Providing Campuswide Protection

Customer Case Study

Fashion Institute of Technology improves security with video surveillance while saving on maintenance and legacy systems

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: State University of New York Fashion Institute of Technology

Industry: Education

Location: New York, United States

Number of Employees: 3000 staff and 10,000 students

Challenge

- Improve safety and security across urban campus
- Increase video capabilities and coverage while lowering costs

Solution

- Physical security solution integrating Cisco Video Surveillance Manager with Cisco Physical Access Manager
- Cisco Video Surveillance IP Cameras

Results

- Efficient management, monitoring, and retrieval of live or recorded video
- Greater situational awareness and faster security response
- Rapid payback with savings on contract security, maintenance, and redundant systems

Challenge

Part of the State University of New York, the Fashion Institute of Technology is globally recognized for design, fashion, art, communications, and business. Safety and security are top priorities. Situated in the busy Chelsea neighborhood of Manhattan, the institute enrolls 1200 new entrants every year to maintain a total student population of 10,000. The prestigious nine-building urban campus includes classrooms, television and radio studios, labs, design workshops, and multiple exhibition galleries. Some of these spaces are operational 24 hours a day. Student residential halls, another key focus for campus security, need to be continuously monitored too.

Yet, six years previously, when Gregg Chottiner took up his post as vice president for information technology, security measures were inadequate. “Back then we had old analog cameras, including some that didn’t even work,” he says. “Our systems were siloed, provided grainy image quality, and relied on locally-stored VHS tapes. And, without central control, there was no indication if a camera failed. The challenge was to improve physical access controls and video surveillance across the campus.”

Solution

As far as possible, the institute wanted to re-use any existing assets, protect IT investment, and reduce time-to-deployment. Cisco® routers and switches in the open standards campus network provided an ideal project enabler. “Our Cisco infrastructure provided a ready-made IP platform over which to run video and alarms,” says Chottiner, “but our initial requirements would probably change within six months. For example, we might want to integrate card readers and turnstile controls. So we wanted a solution that would not force the purchase of more components every time a new function was needed.”

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Gregg Chottiner
Vice President Information Technology
Fashion Institute of Technology

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Gregg Chottiner
Vice President Information Technology
Fashion Institute of Technology

To begin the transformation, the institute installed Cisco Video Surveillance IP Cameras, offering a combination of the latest zoom and pan-tilt features with high-definition picture quality. Some 80 cameras provide campuswide coverage, monitoring common areas, main doors, and other entry points. Video is streamed to large wall displays in a central control room, as well as locally to desk stations manned by onsite security personnel.

At the solution's core is Cisco Video Surveillance Manager (VSM). This software suite helps enable efficient management, monitoring, and retrieval of live or recorded video anywhere, anytime via a web browser interface on a variety of clients. "We've been impressed with VSM," says Chottiner. "It's stable, easy to scale, and well supported by knowledgeable product specialists."

Next, to cost effectively connect door alarms to the system, the institute integrated VSM with Cisco Physical Access Manager. This approach simplifies installation and lowers deployment costs by enabling door controls with Power over Ethernet (PoE). "The system currently monitors around 20 doors and lets one instantly inspect any event. And again it's very easy to expand," Chottiner notes. Cisco Physical Access Manager can be pre-configured prior to implementation and linked with access control policies or human resources and security databases.

Results

Implementing a Cisco video surveillance and access control security platform has helped the institute transform safety and security campuswide. "The system's working very well," says Chottiner. "We've gone from having no way to manage alarms to an automated response system where a sensor is triggered and a camera turns on to alert a guard of a potential event." Areas that were previously cost-prohibitive to cover with cabling and analog cameras are being monitored via Cisco Video Surveillance IP Cameras that simply plug in and run on PoE.

With a full range of zoom-and-tilt controls at their disposal, security guards can quickly use cameras to see whether a situation or alarm requires further action. "Crime on the campus is relatively low but incidents, such as valuables going missing and student altercations, are being resolved much faster," Chottiner says.

As the institute moves to event-tagged video and continues to link more access points to the system, greater insight is provided into who is accessing which areas and when. Greater visibility means more granular control. "We're able to look back at log files and mine the historical data. From this, we can build a picture of acceptable alarms, like regular known deliveries, and fine-tune the system by disabling that particular zone at specific times."

And the institute's innovative approach to physical security does not end there. It plans to leverage its investment by integrating Cisco video surveillance and access control with turnstiles, gates, and card access systems. In addition, the Cisco solution could be used to stream video to mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets, to assist security guards during their patrols.

Chottiner sums up: "With our Cisco video surveillance and access control solution, we now need fewer guards on-site, so we're spending less on contract staff for a greater level of security. The new system's also cheaper to manage. And it rendered another security system redundant, saving the institute a further $35,000 in recurring costs."

For More Information

To learn more about the Cisco architectures and solutions featured in this case study, please go to:

www.cisco.com/go/physec

Product List

Physical Security

- Cisco Video Surveillance Manager 6.3
- Cisco Physical Access Manager
- Cisco Video Surveillance Series IP Cameras

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