MediaWall 2900 video wall processor. The MediaWall 2900 handles up to 16 distinct inputs and creates a single 5560 x 1200 image, then divides it into three parts to be output to the Pro Z projectors. The projectors blend the pieces back into a single image without the need for additional blending software, a significant cost savings feature.

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Avoiding the purchase of blending/warping software not only saved the college money, it also streamlined the installation of the projectors. Hartman, Inc., from Dunedin, Florida, was responsible for the integration in the Digitorium project. According to David Creamer, Director of Network and TV Operations for St. Petersburg College, Hartman was able to complete the job in just a day and a half.

SPC Technology Support Specialist Jonathan Sullivan says that with the combination of the MediaWall processor and the Pro Z projectors, "The possibilities for the 16 inputs we're using can be pretty limitless. We might have two or three remote speakers, as well as their PowerPoint presentations, on screen at one time." During the Clyde Butcher event, technicians alternated between showing a single, ultra-wide photo projected across all three screens and various layouts showing multiple photos or photos and text.

Creating the Digitorium projection system wasn't St. Petersburg College's first experience with Epson projectors. Creamer said most of the college is standardized on Epson because they've had an exceptional experience with the company. "This project came about because we were looking to build out from our two-projector set up in the Digitorium," he explained. "Barry Sugarman, our Epson rep, made it pretty easy—he and Epson have always been very supportive, and if there are ever any issues they'll make it right."

The Digitorium venue at St. Petersburg's Seminole campus offers a fantastic resource to students and community members alike, and it leverages the Epson Pro Z series for maximum effect. How does Dr. Olliver know for sure that this set up has been a success? "We recently held an event called Leadercast, a national conference on leadership," he said. "Students got their cameras and phones out, just to take pictures of the display that we'd put together."