

Santa Rosa, CA

Maximizes transparency with mobile video streaming



The City of Santa Rosa, CA has been broadcasting its council meetings online since 2004, however, this year they wanted to upgrade their video streaming infrastructure to accelerate transparency and reach the rapidly growing number of people using smartphones and tablets. Additionally, they wanted to make the process of capturing, indexing, and publishing their online video streaming content easier for staff — to save time and enhance their online user experience.

The City of Santa Rosa partnered with Granicus to meet these demands. They have successfully modernized their streaming media infrastructure with H.264 formats and they have introduced a new end-to-end automated environment for managing their streaming production and live meeting workflows. These tools are helping the city stay innovative while cutting costs. To date, they are saving approximately \$1,000 per month in staff time.

“ We wanted to make it easier for the citizens of Santa Rosa to participate in our meetings when it’s most convenient for them. ”

- Eric McHenry, Chief Technology Officer,
City of Santa Rosa, CA

Success Highlights

- Enabling broader access to public meetings with live and on-demand mobile streaming
- Streamlined video management with automated indexing and publishing
- Saving more than \$1,000 per month in staff time
- Increased video traffic by 3,000 hits in two months
- Enhanced video research tools with advanced search & RSS

Fast Facts

Agency Type: City

Population: 169,295

Solution:

Granicus Platform

Government Transparency Suite

Legislative Management Suite

Active Since: 2012

The City of Santa Rosa has always been a government transparency leader. As smartphone and tablet usage continues to experience explosive growth, nearly surpassing PC and laptop usage, Santa Rosa's IT Department and City Council realized that they needed to upgrade their video content delivery strategy to meet the new demands of the mobile revolution. They quickly prioritized an initiative to ensure their council meeting video broadcasts could reach mobile audiences. "People expect to have access to their government via their mobile devices," said Eric McHenry, Chief Technology Officer for the City of Santa Rosa. "With Granicus' H.264 video formats we can reach the broadest possible audience — across leading internet browsers, operating systems, and mobile devices," McHenry added.



Santa Rosa City Council streaming via mobile devices

By upgrading their video streaming architecture with the Granicus Open Platform and Government Transparency Suite, the city can now leverage H.264 to reach multiple players, including, HTML5, QuickTime, Flash, Silverlight, and Windows Media. This helps ensure their content can be accessed by the greatest number of viewers on multiple browsers and across various platforms, including, PCs, Macs, iPhones, iPads, and Android powered devices. Within 2 months of launching with Granicus, the city has already increased their video traffic by more than 3,000 viewers.

"We now feel like we're able to deliver our meeting content in the most transparent and accessible way possible," said McHenry.

Additionally, after migrating to Granicus and H.264 formats, "the quality of our viewing experience has greatly improved," McHenry noted. The city's new streaming architecture also provides a better research environment for online viewers, allowing them to search and playback legislative deliberations with greater ease. For instance, end users can use advanced search filters to locate videos and indexed agenda items related to city ordinances, resolutions, or particular legislative topics that interest them most. Additionally, Granicus provides RSS subscriptions which deliver real-time alerts when new council meeting minutes, agendas, and videos have been published within the city's media archive. Another advantage of moving to a cloud platform provider like Granicus is that the city will benefit from a faster pace of innovation. "It's important that we keep up rapid changes in technology. With Granicus, we know we have a team of software developers on our side to help us stay innovative," said McHenry.

Since upgrading to Granicus, the City of Santa Rosa has also realized enhancements to their overall video streaming workflow, which has resulted in time-savings for staff. Previously, when the city streamed their council meetings through their local Community Media Television provider, it took a day to trim, index, and edit the video files before their Clerks department could publish the final archives to their website. They used the videos to complete their minutes records and this delay caused some challenges in their internal process. Now, Clerks have complete control over the indexing and publishing process—the final video archive is ready to be published almost immediately after the meeting is finished. “The turnaround time for information is quicker and our Clerk staff doesn’t need to worry about publishing, this happens automatically,” said McHenry.

According to McHenry, these process enhancements are enabling the city to save roughly \$1,000 per month. He also expects these cost savings to increase after they connect their video solution to Granicus’ Legislative Management Suite, which will provide them with a completely automated and paperless agenda management workflow for their council meetings.

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