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Certify VMS Software

By [Ralph C. Jensen](#) Jul 01, 2012

No one likes taking tests, or the testing process, until now. Arecont Vision set up its own MegaLab several years ago to ensure the integration of its own suite of cameras with industry-leading NVRs and video management system software solutions. It is a testing process that makes the best even better by lining up to become part of Arecont Vision's technology partner program. The idea is the brainchild of Jason Schimpf, Arecont Vision's director of partner relationships, and resides in the company's Glendale, Calif., offices. The MegaLab is meant to test integration and load performance with the assistance of a quality assurance engineer. Those involved in the testing also work hand-in-hand with company development engineers.

"The MegaLab is the perfect tool to assist our efforts in expanding the integration of Arecont Vision megapixel cameras, while companies can test their compatibility with complementary state-of-the-art technologies," Schimpf said. "What we've done is created a test ground in a comfortable setting for software workers. They can visit our facility and test their products for themselves.

"There is nothing like getting a hands-on experience during the testing phase. The more testing we complete in our Mega- Lab ensures a better integration of our megapixel cameras with our partners."

The MegaLab provides a level of integration that partners are able to quantify using their own open-architecture platforms with Arecont Vision cameras in a completely agnostic environment. The concept is to determine the integration of a

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camera and which camera features—e.g., quality, saturation and brightness—are controlled by the VMS.

Rob Shaw, president of Video Insight, had high praise for the lab because it allows his staff of engineers to load test a bank of cameras with their video management system. He was equally impressed with the way his VMS worked so smoothly with the Arecont Vision panoramic camera.

“There are a number of schools that we have worked with that have that panoramic camera,” said Shaw, who was awarded the Arecont Vision VMS of the year in the education vertical. “Using the lab allows us to test without having to be in the actual customer environment, and it allows us not to have to put up hundreds of cameras to test the software.” Staged in the back offices at Arecont Vision headquarters, the MegaLab would be easy to miss without a guided tour. The thing that stands out is the straight line of cameras at ceiling height constantly monitoring two giant, high-definition screens. The cameras watch in full color as the partners begin their testing. Testing began in 2010, and testers are frequent visitors to the lab facilities.

A Milestone Solutions engineer who worked with the certification said that the MegaLab is “definitely impressive. It is nice to have access to all of the cameras there so we can test capabilities across the board.”

In fact, Arecont Vision has set up a program through which remote testing can take place. In the past two years, more manufacturers have used the remote option rather than physically spending a couple days in the Glendale offices to test their own products. An average certification generally lasts one day, but it’s not unusual for a software developer to spend up to three days performing product testing.

“This MegaLab certification provides a double-check for Milestone to verify the integration is solid between our software and their hardware,” said Martin Friis-Mikkelsen, head of strategic alliances at Milestone Systems. “We have the ability to test our integration on a large volume of Arecont Vision cameras at once.”

Because the testing facilities are agnostic and programs do not favor one manufacturer over another, there is no finger pointing when it comes to finding and fixing a problem. In fact, Schimpf said that when a problem is found, everyone involved in the test focuses on the fix rather than “who did it.”

The Milestone device driver developers—who program the integration between XProtect VMS and alliance partners’ hardware devices—do their own final stability testing of new camera models running with a mix of different camera brands. The MegaLab allows partners such as Milestone to also check performance with several megapixel cameras at once. It means a lot to Milestone engineers, who test certain configurations and system loads, but also for the development team in the Copenhagen headquarters working with new releases.

“The certification will carry extra weight for system installers and end users alike, helping the channel to more confidently sell and implement our joint solutions,” Friis-Mikkelsen said. “We work closely with our partners, collaborating for the benefit of customers and the industry as a whole towards mutual success for all involved.”

The MegaLab has a quad core server with hot-swappable hard drives connected to more than 100 cameras, all of which are a brand off of the Arecont Vision shelves.

The MegaLab has a dedicated gigabit network and a server rack with KVM to secure the partner’s appliance equipment. In addition to a dual quad core server option, it also has a quad core client PC with dual 24-inch display in the clean work environment. Three certification tests are offered for camera integration, feature integration and load testing.

And, soon, the MegaLab will begin to offer testing outside of the video management system realm, administering testing for optics, housings and wireless solutions.

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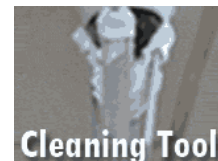
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