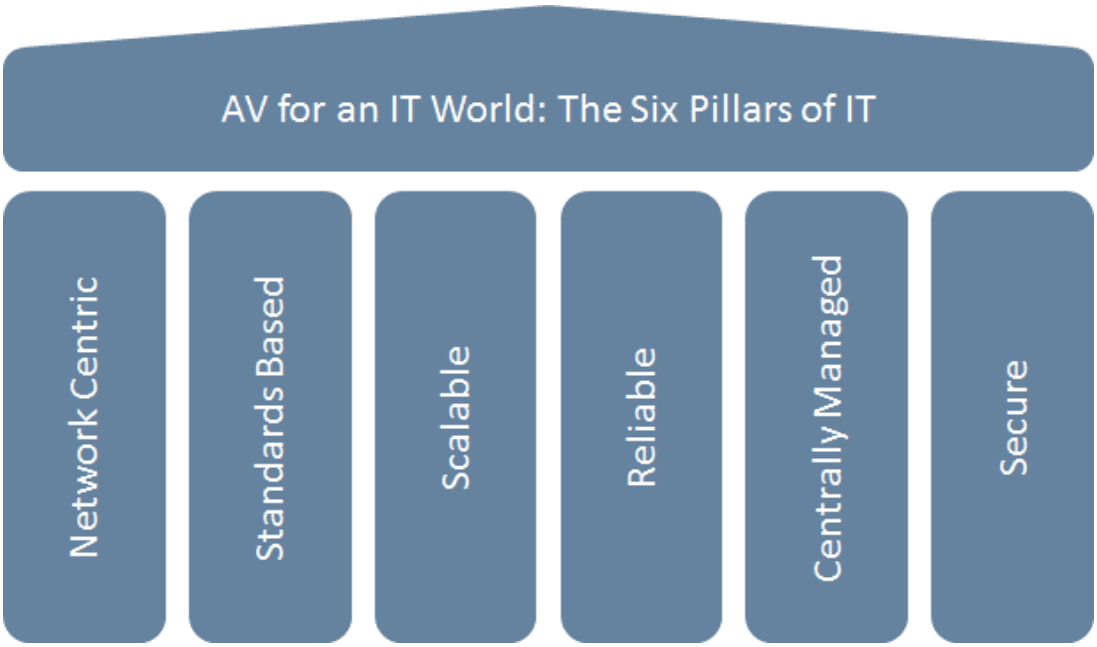
AV/IT CONVERGENCE: THE SIX PILLARS OF IT

In its younger days, the computer industry looked a lot like AV still does today with lots of vendors feeding a substantial community of large and small dealers and integrators. The dealers added substantial value by integrating, configuring, programming, installing, and supporting highly customized systems. This approach fostered lots of innovation but was relatively costly and difficult to scale.

In order to transition to an enterprise wide capability, the computer industry changed its priorities to focus on those characteristics and business practices that were conducive to reliability, repeatability, and affordability. These priorities included adoption of open standards, network capability, scalability, security, and centralized monitoring and maintenance. Along with the focus on reliability, we refer to these priorities as the Six Pillars of IT.



Network Centric

Unlike AV systems of the past, IT systems are designed as parts of a living ecosystem, where components and tools must adhere to IT expectations of service, connectivity and resource management. In other words, IT systems do not live as independent islands, but as an interconnected whole.

In the past, the content reviewed in a conference room was essentially held hostage within that room. The only way to share meeting resources was via video conferencing, which has traditionally been too expensive to use in any but the most sophisticated conference rooms or boardrooms. But with a networked AV strategy, meeting participants around the world can share meeting content in real-time using standard collaboration technologies.

IT ORGANIZATIONS WILL MONITOR AV ASSETS LIKE IT ASSETS – IN REAL TIME AND ON A GLOBAL BASIS

Standards-Based

The domain of IT is far more expansive today than it was just 10 years ago. In a relatively short period, its responsibility has grown beyond its original roots in data processing systems to now encompass networking and most forms of communications.

One factor absolutely critical to making this astonishing growth possible is the use of open standards wherever technological maturity permits. A standards-based architecture avoids proprietary implementations and protocols so that systems and devices can coexist and evolve in a network-centric framework.

Scalable

In the IT world, management tools must support server farms for global deployments. Products and systems must be scalable not only from a growth perspective but from the ability to adopt and embrace rapidly changing technologies.

Reliable

Reliability means high availability. Two key components of high availability are the inherent up-time of any product, plus the ability to rapidly diagnose and repair a product if it fails. This is a critical factor for IT organizations who lack the time and manpower to constantly diagnose issues with AV systems. As any IT staffer knows, a reliable system is worth its weight in gold.

Centrally Managed

As a follow-on to reliability, a key component of an IT-centric world is the ability to access, monitor and diagnose products from a central location and on a global basis, 24x7x365. As mentioned previously, the AV paradigm has been to

A RELIABLE SYSTEM MUST MINIMIZE POINTS OF FAILURE BY REDUCING THE NUMBER OF DISCRETE COMPONENTS.

maintain systems separate from the IT network, which means assets like controllers, touch panels, video conferencing systems and the like are not easily monitored for performance, uptime and energy utilization. In the new converged AV/IT world, the difference between AV assets and traditional IT assets will disappear.

Secure

In the IT world, each and every asset on a network must adhere to stringent layers of security, since any node on a network represents a potential security vulnerability. Additionally, the small footprint and high value of certain AV assets like touch panels and controllers makes them physical security risks like laptops and other portable devices. To minimize theft and accidental removal, many AV assets offer physical security features like table mount kits or Kensington mounts.

TAKE ACTION

This Industry Brief is an excerpt from the AMX White Paper "When Industries Collide: What is AV/IT Convergence – And what it means for you." You will find this White Paper and many other industry materials on the **LEARN** page at amx.com (http://amx.com/automate/learn.aspx).

The **PLAN** page (http://amx.com/automate/plan.aspx) includes an interactive tool that allows you to visualize the typical conference room configurations that AMX offers, and to explore which room configuration is best suited to your needs.

You can always **CONTACT A SOLUTIONS ADVISOR**, who will be glad to guide you through the process of identifying, specifying and purchasing your ideal conference room or classroom AV solution. The "Contact an Advisor" link is at the top of every page of the AMX website. Options to connect include chat, phone and email.