

Alston & Bird Law Firm Raleigh, North Carolina

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Alston & Bird has consistently been one of FORTUNE'S "100 Best Companies to Work For". When its head litigation partner wanted to create a state-of-the-art courtroom for training, practice, research and teleconferencing, Jimmy Carroll, Alston & Bird Telecommunications Manager, and Clay Sturgill, Sales Director with Technical Innovations, teamed up to devise the concept. Jim Lanier of Technical Innovations was the system designer responsible for the project, and he collaborated with the architectural team at Carson Guest to realize the original vision and take it to the next level.

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Lanier designed the system to simulate a real courtroom experience, allowing attorneys to practice presenting their cases and for witnesses to rehearse giving testimony in front of juries. The room is also used to train new attorneys, for mock trials and to study jury deliberations. The judge's chamber, which features a Crestron touchpanel, doubles as a conference room for video arraignment, video testimony and videoconferencing, enabling lawyers to meet remotely with clients, witnesses and experts. The courtroom is controlled by Crestron PRO2 and AV2 processors and is remotely accessible via Crestron e-Control®.

The real differentiator in the system is the "Perception Analyzer," which was conceived, designed and implemented by Lanier. Each juror is given a handheld wireless "Perception Analyzer" that



tracks individual reactions in real-time and graphically records the data over live video. There are cameras capturing reactions of the jury box and two cameras in the deliberation room recording jury members for later analysis and training. Data from the analyzers are stored in a database allowing complex searches, filters and reports to be generated, giving attorneys quantitative insight into jury tendencies toward different legal arguments or tactics.

The podium features a 6" Crestron tilt touchpanel, providing control for the attorneys to display testimony or evidence. There are four cameras mounted in each corner of the courtroom: on the bench, the podium, the jury box and a wide shot of the courtroom. Live remote PTZ (pan-tilt-zoom) camera control is also provided by Crestron.

The production control/observation room has a broadcast-type switcher that provides professional elements to the recording of the live event. A one-way mirror allows the director to watch proceedings without being detected by participants in the courtroom. The judge has two Crestron touchpanels on the bench, programmed with a button that simultaneously activates sound masking over the jury box, mutes all microphones in the courtroom and switches all controllers and all displays to a default screen. This function is used primarily when the judge asks the attorneys to address the bench, preventing the jury from overhearing these private conversations.

