

Ruggedized SYSTIMAX® Solution Copes with Environmental Extremes at Radboud University

New SYSTIMAX cabling chosen for wet and humid conditions in botany lab



Network connectivity is vital to all types of organization, but standard cabling and outlets are not suited to every environment. An illustration of this is found in the botany laboratory of Radboud University in Nijmegen, The Netherlands, where conditions are severe enough to make standard products unreliable and shorten their lives.

The laboratory's facilities for the study of plant roots are housed in a semi-open greenhouse complex where humidity and temperature vary dramatically. To meet this connectivity challenge, the University needed a special kind of cabling. It found the right solution by working with SYSTIMAX BusinessPartner Croon Elektrotechniek B.V. and distributor, Anixter.

Together, they decided the new ruggedized SYSTIMAX cabling solution was best to provide reliable, high performance under the laboratory's extreme conditions. By making this choice, Radboud University became the first organization in Europe to implement the SYSTIMAX ruggedized solution.

Adopting this advanced network infrastructure is helping establish Radboud among the top Dutch universities. Achieving a leadership position in today's academic sector depends on the quality of an institution's infrastructure as well as its standards of research and education. This makes high performance network infrastructure a key asset in keeping the University ahead of competitors.

To ensure students and researchers have the fast data communications needed to implement advanced systems, the University's IT department has a program to upgrade all its network cabling. This long-term project includes replacement of over 25,000 connections in nearly 70 different buildings.

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Bert Smeets, a consultant and project manager
in the University's IT Department

The Botany laboratory, with its special environments, demanded particular attention. In its semi-open area, biologists from all over the world need continually available data connections as they study plant growth.

“Use of regular UTP cabling was not an option here,” said Bert Smeets, a consultant and project manager in the University's IT Department. “In the Botany Lab, large glass containers filled with water are used in open spaces, so cables and connectors are exposed to water and humidity. With ordinary cabling, this would cause corrosion that compromises connectivity performance and eventually disrupt operations to the point where cabling replacement would be needed.”

When Croon won the contract to replace other cabling on the campus, its engineers saw that the ruggedized SYSTIMAX solution could meet the Labs requirements. SYSTIMAX cabling was already the preferred choice across the site because of its performance and industry leading guarantees, so the ruggedized version was a natural choice.

This new variant of the SYSTIMAX GigaSPEED® XL Solution is specially designed for extreme environments, but is fully compatible with other SYSTIMAX cabling solutions. It is compact, easy-to-install and comfortably exceeds the performance specifications of the Category 6 cabling standard, even under harsh conditions.

The solution's special features include corrosion resistant outlets and waterproof connectors designed for extra strain, flex and impact resistance. Joints between connectors and cables have IP67-rated water sealing and, for unused outlets, sealing caps are provided to keep out water and dirt.

Using the ruggedized solution, researchers can, for example, install IP cameras to observe root growth inside test containers filled with plants. Via these connections, they have the option to monitor their experiments via the Internet from any location.

Through Anixter, Croon was able to obtain all the new cabling needed in time to complete the installation before the start of the new academic year. This allowed researchers go about their work without any interruption. The ruggedized cabling is now seamlessly integrated with the rest of the SYSTIMAX cabling on the campus. It has also been certified, along with other connectivity infrastructure, to receive the SYSTIMAX 20-year guarantees and application assurances.

“The University is using network communications to add new dimensions to its research capability - with a ruggedized cabling infrastructure it can be sure its communications infrastructure is reliable and has a long life,” said Carl van Bethray, Sales Director, SYSTIMAX Solutions, Netherlands. “By putting reliable, high performance connectivity in areas where this was difficult or impossible in the past, the Botany Lab has created unique facilities that put it at the forefront in its field.”

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