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THE VSCU ADVANTAGE

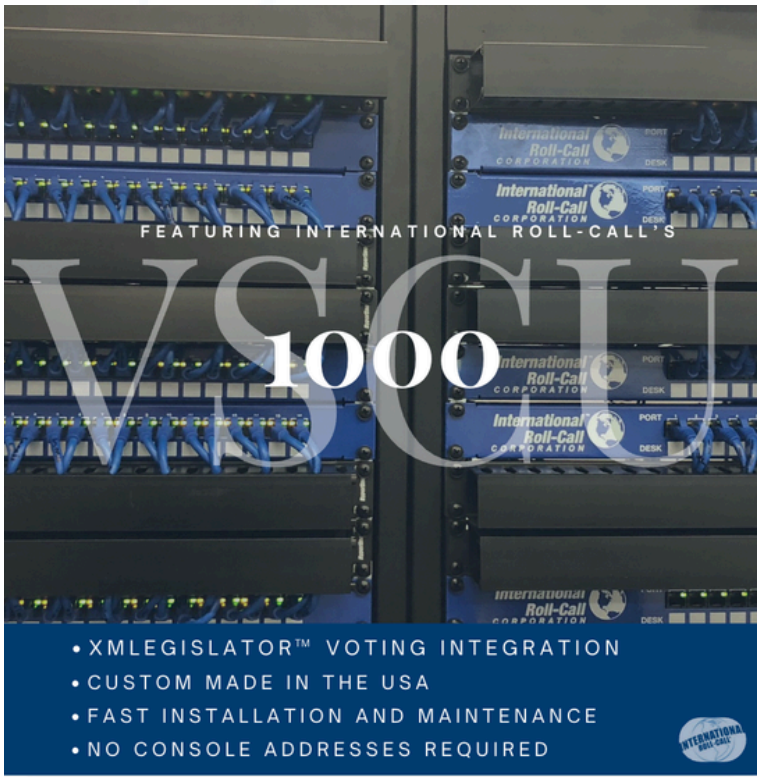
WHY 30+ LEGISLATIVE BODIES HAVE UPGRADED

Legislative chambers and processes are built on tradition. Desks remain unchanged for generations, workflows are carefully protected, and technology is often expected to disappear quietly into the background. If something works, the instinct is simple: don't touch it. If a legislative system has functioned reliably for decades, the question naturally arises: why change it?

IRC's answer is straightforward: every system works until it doesn't. And when it doesn't, the consequences are immediate, public, and disruptive. Over time, even the most dependable systems face increasing risk as technology ages, supportability declines, and replacement parts become unavailable.

Legacy solutions become harder to maintain and less capable of supporting the evolving needs of a modern legislative chamber.

That reality is exactly why more legislatures are choosing to upgrade from IRC's legacy System Control Unit (SCU-9000) to the modern **Voting System Control Unit (VSCU-1000)**—a streamlined voting system designed to simplify installation and troubleshooting while enhancing reliability and overall voting functionality for legislative bodies across the United States.



The Hidden Cost of "It Still Works"

For many years, the SCU-9000 served legislatures well. The SCU-9000 was designed as a home-run system, directly connecting every member desk to a central control unit and communicating with the operator's computer over a serial connection. Inside its cabinet lived a dense ecosystem of power supplies, motherboards, scanner cards, voting cards, lamp drivers, relays, and hand-pinned wiring—each part doing its job, each connection critical.

Troubleshooting a single desk issue can require tracing dozens of wires, checking cards one by one, and hoping the problem reveals itself before a session begins. In some chambers, keeping legacy systems alive has meant more frequent service calls, improvised fixes, or simply crossing fingers that nothing fails during a live vote. That is not a sustainable strategy for a system that supports legislative authority.

SCU-9000 System

VSCU-1000 System

Designed for Present-Day Legislatures

The VSCU was created to solve these problems without forcing legislative bodies to change how they operate while maintaining the historic features of the chamber. The VSCU-1000 design respects tradition while eliminating fragility.

Where the SCU relied on large cabinets filled with custom wiring, the VSCU consolidates that complexity into a cleaner look. Each VSCU device is enclosed and protects and

supports up to 16 desks per unit utilizing CAT5 or CAT6 cabling for a faster installation and simpler troubleshooting. No custom pinning, no fragile connectors, and no bundles of mystery wires. The result is immediate clarity. One of the great features of the SCU-9000 voting system was the home-run cabling design, which IRC has continued with the VSCU voting system. One cable runs from the rack to each desk and power is standardized, expansion is predictable, and installation is dramatically faster.

Troubleshooting That Takes Seconds, Not Hours

One of the most transformative differences between the SCU and the VSCU is visibility.

Each desk connection on a VSCU includes clear status indicators. When a desk is properly connected and communicating, the system tells you instantly. If something isn't working, staff no longer have to guess whether the issue is a burned-out LED, a bad card, or a mis-pinned connector buried in a cabinet. You simply have to look at the VSCU.

In many cases, what once took hours to diagnose can now be resolved in minutes. For chamber staff and IT teams, that shift alone changes the entire ownership experience.

Built for Security, Not Trends

While many vendors are pushing wireless or tablet-based voting, IRC continues to stand by a wired, closed network system—and for good reason. Voting systems are not the place to experiment with unreliable connections or consumer-grade technology. Further, the VSCU system is capable of customizable integration with keycards, mobile HID readers, and physical keys for enhanced security.

The VSCU preserves the integrity of IRC's proven home-run architecture. Every vote completes a full handshake from the desk to the server and back before it is registered. Once a console button is pushed, the VSCU sends a signal to the Chamber's server. Once the server receives that signal, it works with the VSCU to send a signal to the voting console's indicator light in milliseconds. There is no ambiguity, no "maybe it went through," and no dependence on Wi-Fi conditions with potential network congestion. In an environment where a single vote can matter, that certainty is non-negotiable.

Single 16-port VSCU-1000 Device

One Platform with Consistency in Design

Despite its modern design, the VSCU is remarkably consistent across installations. The hardware remains the same from chamber to chamber, while firmware allows the system to adapt to local needs—whether that includes card readers, different button configurations, or unique desk layouts.

From the largest legislative bodies in the country to chambers with extremely tight space constraints, the VSCU is designed to fit without forcing physical changes. Current desks are not affected. Aesthetics are preserved. The technology simply works better.

Hear From IRC's Director of Voting Solutions, Ryan Babcock, who brings over 13 years of hands-on experience designing and supporting technology solutions in legislative chambers nationwide:

"If I were a legislative clerk's office client and was still operating on the IRC SCU-9000 system, what's the biggest downside of continuing to run an SCU instead of upgrading to the VSCU-1000?"

"Serviceability would be the biggest downside. Although we have enough spare parts on hand to service the SCU-9000 units still in operation, it can be a daunting task to repair. Between figuring out which of the cards have issues, as well as wires starting to become brittle from age."

"You've worked in a lot of legislative chambers over the years. At what point does an older 'working' system become a liability?"

"I would say when you start to realize the age of the installed system, most of the systems that are currently in operation have been installed for 20 to 30 years. They are on borrowed time."

“What’s the difference between how an SCU system issue presents itself and can be resolved versus how a VSCU behaves and its issue resolution techniques?”

“With the SCU-9000 the avenues you have to search in order to discover what the actual issue is consists of removing everything ‘soup to nuts,’ especially if the issue isn’t something you have experienced before. This could include removing and replacing circuit cards as well as checking individual wires within the motherboard connections.”

“With the VSCU, for example, you can use the network connection indicators on the face of the VSCU to figure out if there is even a connection to the desk unit. This greatly reduces troubleshooting time, helping IRC determine if there is an issue with the unit, cabling or network.”

“What usually forces a chamber to upgrade from the SCU to the VSCU—careful planning, or something going wrong at the worst possible time? Are there any signs to look out for?”

“Honestly this is a combination of the two options presented. Careful planning would always be the preferred reason; however, we have had clients who have reached a critical failure point and needed to have the system replaced. As far as what to look out for I would again recommend looking at the age of the system, and the cabling that is currently in use.”

“If I’m a clerk or IT staff member responsible for keeping votes and related data running smoothly, how does my day-to-day experience change after moving to a VSCU?”

“It is a seamless transition. Your day-to-day operation would not change in the slightest.”

“For clients worried about chamber aesthetics regarding a system upgrade like moving from the SCU to VSCU and voting console and button upgrades, what positive job aspects surprises them as part of a VSCU installation upgrade?”

“The ease of which the install occurs and ability to integrate with the existing software and hardware products in use would be the biggest positive. In addition, another positive is the new CAT6 connections between a desk card instead of relying on different connection types that have been used in the past. As always, we consider the chamber aesthetics ourselves prior to even suggesting a solution, this is something that our clients have grown to love about our process as well.”

“If I’m concerned about cost, why is the VSCU-1000 better than voting system options such as tablets or conference systems?”

“The VSCU is reliable with no hidden costs, with no operating system or licensing involved. The system is built and designed by IRC and not beholden to other manufacturers, IRC stands by supporting our systems up to 20 years or more. One of our goals is keeping costs lower for our clients over time while providing the same reliability they have had with our SCU-9000 system and IRC’s customer service.”

Why Upgrade Now?

Many chambers still running SCU systems continue to do so for one reason: they are still working. But history shows that legacy systems rarely fail gradually. They fail suddenly, often when the system is needed most.

As spare parts disappear and institutional knowledge fades, the risk only grows. Upgrading to a VSCU is not about chasing new technology—it is about protecting continuity, reliability, and confidence in the legislative process. More than 40 legislative bodies have already made the switch. Others are following as soon as the warning signs appear. Why wait?

What the Upgrade Process Looks Like

Upgrading from an SCU to a VSCU is a well-planned, collaborative process designed to modernize the voting system without disrupting chamber operations. IRC works closely with legislative staff to schedule the transition around the chamber's legislative timetable to ensure continuity before, during, and after the upgrade.

The process typically includes removing the legacy SCU control equipment, installing the VSCU system control units, and updating the supporting infrastructure to align with the new architecture. Because the VSCU is designed as a streamlined, modular system, installation is significantly cleaner and more efficient than legacy systems.

Once the VSCU is installed, IRC completes full system configuration, integration with existing voting software and peripherals, and comprehensive testing to confirm that every desk and every vote functions exactly as expected. The system is not turned over until it is fully operational and verified.

The result is a modern, reliable voting system that fits naturally into the chamber and is ready to support legislative operations well into the future—without unnecessary disruption or forced change.

The IRC Difference

The VSCU reflects more than a hardware upgrade. It represents IRC's philosophy: design systems that are understandable, serviceable, and **built for legislatures by people that understand them.**

From engineering to installation to on-site support, everything about the VSCU is designed and serviced by IRC. When something needs attention, help is not outsourced—it is personal, immediate, and performed by staff with decades of experience in legislative chambers and the legislative process. The VSCU is built to carry voting hardware forward for the next 20+ years.

Because in a chamber, reliability isn't a luxury—it's the foundation.