University Adopts Pervasive Video for Communications and Learning

Our Lady of the Lake University gave faculty, students, and staff the tools to capture, transform, and share video.

Executive Summary

Our Lady of the Lake University
Higher Education
San Antonio, Texas
2700 Students; 421 Full-Time Faculty and Staff

Challenge:
- Produce attention-getting communications for current and prospective students
- Offer distance learning and blended classroom and online instruction
- Record and securely share video of graduate students' counseling sessions

Solution:
- Capture video on any device, including Cisco TelePresence systems, Cisco Video Surveillance IP Cameras , smartphones, and others
- Encode video for viewing on any device with a few clicks, using Cisco MXE 3500 Media Experience Engine
- Share video on Cisco Digital Signs and online with Cisco Show and Share

Results:
- Made it easy for students and staff to capture, transform, and share video
- Enriched distance learning programs
- Complied with privacy regulations for sharing video of therapy sessions

Challenge

An independent Catholic, coeducational university, Our Lady of the Lake University (OLLU) offers undergraduate and graduate degrees. Courses are available weekdays, weekends, and online, on the main campus in San Antonio, Texas, as well as satellite campuses in Houston and Harlingen.

When a fire destroyed the historic Main Building in 2008, university leaders wanted the new building to combine old-world charm with modern technology, especially business video. "Video captures attention in a way that the printed page does not, for communications and learning," says Joseph Deck, chief technology officer for the university.

Digital signage throughout the building would display eye-catching communications about registration deadlines, loan deadlines, and campus events. "Making students aware of academic and extracurricular activities helps to get them more engaged and involved, which leads to better retention," says Anne Gomez, director of marketing and communications for OLLU.

At the same time, the university wanted to make it easier for faculty members to integrate video into learning. For example, the psychology department had patched together a system to record graduate students' counseling sessions at the university's community counseling clinic and speech and hearing clinic, for review with the student and class. But the system was difficult to use and the department needed a better way to demonstrate compliance with privacy requirements.

Other faculty wanted to make video available online to reach students who need to hear information more than once, or cannot easily drive to campus because of high gas costs

or family or work commitments. "Today's students like to get information in ways other than the printed page," says Sister Margit Nagy, Ph.D., a history professor and department chair who has taught at OLLU since 1979.

Finally, OLLU campus police wanted to shift from analog video surveillance to IP video surveillance. This would give personnel the flexibility to view real-time or archived video from any web browser on campus instead of being limited to a single console.

Solution

Today, Cisco business video solutions have become a strategic tool for academics, administration, and physical security at OLLU. The university currently uses the Cisco® MXE 3500 Media Experience Engine, Cisco Digital Signs, Cisco TelePresence® technology, Cisco Show and Share®, and Cisco IP Video Surveillance. "We know from experience that Cisco products work, and Cisco provides outstanding service," says Deck. "Plus, it's easy to integrate multiple Cisco business video solutions to meet unusual requirements, such as securely recording and sharing students' counseling sessions."

Using the Cisco MXE 3500 Media Experience Engine, students, faculty, and staff can capture video on any device, and just click to encode it for viewing on any device: digital signage, PCs, smartphones… "The Cisco MXE Media Experience Engine is the foundation building block for all of our video programs," says Deck. "Without it, we couldn't take advantage of video to the degree we do because the IT team would have to make time to encode the video for the different types of devices used on campus."

Video has become a highly visible part of campus life at OLLU:

- Digital signage for on-campus communications
  The university has implemented 15 Cisco Professional Series LCD Displays in the refurbished building, cafeteria, and residence halls. Current students see eye-catching reminders of registration deadlines, loan deadlines, and campus events. Prospective students and their parents learn about academic and extracurricular opportunities. OLLU can also use the signs for emergency notification and instructions. Departments create their own content, using the Cisco MXE 3500 Media Experience Engine to optimize the content for digital signage.

- Critiquing of graduate psychology students' therapy sessions
  Cisco partner Vyopta integrated multiple Cisco solutions to make it very easy to record and share graduate students' counseling or speech-therapy sessions in accordance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) privacy requirements. In rooms at the clinics where the students work, Cisco TelePresence Quick Set C20 transforms a high-definition display into a telepresence system, including a camera. At the beginning of the session, the student simply enters a name and date on a touchpad and presses a button to begin recording on a central Cisco TelePresence Content Server. Then the Cisco MXE 3500 Media Experience Engine automatically adds a watermark to the video, indicating it cannot be shared, and publishes it to Cisco Show and Share. For privacy, the video is visible only to fellow class members.

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Chief Technology Officer
Our Lady of the Lakes University

- Digital film classes
Students in digital film and TV production classes use the Cisco MXE 3500 Media Experience Engine to transcode their video to the required format for different assignments. "Students save hours and hours on encoding, time they can use more productively," Deck says. Members of the university community can view student projects on Cisco Show and Share, and some projects appear on digital signage.

- Distance learning and blended courses
Faculty members are beginning to assign videos for students to view at home before or after class, posting them to Cisco Show and Share. Restricting viewing privileges to students in the class helps the university comply with copyright requirements. Faculty can also record their own videos on Cisco TelePresence Content Server. No matter what device they use to capture video, they can optimize it for viewing on any device using Cisco MXE 3500 Media Experience Engine software.

- Cisco Video Surveillance
Cisco Video Surveillance IP Cameras as well as third-party cameras monitor campus entrances, public areas of residence halls, and the library. Using Cisco Video Surveillance Manager software, campus police can view archived or real-time video from any camera, from any web browser on and off campus.

Results

Video is enriching campus communications, learning, and physical security, and without increasing work for the CTO's office. "The Cisco Digital Signs solution is a wonderful tool for communication with potential and current students, and for emergency notification," says Gomez. "It also shows prospective students that the university invests in the latest technology, which is attractive to prospective students choosing between schools."

Faculty are beginning to use Cisco Show and Share to make learning materials available to students anytime, anywhere. "Students are already using video tools for entertainment," says Sister Nagy. "The opportunity for educators is to view video not as a distraction, but as a tool for delivering educational content in a better way." She plans to ask her history students to view video segments that she posts on Cisco Show and Share, as a follow-up assignment. She will use Show and Share capabilities such as inserting slides into the video to reinforce major points and spell names, and adding timeline comments that students will see as they watch the video.

Sister Nagy continues, "What intrigues me about Cisco Show and Share is the potential to incorporate different perspectives in a fresh way that can lead to other conversations." For example, a student who finds a good website on the Incas can share it with the professor and classmates.

Cisco Show and Share is also helping OLLU offer advanced classes to students enrolled at the Houston and Harlingen campuses. By viewing live and prerecorded video, students will have the opportunity to learn from the same experienced faculty as their peers on the San Antonio campus.

Sister Nagy concludes, "It's important for today's students to be globally aware. Part of that is making other parts of the world real. That's what inspired me to use video to impart knowledge in a way that's more interesting than traditional textbooks."

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Sister Margit Nagy, Ph.D.
History Professor and Department Chair
Our Lady of the Lakes University

CISCO

Next Steps

OLLU plans to look at new ways to take advantage of its Cisco MXE 3500 Media Experience Engine, Cisco Show and Share, and Cisco TelePresence solutions. One plan is to play selected television shows on digital signage in residence halls, and on Cisco Show and Share. Another is using the Cisco MXE 3500 to automatically create a searchable transcript of videos so that students can go directly to specific content or speakers.

"The ideas are already blossoming," Deck says. "Walk around a campus today, and you'll see students viewing videos on their iPhones and Android devices. Video is the way we acquire information and learn these days, and as a university, we need to adapt to our clientele."

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco business video solutions, visit:

www.cisco.com/go/businessvideo

Product List

Cisco MXE 3500 Media Experience Engine

Cisco TelePresence Content Server

Cisco Digital Media Encoders

Cisco TelePresence Quick Set C20

Cisco Digital Signs

Cisco Show and Share

Cisco Cast

Cisco Video Surveillance IP Cameras

Cisco Video Surveillance Manager