

United States District & Bankruptcy Court

District of Idaho

Last Update: April, 2014

Electronic Courtroom User Manual *for* 550 W. Fort Street, Boise Idaho

Overview:

The courtrooms in the Boise U.S. Courthouse located at 550 West Fort St. in Boise Idaho are equipped with modern audio/video suites to facilitate creation of the court record and present evidence to the court and Jury. These systems include infra-red technology for assisted listening and language interpretation and are designed to accept computer input from counsel computers and a wide variety of portable equipment. These courtrooms also have document cameras for your convenience. Each courtroom has a multi-camera video conferencing system to assist with remote hearings and testimony.

This documentation is intended to provide you with the information you need to take full advantage of the equipment in the Boise courtrooms. This document should also serve as a reference to brief your clients and witnesses.

This document will cover all electronic components in the courtroom. For your convenience those systems are addressed in separate sections by function.

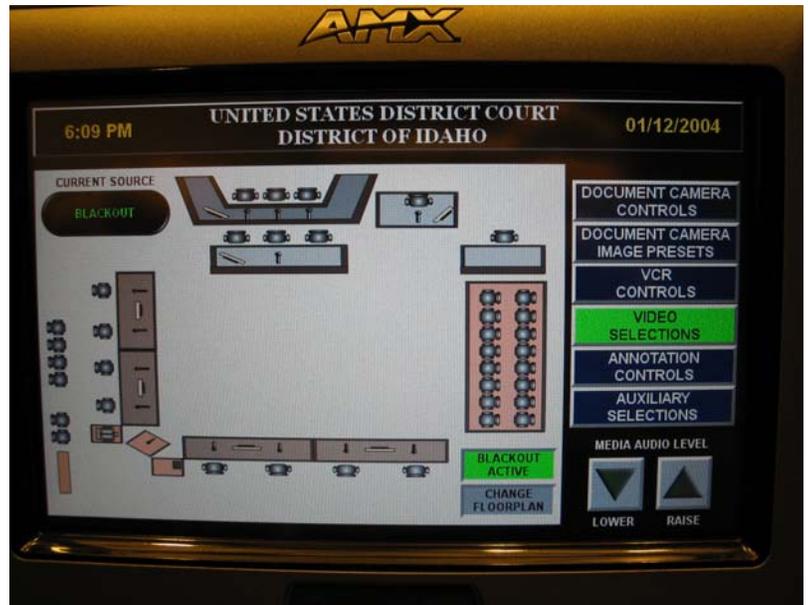
As a final note, please understand that due to the cost of these systems, they have been installed during different fiscal years. This means there are minor variations and improvements from one courtroom to the next. This document will attempt to illustrate most of those differences.



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AMX Touchscreen Control Panel

The courtroom Audio and Evidence Presentation Systems are fully controlled via identical AMX Touchscreen panels at the Judge's and Clerk's benches. These touch activated panels control all functions of the system including lighting and projection functions. These units control which location within the courtroom may present video evidence, as well as control of the sound system and audio teleconferencing. These panels include the ability to blank or "blackout" the jury monitors or all monitors. Counsel also has a touchscreen located at the lectern for selecting video sources, controlling the document camera, VCR and volume levels. These touch sensitive display panels are manufactured by AMX and are discussed throughout this document.



Audio Systems

The courtroom audio systems were installed as an integrated part of the courtrooms. The microphones on the counsel tables are only the most visible part of the system. Each courtroom has speakers in the corresponding chambers so the Judge's staff can listen while performing other duties. The audio systems are also connected to the opposite large courtroom on the sixth floor for overflow purposes, as well as speakers in the detention cells. These courtrooms also have infra-red interpretation systems as well as audio reinforcement for hearing impaired participants. Each system also has audio teleconferencing, allowing the teleconference to be conveniently made part of the court record. Finally, a wired lavalier microphone is available for the Judge and witness, as well as wireless handheld and lavalier microphones for various purposes in the courtroom.

Microphones:

There are a variety of microphones throughout the courtrooms. All system microphones, regardless of style, have a unique characteristic sound pickup pattern. The pattern is a heart-shaped pattern called a cardioid with the sound pickup pattern extending straight out from the tip of the microphone, reducing to a zero or "null" pickup towards the rear of the microphone. This pattern maximizes the sound pickup from the speaker while eliminating unwanted noise and feedback from the courtroom speakers and other courtroom noise. The typical microphone of this type picks up sound from an approximate angle of 50 degrees from center, or about 100 degrees total, so it is important the microphone user speak as directly into the microphone as possible. Average speaking

distance to the microphone should be between 10 and 20 inches.



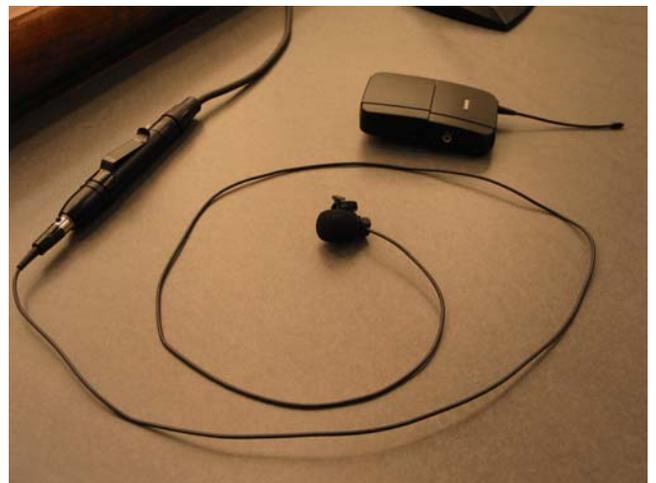
The microphones at the counsel tables have a touch pad which mutes the microphone when touched. The microphones are highly sensitive and will pick up the slightest whisper so be sure to mute them during consultation with your client. Do not point the microphones up as they are extremely sensitive and will pick up the audio from the ceiling speakers creating a feedback situation. For a demonstration of the sensitivity of these microphones, try one of the Sennheiser assisted listening headsets that will be discussed in the “listening assistance” section. You will find this

system remarkable in its ability to pick up even a whispered conversation in the courtroom.

The Judge’s benches in these courtrooms also have sidebar microphones. The Judge (or Courtroom Deputy) will press the Bench Conference button on the control panel so that pink noise is heard through the jury speakers to further prevent the bench conference from being overheard.

The microphones at the witness stands are quite sensitive but when preparing your witnesses you still need to remind them to speak clearly and directly at the microphone, at a distance of no more than 12". If you wish to have the witness speak directly to the jury please instruct the witness to adjust the microphone so that they are still speaking into it. These microphones cannot pick up the witness when speaking in a different direction. The witness stands also have lavalier microphones to assist with this challenge, for use for use if the witness is soft spoken or it is not practical to speak directly into a stationary microphone.

In addition to the wired lavalier microphones at the Judge’s bench and witness stand, this system has a wireless capability. A handheld microphone and a wireless lavalier microphone are available, but share the same radio frequency so only one of the wireless devices can be used at a time.



Assisted Listening System:

Each courtroom is equipped with a listening assistance system consisting of one or more Sennheiser Infrared emitters, mounted on each side at the front of the courtroom. Up to 6 battery operated headset receivers are also available for listeners. The system uses low frequency lightwave (infrared) transmission, similar to that used with TV and VCR remote controls, and permits all headset users to hear courtroom discussions in an amplified manner. This amplification is quite effective, as even a whisper in the courtroom can be heard on the headsets. Please remember to hold the mute button on your microphone while conversing with your client or you may be overheard.



Headsets:

Each headset (see picture below in the interpretation section) has a separate volume adjustment and it is important that the user not set the volume level too high in order to prevent discomfort when someone is speaking loudly into any of the room microphones. Aside from the volume/off switch, the headsets also have a switch with positions labeled I, II and S. The assisted listening is on channel “I”, language interpretation (when used) is on channel “II” and “S” is for Stereo, where assisted listening is present in one ear and interpretations are available in the opposite ear, as discussed in the interpretation section of this document. The clerk has a supply of rechargeable batteries for these headsets.

Interpretation System:

Each courtroom is equipped with an interpreter system consisting of two Sennheiser infrared emitters, which are mounted on the front wall of the courtroom (pictured in the assisted listening section) and two microphones. Up to 6 battery operated headset receivers are also available for listeners. The system uses low frequency lightwave (infrared) transmission, similar to that used with TV and VCR remote controls, and permits all headset users to hear interpreted discussion in an amplified manner. This amplification is quite effective and the interpreter can speak in a whisper and will be heard on the headsets.



Headsets:

Each headset has a separate volume adjustment on each ear and it is important that the user not set the volume level too high in order to prevent ear discomfort when someone is speaking loudly into the interpreter’s microphone. Aside from the volume/off switch, the headsets also have a switch with positions labeled I, II and S. The assisted listening is on channel “I”, language interpretation (when used) is on channel “II” and “S” is for Stereo, where assisted listening is present in one ear and

interpretations are available in the opposite ear. The clerk has a supply of rechargeable batteries for these headsets.

Interpreter's control system:

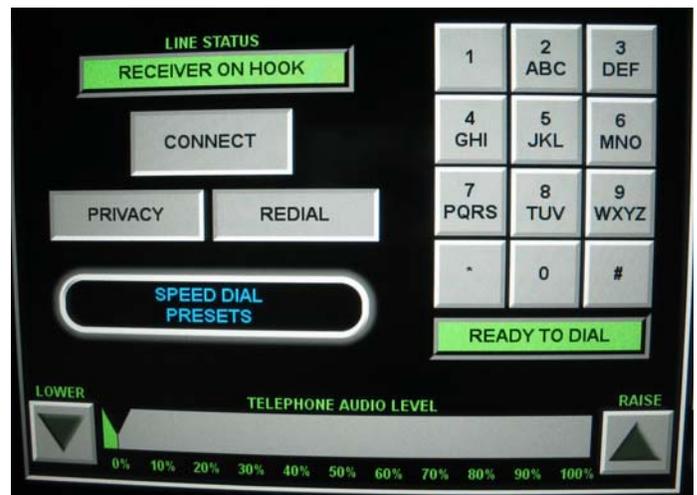
To operate the Interpreter System, the interpreter must plug the 5 pin interpretation control unit into the interpreter's panel at the witness stand or in the left leg of the left plaintiff's table and adjust the headset so that the microphone element is within one-half to one inch from his or her mouth. The Interpreter's control system consists of the MIC ON/OFF switch, an HP MAX/MIN volume control, and a BROADCAST switch. For normal interpretation, the interpreter should have the MIC ON/OFF switch in the ON (depressed) position, so those listeners wearing the wireless headsets can hear the interpretation. For "broadcast" of the interpreter's microphone over the courtroom speakers the BROADCAST switch should be held down. If at any time the interpreter needs to temporarily turn off his or her microphone, the interpreter may press and "toggle" the two position MIC ON/OFF switch. The audio will remain off until the MIC ON/OFF switch is pressed again. The headphone portion of the Interpreter's headset is used to monitor courtroom audio from all courtroom microphones. The interpreter may vary the level of this audio by adjusting the HP MAX / HP MIN control on the side of the control unit.



Audio Teleconference:

Teleconferencing equipment incorporated into the AV system permits the Judge and other participants in the courtroom to listen to, and hold conversations with, parties outside the courtroom. Control of this unit is via the AMX Touchscreen on either the Judge's or Clerk's bench.

To establish a conference call, the courtroom deputy will normally establish the connection using the telephone set at the clerk's bench. The courtroom deputy places the called participants on hold and then must select the Audio Conference menu on the AMX Touchpanel, pressing the button marked "CONNECT." Immediately, a soft chime tone will be heard over the courtroom speakers and the caller will be connected to the courtroom audio system. Normal courtroom conversations as picked up by the courtroom microphones will be heard by the caller and the caller's voice will be heard over the courtroom loudspeaker system. If it is necessary to change the volume level of the caller's voice, it may be adjusted by pressing the Telephone audio level control buttons on the Clerk



or Judge’s AMX control panel. It is very important to note that the participants outside of the courtroom can only hear discussions spoken clearly and directly into the courtroom microphones.

If at any time during the call the courtroom deputy wishes to prevent the caller from hearing the courtroom conversation, he or she may press the “PRIVACY” button on the audio conference section of the AMX control panel once. This will temporarily mute the conversation, until the button is pressed again.

To disconnect the conference, simply announce to the outside party that the courtroom is disconnecting and the courtroom deputy or Judge can press the CONNECT/DISCONNECT button on the AMX control panel. The call will be immediately terminated.

Additional Audio Notes:

For your reference, you should know that audio is distributed throughout the courthouse. For example, each courtroom has audio feeds to the respective chambers suite so that court personnel can continue their other duties while listening to the courtroom proceedings. Audio is also distributed to the detention cells on the sixth or seventh floor, unless the “Under Seal” selection has been made by the Judge or Courtroom Deputy. This feature was designed to accommodate an unruly or disruptive defendant. Additionally, the audio from these courtrooms is distributed to the opposite courtroom (only for courtrooms 2 & 3) to facilitate overflow spectator seating. Finally, audio is distributed to two jacks at the rear of the jury box in courtrooms 2 & 3 for Press/Media audio feeds.

Audio/Video Inputs at Front Counsel Tables & Lectern:

There are also computer inputs at all counsel tables (additional video inputs at select tables) and the lectern, as illustrated in the image to the right. The connectors on the top row are called S-Video and the bottom row of connectors are called Composite connectors. The center connector is for computer video. When any of these video sources are selected using the AMX touch panel (video selection menu), the associated audio connections are also active. These allow counsel to bring a variety of different types of portable tape decks into the courtroom and play the audio over the loud speaker system. The



Black RJ-45 jack is for Real Time Transcription, Blue is for network (Not used: replaced by WiFi).

The volume levels of these inputs can be adjusted by repeatedly pressing the Media Audio Level volume

controls on the AMX touchscreen (lower right). The audio (and corresponding video) is selected to be distributed to the courtroom by touching the table, using the Video Select menu on the AMX touchscreen (see AMX touchscreen discussion on page 3). Once the table position is touched, either at the lectern or either of the bench touchscreens, the menu at the right will appear. Now simply select the source for that audio/video which is desired for presentation in the courtroom, then press on the “CLOSE WINDOW” button.

Video Systems

The video evidence presentation system is also fully integrated into the courtrooms and consists of a variety of components, all controlled via the AMX touchscreen panels at the bench and lectern. The system also has the ability to receive computer inputs and accept input from a variety of portable devices. The witness can also annotate the evidence using a finger via their touchscreen and the evidence display at the lectern is also a touch screen. The jury video can be “blanked “ or muted from the AMX touchscreen until it is determined appropriate for viewing by jurors and spectators. Counsel tables have monitors to display the video, as well as the clerk, judge and witness. In courtrooms 2 & 3, a Sanyo PLC-XF35 projector is mounted in the rear wall. Courtroom 1 has individual monitors for each two jurors in the jury box, and the fifth floor uses large flat panel LCDs for the jury and spectators. All courtroom video evidence display monitors can be disabled using the “BLACKOUT ACTIVE” on the VIDEO SELECTIONS menu of any of the AMX panels.

Document Camera:

The document camera is also frequently known by the terms visual presenter and evidence presenter. This tool is used for presenting documents and three-dimensional objects.

To use the document camera, press the power ON button (top, left side), unless the unit is already on (can also be turned on using the AMX touchscreen). Paper documents should be placed on the platform with the printed side up. The control panel (the head that houses the camera) has buttons for zooming and focusing. All controls are accessible from both the document camera as well as the AMX touchscreen.

The camera has a zoom wheel, auto focus (enabled by default), freeze and lighting controls. Turning the light on while not always necessary, frequently reduces the shadowing caused by the courtroom lighting. Using the freeze button, allows you to reposition the document without disturbing the image displayed in the courtroom. Once you have the image oriented to suit your preferences, you can remove the freeze option to display the new image.



Touch Panel for Witness & Lectern:

All video evidence is displayed at the witness stand and lectern on touchscreen LCD displays, identical in appearance to the counsel table displays, except this version is enhanced to include touch capabilities. These special touch screens allow the witness or counsel to annotate the evidence presented (note: courtrooms 4 & 5 do not have touch screens or any other annotation capability). Mark up any video showing on the display by simply drawing right on the display using the tip of your finger. Change colors by pressing in the upper left hand corner of the display, or clear all annotations by pressing in the lower left hand corner. The witness can “drop” an arrow on screen by tapping with his or her finger. Any individual marks can be “undone” by pressing in the upper right corner near the “undo” label. If the touch panels are accidentally tapped in the upper middle area, the annotation menu will appear. In most cases simply touch the word exit from either panel and the menu will disappear.

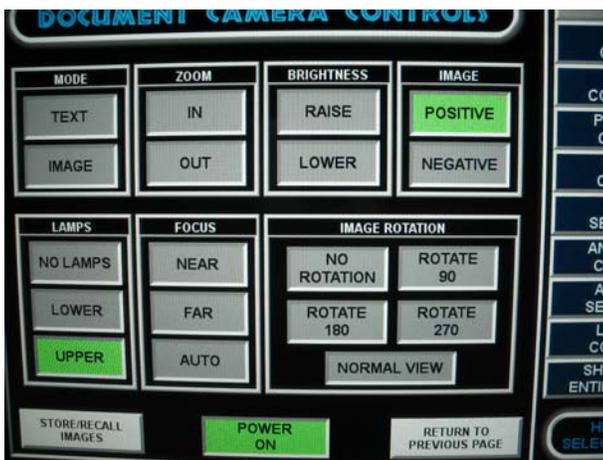


VCR at Lectern:

The Video Cassette Recorder in the Lectern equipment rack is a Super VHS model. Courtrooms 1, 6 & 7 have combo units that include



DVD players. Unfortunately this unit does not produce sharp freeze frame images. The VCR is activated as the active video source by selecting the lectern on the “Video Source” menu, then choosing VCR, followed by CLOSE WINDOW. Now choose VCR CONTROLS (from menu of AMX touchscreen at lectern) and the display at the right will show. Most controls on the front of the VCR do not function as the unit is integrated



into the AMX control system.



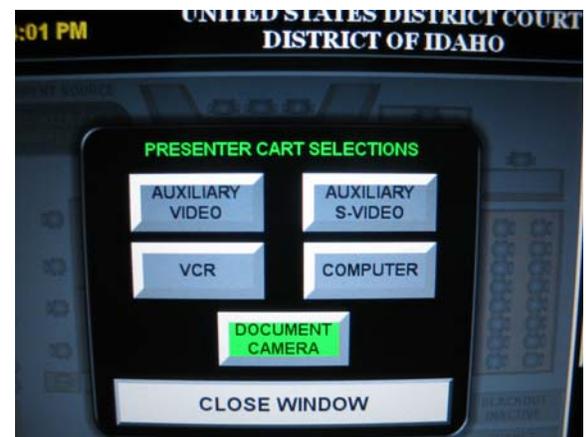
Audio/Video Inputs at Counsel Tables:

The picture on page 7 illustrates the standard input panel at the counsel tables and lecterns in courtrooms 2 & 3, and 5, 6 & 7. Courtrooms 1 and 4 have a recessed input panel with the same features, but the cables are already attached. In the large courtrooms 1, 2 & 3, there is a wall (floor in courtroom 1) location next to lectern with computer inputs, as well as the witness stand. These input sources are selected using the “VIDEO SELECTIONS” screen on any of the AMX touchscreen panels (see image on page 3). Simply touch the table, lectern, wall location or witness stand location desired, and choose the desired video source. The corresponding audio source will also be selected automatically. The audio volume can be adjusted using the lectern AMX touchscreen media volume control on the lower right corner of each screen (also found under Auxiliary Options), or on the AUDIO CONTROLS menu of the AMX panels on the bench. Below is a brief description of the various video sources. The Courtroom Deputy has a supply of cables and adapters to connect your equipment to these panels.



Auxiliary (Composite) Video

The composite video is for devices such as VCRs, document cameras or any other portable low resolution devices that are brought into the courtrooms. Since many of these portable devices have RCA connectors, the clerk has a supply of adaptors to translate between styles.



S-Video

The S-Video is capable of producing slightly higher quality output than a composite video signal. Many high resolution document cameras and Super VHS VCRs have S-video outputs.

Computer Video

This jack should look familiar. Plug this into the video output from your computer. The system can display video at resolutions as high as 1024 by 768 pixels. Some of the newer monitors can display higher resolutions, but this is the standard the rooms were designed for so if you wish to ensure good video on all monitors, you will want to use this resolution. The computer refresh rate should be set at 60 Hz using the computer display properties settings. Caution should be advised at higher resolutions however as the image will be quite small and may be difficult for all courtroom participants to see. The computer video inputs also have a horizontal adjustment to correct for an image that is skewed to the left or right. This is just one of the reasons you are advised to test with the actual equipment you will be using before your hearing begins. Courtroom 4 supports the newer digital HDMI computer video inputs.

AMX Control Panel at Lectern:

The AMX control panel has been referenced several times above and the main menu is illustrated at the left. The panel facilitates operation of the evidence presentation devices and selection of the audio/video sources. The first four functions have been discussed above. The annotation controls allow the annotations to be turned on or off (using OVERLAY ON and OVERLAY OFF functions) as shown on the next page. The system also has a chalkboard mode where the parties can freely draw using the touch screens. When in chalkboard mode all other video sources are inactive. Return to normal video by pressing “VIDEO MODE” again. The annotation system can be rebooted from this panel but this action should only be taken by the Courtroom Deputy. The annotation menu can also be selected, where many functions exist such as changing the pointers or line width. It is a very rare occasion where you may need this menu.



The final menu on the lectern AMX display is labeled AUXILIARY CONTROLS. It contains a touch panel setup button which you should only use with assistance from the Courtroom Deputy, as well as a Technical Support number with the number of the system integrator. A cleaning page is also provided so the touch panel can be cleaned without activating any of the “touch” spots or hot spots. Finally, it includes another location where the Evidence Media Audio levels can be adjusted.



Video Conferencing:

All Idaho federal courtrooms have video conferencing systems incorporated into the AV suite, except for courtrooms 2 & 3. Those rooms are scheduled for video conferencing installation in June of 2014. These are Polycom Standard Definition and High definition systems that have both ISDN and IP communications capabilities. With the Judge’s approval, these systems can be used for a variety of hearings and remote testimony with other Idaho courthouses as well as federal courthouses and Kinkos locations around the world.

Additional Courtroom Notes:

If a single piece of advice could be offered, it would be to practice with the courtroom systems so that you are completely comfortable with the equipment specific to your courtroom when you appear. Practice with the equipment you will be using (the EXACT equipment, not a “similar” model) so that any incompatibilities are resolved well in advance of your court date.

The court has two rolling large flat panel displays that can be placed at the front of the Jury rail (courtrooms 2 & 3) in the case of projector failure, or in front of the first row of spectator seating.