Facility Infrastructure for Electronic Timing

The most basic timing system (electronic timing) would consist of a single camera and two (2) computers. The timing system is a portable system, so the only requirement by the athletic venue would be to supply a power source to operate the camera and computers. The simplest and most basic setup location would be on the infield near the finish line. The whole system can be operated from this location with the components that make up a basic timing package and the power supplied by the venue.

The single camera timing system can grow in many capacities from the basic setup, depending on the capability of the facility and the requirements of competitions to be hosted. It may also depend simply on the budget of the facility and what they can afford to setup and operate, as long as the infrastructure can support it.

They timing system can grow into multiple cameras and actual systems, such as a primary timing system and a backup timing system. The computers then expand the network and operate the timing system from the press box. Multiple systems then require additional computers and then they begin adding a host of other peripheral devices. These devices include things like wind gauges, display scoreboards, not just the main scoreboard in the facility. The timing system grows beyond the scope of the oval track and running events, to include the field events. The field events cause the network to grow larger with additional computers, additional scoreboards and becomes a host of digital results that provide information live during the competition. There are still hard copies of the results being printed throughout the competition which requires printers and copiers to keep everyone notified of results and progression of the competition events.

Without the proper facility wiring and infrastructure a great deal of this is very difficult to accomplish. Having no underground conduit raceways for power and data it forces power cords and data cables to be run on the surface and creating hazards and an unsafe environment. Athletes can trip on these hazards, step on them and puncture power and data cables which then create delays in the schedule as the cables need to be repaired or replaced.

People will say that a great deal of this can be done wirelessly, and a good portion can be operated wirelessly. Wireless is not as reliable as a hard wired connection and is much more difficult to troubleshoot. When a performance record is at stake most professional timers will tell you they would rather have a hard wired system timing those races and the backup may be wireless.