



Opening up an Entire World of Knowledge

American University of Sharjah chooses Cisco Show and Share to give students visible advantage.

Customer Name: **American University of Sharjah**
Industry: **Higher education**
Location: **Sharjah, The United Arab Emirates (UAE)**
Company Size: **351 full-time faculty members representing 49 nationalities**

Case Study

Business Impact

- **Differentiation in a competitive marketplace**
- **In tune with the needs of tomorrow's students and leaders**
- **Studies show video-enabled students typically achieve a full grade higher result**



Business Challenge

Founded in 1997 by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qassimi, Member of the Supreme Council of the UAE and Ruler of Sharjah, the American University of Sharjah (AUS) is a not-for-profit coeducational institution. Thoroughly grounded in Arab culture, its existence is a hallmark of the revitalization of intellectual life in the Middle East.

That revitalization has generated huge amounts of interest, both from within the region and from established centers of learning throughout the world. In many Middle East countries, up to 50 percent of the population is aged 18 and below. Together with significant levels of unemployment, this demographic means the demand for higher education is already enormous and growing fast. The opportunity for AUS is to meet the growing demand locally rather than students having to go abroad for a first-class education.

Ashi Sheth, IT Director at AUS, says: "Ours is an extremely competitive marketplace. The eventual winners will be institutions that use technology not only to transform the learning experience, but also to reach out to potential students previously unable to access further education."

The trend towards an always-on multimedia educational environment was front of mind as AUS addressed the role of technology in education. "The issue is not so much about new media materials, of which there's a huge variety already out there," Ashi says. "It's more about organizing and exploiting that rich resource, and making it easily accessible both on and off campus."

An aggressive growth strategy on the part of AUS has seen its student population increase by nearly 30 percent over five years to its current total of 5100. The plan for the next five years might see that figure rise by a further 35 percent.

As well as much higher levels of video streaming to classrooms and the Internet, AUS was looking at ways to offer faculty members the ability to conduct lectures remotely from conference venues. Another requirement was to capture lectures conducted by faculty members or guest speakers and make them available to students remotely.

Ashi Sheth says: "Studies have shown that students whose lectures are captured for later playback achieve as much as a full grade better. That's because they're able to engage more actively in the classroom as opposed to just taking notes."

AUS had experimented with a Windows Media streaming server and YouTube, but needed a more robust solution to meet increasing demands and deliver new ideas.



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Ashi Sheth
IT Director, American University of Sharjah



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Continued

Case Study

Solution and Results

AUS chose the Cisco [Show and Share](#) social video system. The solution comprised thirty Cisco [Digital Media Players](#) and twenty Cisco [Digital Signs](#). Cisco [Digital Media Manager](#), Cisco [Digital Media Encoder](#), and a Cisco [Media Experience Engine](#) complement Cisco Video Portal and Cisco Digital Signs.

"We looked at several potential suppliers, but the Cisco solution was the only one that did everything we wanted on a single platform," says Ashi Sheth. "Even more powerful was the technology roadmap that Cisco unfolded before us. Cisco's vision was more advanced and comprehensive than anything else that we had seen."

The Cisco Show and Share solution allows AUS not only to distribute real time and recorded events over the campus network and the Internet, but also to transcode files from one video format to another. Beyond simple video streaming, the solution offers video cataloguing, together with digital signage and campus messaging. It also integrates with Cisco collaborative applications such as Cisco [WebEx](#)™.

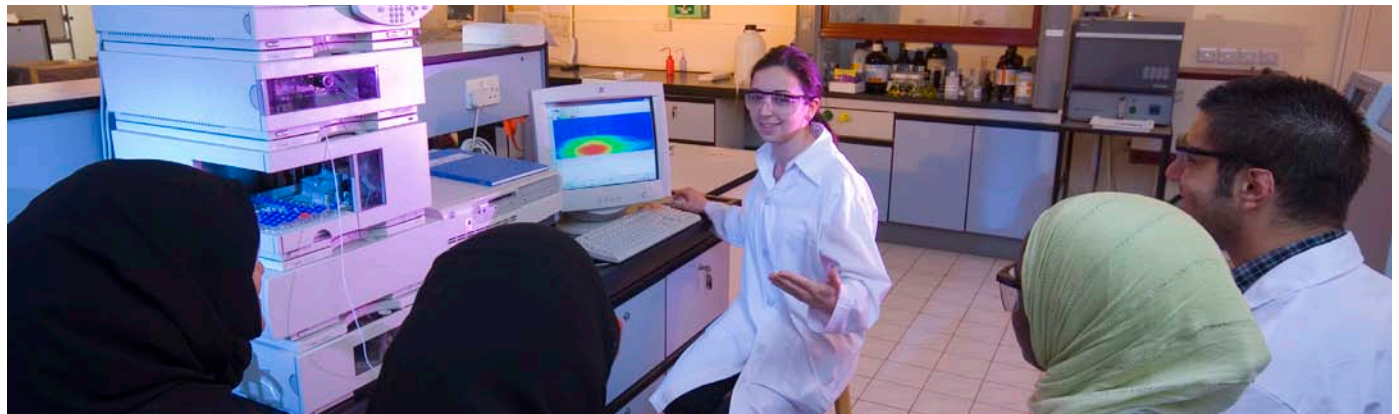
At the forefront in the community, AUS runs courses for local government agencies to encourage, for example, computer and language skills. An Executive MBA geared towards the corporate world runs in parallel. Both activities occupy a mixture of weekends and evening lectures, and it is impractical to ask students to make the (typically) three-hour drive to the campus. The Cisco Show and Share solution enables AUS to offer distance learning with facilities such as students capturing their own efforts and playing them back or seeking critique. "That's enormously valuable in English language learning, for example," says Ashi Sheth.

The Cisco Show and Share solution is a powerful differentiator for AUS. It means students can access top-quality video-based content from anywhere. In many ways, it brings the whole world into their physical and virtual classrooms. Meanwhile AUS has the ability to control material that is under copyright while providing public access to other footage such as films of university events for students' friends and family.

Ashi Sheth says: "We're delighted that we chose the Cisco solution. It means that our students can focus on learning and our faculty can focus on sharing. And it's not just the immediate technology. Where it's going is even more important. That's the power of working with Cisco, being able to embrace the ideas of the next generation of students and leaders." Looking to the near future, AUS is considering Cisco TelePresence™ and WebEx® as a further way of improving the virtual classroom experience, while smart building technology will help to underpin the university's competitive position.

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