

# Catlinc Net Evaluation

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The Catlinc Net is an attachment for the SP Controls Smart Room controller which enables you to control the Smart Panel over the network. It plugs into the Smart Panel's RS-232 port and has an ethernet jack on the other end. It can also monitor usage statistics (which input is used and for how long), bulb life, and send email alerts when a bulb exceeds a preset number of hours, as well as when it loses communication with the projector (which has some potential as an anti-theft alert, albeit after-the-fact).

Configuration is via RS-232 prior to installing it into the Smart Panel box (the Catlinc requires a static IP address). Cost of the unit \$375 is (from Compview) plus possible costs of a cable drop and port heating (\$275, \$80, respectively). MDS tech time to install and program is less than one hour per unit.

## Pros

- Allows remote control of Smart Room panel; can aid in troubleshooting
- Keeps automatic track of usage, bulb life
- Capable of email notifications regarding bulb life, communications; slight chance it might help catch thieves

## Cons

- Expensive, does not scale well
- Requires running network cable, heating port, and assigning a static IP address (which may incur additional costs).
- Does not monitor heat/projector errors.

The bottom line is that we just did not end up using these much. They do work, but most problems we have with a Smart Room are not solvable via the Catlinc—they require us to physically go to the room to assist the user. Our most common problems are Function-F8, replacing a VGA cable, and resetting a frozen projector—none of these problems can be helped by the Catlinc. Couple this with the high cost, and the requirement for a network cable drop for older rooms, and the Catlinc just can't be justified for use here in our SmartRooms.