Texas College Reduces Costs and Increases Access to Learning with TelePresence

Tarrant County College deploys Cisco solutions to support new distance learning programs.

Executive Summary

TARRANT COUNTY COLLEGE
- **Industry:** Education, Higher Education
- **Location:** Fort Worth, Texas
- **Size:** 53,000 Students, Faculty and Staff

CHALLENGE
- Keep growing, dispersed student population connected and informed
- Update video conferencing infrastructure

SOLUTION
- Leverage network infrastructure to implement flexible, scalable video with Cisco video management solutions
- Utilize Cisco video solutions to expand number of users

RESULTS
- Reduced costs by implementing Cisco Movi solution to consolidate licenses
- Increased productivity of IT team due to ease of installment and use
- Provided more courses to students via video conferencing

Challenge

Tarrant County College (TCC) is a two-year higher education institution in Fort Worth, Texas, with more than 50,000 students. TCC offers programs for associate degrees and technical programs, and is the seventh-largest college or university in Texas. TCC also offers continuing education and corporate and workforce services for businesses and individuals of all ages, through courses, workshops, and customized training programs. The college has five major campuses in the cities of Hurst (Northeast campus), Fort Worth (Northwest, South, and Trinity River campuses), and Arlington (Southeast campus), with administrative offices in downtown Fort Worth at the May Owen Center.

TCC began installing video conferencing capabilities approximately 10 years ago, to help support its expanding continuing education programs. The video conferencing system served them well for many years, but lacked modern capabilities, such as high definition (HD).

In addition, the aging video conferencing infrastructure required a technical person to install software on each individual system. This was a challenge to the IT team members, who were constantly traveling between four campuses to install the solution. The conferences on the network were bumpy and jittery, which students found distracting. Following a survey of the network and video conferencing classes, the IT staff determined that the network was affecting the quality of the video.

Solution

Before installing new equipment, the IT staff at TCC needed to upgrade their network. TCC began utilizing test groups to experiment with different video conferencing solutions, to determine which was best. The IT team at TCC found that the Cisco Video Communication Server (VCS) was able to solve their challenges.

The VCS solution provides the most advanced call control for Cisco TelePresence® and video conferencing. It enables any-to-any interoperability between all standards-compliant Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) and H.323 devices. VCS enables video communications devices to interoperate with unified communications and voice over IP solutions, providing end users with the best experience, regardless of the device they are using.

The VCS solution enables the TCC IT team to hold signaling and transverse calls. "It seemed like Cisco was putting a lot expertise into the VCS," says Dwayne Killins, coordinator of telecommunication services, TCC. "We saw that you could grow with this technology. It is one of the best investments we have made."

The schools now have a flexible and scalable video infrastructure with video management solutions. The Cisco Movi solution is designed for HD video

> "It seemed like Cisco was putting a lot expertise into the VCS. We saw that you could grow with this technology. It is one of the best investments we have made."

Dwayne Killins
Coordinator of Telecommunication Services, Tarrant County College

environments and provides processing up to 720p resolution, interoperability between standards-based video systems, firewall traversal, and a dynamic and automatic resource allocation to optimize the capacity for mixed endpoint environments.

"Movi is the central point of our whole video network," says Leo Parrish, manager of telecommunications services, TCC. "It is very powerful technology that allows us to have an endless number of users online, speaking to people in and outside of our network, even people on mobile devices. The solution also has its own security, so we never have to worry about hosting joint classes with other schools."

Results

TCC's Cisco video solution saves the IT team time and money. Cisco Movi provides cost savings, because one does not have to get a separate license for each user. Instead "loaner licenses" are downloaded for the duration of the conferences. "We started out with 25 users when we first installed Movi. Last year, we had to upgrade the solution to get an additional 200 users online. The Movi solution has been the biggest bang for the buck and has really taken off with students," says Killins.

TCC is using video communication for its nursing courses that utilize video conferencing to instruct students from John Peter Smith Hospital.

In addition to teaching courses, TCC faculty and staff have been holding many of their meetings on the network. TCC also hosts other organizations' meetings on their network. For example, they held a meeting for the Library of Congress, where a guest author spoke to a large audience.

"There are so many ways that a customer can make a call from their desk, on their mobile device, or at home," says Kevin Lee, coordinator of telecommunication services. "There are so many creative ways to use this video technology. You can even use it as a podcast or an on-demand solution. It allows users from inside and outside the network, such as K-12 schools for dual credit courses, to benefit from our video services."

The TCC IT team has benefitted from the ease of use and installation of the solution. "The coolest thing is the ability to flip on your desktop and actually talk to someone across the country," says Parish.

Texas College Reduces Costs and Increases Access to Learning with TelePresence

Tarrant County College deploys Cisco solutions to support new distance learning programs.

Product List

VIDEO
· Cisco TelePresence
· Cisco Movi
· Cisco Video Communication Server

For More Information

To find out more about the Cisco video solutions, go to:
http://www.cisco.com/go/video