

EMS Case Study *Columbia University*



Background

Columbia University is an independent, privately supported, non-sectarian higher education institution. More than 25,000 students attend the university at a variety of sites. The main campus is located on 33 acres in the Morningside Heights section of Manhattan.

When they are not in class, students often gather at Lerner Hall, Columbia's student center. Located on the southwest corner of the campus, this 225,000 square foot facility opened in the fall of 1999.

Lerner Hall is the center of campus activity at Columbia and one of its busiest facilities. The building hosts:

- 7,000 undergraduate student mailboxes
- Computer labs and networked laptop lounges
- Travel agency
- Copy center
- Electronic banking center.
- Columbia University Bookstore
- Music rehearsal and art exhibition spaces
- Student service offices
- Columbia TV and WKCR

Students visit Lerner to plan events with their organizations in one of the club offices or in the meeting rooms designated for student club usage.

They also meet friends in one of Lerner's two dining locations, in the pool and game room, for an event in the auditorium and for the movies in the cinema. Students host events in the lounges, conference rooms, party space and multi-purpose spaces.

Outdated Software Couldn't Handle the Volume

Lerner Hall needed sophisticated software that would centralize and standardize their facility's event management operations.

Fast Facts

- More than 25,000 students attend classes at main Morningside Heights campus
- University replaces unreliable scheduling system with EMS Professional and then **upgrades** to EMS Enterprise and Virtual EMS, creating a **seamless scheduling system**
- University's **Student Center**, Lerner Hall, is one of its busiest facilities

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Those operations involve a variety of event types, from single-room reservations with little or no resource requirements to year-long series of reservations with multiple rooms, intricate room setups, catered meals, and biweekly customer invoicing for services rendered throughout the year.

Prior to implementing EMS, the Lerner staff tried using another program, but found that it was unable to handle the task of scheduling for over 900 customers. Users often commented that the old system was designed by a company that focused on classroom scheduling and consequently the program didn't have the power and flexibility needed for meeting and event management.



The staff made a list of problems with the outdated software that included its inability to handle last-minute event or scheduling changes, the time it took to implement the software on new computers and the company's unreliable technical support. In addition, the old system made interdepartmental

communication difficult in a number of ways, including the fact that reports couldn't be emailed and instead had to be printed out and faxed.

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Meeting the Challenges

Columbia University implemented EMS Professional soon after Lerner Hall opened. Later, they upgraded to EMS Enterprise, the most powerful member of the EMS product line. The Lerner Hall staff quickly saw that EMS Enterprise could seamlessly coordinate the resources and scheduling opportunities for numerous departments, and many - Faculty House, the School of Journalism, and Columbia Law School, for example - began using the system.

Today, users can access EMS Enterprise on the web via the Virtual EMS component, in real time from anywhere on campus. As even more campus entities become aware of the system's power, functionality and flexibility, the scope of the system's implementation is virtually limitless.

For more information on Dean Evans & Associates, and the company's event management and master calendaring software products, go to www.dea.com or contact the Sales department at sales@dea.com or 1.800.440.3994 ext. 863.

