# University Enhances Physical Safety

Elon University's campus safety department uses Video Surveillance Operations Manager to view video throughout the campus.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**ELON UNIVERSITY**

- Higher Education
- Elon, North Carolina
- 5450 students; 1150 faculty and staff

**BUSINESS CHALLENGE**

- Enhance campus safety
- Minimize IT workload

**NETWORK SOLUTION**

- Deployed Cisco Video Surveillance System
- Connected wired and wireless video surveillance cameras from Cisco and other vendors

**BUSINESS RESULTS**

- Enabled campus police to more quickly gather video evidence
- Created an effective deterrent
- Saved time for IT

## Challenge

Located in North Carolina, Elon University is a private university with 5400 students and 1150 faculty and staff. The university's 100 buildings are situated on a beautiful and historic 575-acre campus, away from urban centers. "Students feel very safe here, and that's part of the university's appeal," says Christopher Waters, the university's assistant chief information officer and director of information systems. "At the parent orientation in 2008, one of the most popular question from parents was whether the campus had video surveillance."

The Elon University campus security department has 15 sworn law enforcement officers, who work in partnership with the Town of Elon police department. To augment the force, in 2003, the university deployed 40 IP video surveillance cameras at campus entrances and in classrooms, mostly to protect against equipment theft and vandalism. "Our main motivation for using video surveillance is to encourage people to make good choices," says Waters. "We also want to have a record if incidents do take place."

At first, the university IT department used internally developed software for controlling the cameras and viewing archived footage. The software was complex, however, and campus police had to contact the IT department whenever they needed to view video evidence. "We wanted to simplify the technology to put control back in the hands of our campus safety experts," Waters says.

## Solution

Elon's campus security department can now view real-time and archived video surveillance footage on demand, thanks to the Cisco® Video Surveillance Operations Manager. The system operates over Elon University's existing Cisco network, which is also used for Cisco Unified Communications; a Cisco digital signage solution; and for intercom, using Berbee Informacast software and the built-in speakers of Cisco Unified IP Phones. "We like the idea of end-to-end

Cisco solutions because they are easier to support," Waters says. "The reliability of Cisco solutions is also important to us because a video surveillance system must work all the time to be an effective crime deterrent."

The Cisco Video Surveillance Operations Manager controls Elon's 40 preexisting cameras as well as 35 new Cisco Video Surveillance IP Cameras that receive power over Ethernet. The new video surveillance cameras are deployed in parking lots and at various campus entrances. Wireless cameras provide coverage of walking paths. The IT group also connected older analog cameras that monitor the campus stadium to the IP network. "The use of video cameras serves as a deterrent in the community, and also helps to improve evidence collection," says Gerald O. Whittington, vice president of business, finance, and technology, Elon University.

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> **—Chuck Gantos, Chief of Police, Elon University**

Currently, the video cameras are configured to provide wide-angle shots so that campus security can remain aware of who is entering or exiting the campus, creating a force multiplier. In the future, the university will take advantage of the zoom-in capabilities of Cisco Video Surveillance IP Cameras to capture detail such as faces and license plates.

The campus chief of police and a detective use the video primarily for investigations. "Police detectives and officials can now access footage on demand to increase their response time to review evidence," says Eccles Wall, networking director, Elon University. The Cisco solution can also display live video. For example, if campus police receive an alert, the dispatcher consults a campus map to see which cameras are in the vicinity, and then just clicks the thumbnail image of that camera to view real-time video on a large display, increasing situational awareness.

## Results

### Enhanced Safety

"We have already seen evidence that the Cisco Video Surveillance solution is a deterrent of small crimes on our campus," says Chuck Gantos, chief of police for Elon University. What's more, investigations can proceed more quickly because campus security can access video footage without waiting for the IT group. "Our physical security solution puts control of video forensics with campus police, where it belongs," Waters says. And campus police officers can also burn DVDs to share video with Town of Elon police, enhancing collaboration.

Video surveillance is part of a broader plan for emergency communications at Elon University. "We have sirens, text messaging, email alerts, broadcasts to the speakers of campus Cisco Unified IP Phones, and now video surveillance," says Waters. "Connecting all emergency communications systems to the same IP network gives us the capability to automate incident response (for example, by setting off an alarm, sending text messages to appropriate people, and publishing a message on our digital signage)."

### Lower Operational Costs

The university IT department no longer has to spend time finding relevant video footage for campus safety investigations. “With the previous system, if campus security requested a week’s worth of video, IT would have to spend hours to download seven million snapshots, digitally master the evidence, and burn a DVD,” says Waters. “Now campus safety officers can just click an image to watch the video in real time or burn a DVD. They get the video footage that they need, when they need it.” Waters also notes that IT needs little time to add new IP video surveillance cameras, and simply connects them to the university’s wired or wireless Cisco network.

## PRODUCT LIST

**Routing and Switching**

- Cisco Catalyst® Switches 6500 and 4000
- Cisco 7200 Routers
- Cisco 2800 Series Integrated Services Routers

**Physical Safety and Security**

- Cisco Video Surveillance Operations Manager
- Cisco Video Surveillance 2000 Series Cameras
- Cisco Digital Media System

**Security**

- Cisco Adaptive Security Appliance 5500
- Cisco Intrusion Prevention System 4200
- Cisco Security Monitoring, Analysis, and Response System

**Voice and Unified Communications**

- Cisco Unified Communications Manager
- Cisco Unity®
- Cisco Unified IP Phones

**Wireless**

- Cisco 1200 and 1100 Series Wireless Access Points
- Cisco Wireless LAN Controller 4400
- Cisco Catalyst 6500 Series/7600 Series Wireless Services Module
- Cisco Wireless Control System

### Next Steps

Elon University plans to extend the value of its Cisco Video Surveillance solution in the following ways:

- Add more Cisco Video Surveillance Cameras to cover the campus, entry gates, and parking lots, and possibly residence hall entrances.
- Enable other departments besides campus police to access video. Library managers, for example, could study library use by hour and staff appropriately.
- Integrate the Cisco Video Surveillance system with the university’s access control and fire alarm system. “If a fire alarm sounds, for example, the cameras can automatically begin capturing full screen video,” Waters says.
- Use the video analytics capabilities built into Cisco Video Surveillance IP Cameras for license plate recognition and to identify certain types of vehicles, such as trucks.
- Integrate the video surveillance system with the campus Cisco Unified Communications system and Cisco digital signage system (for example, to send an alert to predefined police officers if a specified event occurs and broadcast emergency alerts and instructions on digital signage around the campus).
- Integrate with building control systems. For example, if campus police detect an unsafe situation from video surveillance, they can lock down appropriate areas of the campus by issuing commands over the IP network.

“A partnership between universities and local police force is essential,” Waters says. “We plan to have an ongoing dialogue with Town of Elon police to find out how else we can use the network to help them protect the university community.”

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