

Educational Facilities - Case Study

Sony Internet Based / e-Surveillance System

San Diego's Grossmont School District - Reference Site for Sony's IP-Based Security

SAN DIEGO, Sept. 15, 2003 - For most schools, reports of campus shootings from across the country seem a distant nightmare. Sadly, that nightmare became a recurring reality at Grossmont Union School District, an 11 high school system with 24,000 students in San Diego County. In 2001, two separate shooting incidents happened back-to-back over a two-week period. That started Grossmont's search for an economical way to protect their campuses. The district turned to Sony, a leader in audio-visual and security technologies.

This summer, Grossmont was the initial reference site for the new Sony e-Surveillance system, which allows administrators and law enforcement officers to act on emergency situations in real-time with digital video surveillance over TCP/IP networks.

Sony's solution consists of fixed and pan/tilt/zoom IP addressable cameras with built-in web servers and Ethernet ports, Sony Real Shot™ camera recording and video management software, and network attached servers for storage and archival retrieval. The application software runs on a Cisco infrastructure. Warren Williams, assistant superintendent for information and technology services for Grossmont, instantly liked what he saw.

Just a few months into the system's operation, Williams saw far greater applications and opportunities than originally imagined. Besides fostering a safe learning environment for the district's students, he said that the Grossmont school district now reports that vandalism and inappropriate use of school facilities and resources has dropped significantly. Williams also said that cost savings from maintaining the physical plant along with insurance reductions have been some of the unexpected returns from the initial investment.

Williams said "The local police had to go in SWAT fashion from hall to hall. They didn't know where the shooter was, how many there were. In a lockdown situation, it's very valuable to have that kind of information." After which, Williams added events had to be reconstructed from memory only. "It would have been helpful to have evidence of what had happened to design preventive measures."

"We can program the system to respond to alarm events numerous ways. It can send e-mail or call a cell phone," Williams said. "It would be impossible for anyone to monitor all the information coming through the cameras. But the system looks for what's important. Say the assistant principal is on call at home. If there's an alarm, they just dial in on a laptop to see what's going on."

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Initially, plans for the pilot campus system for Grossmont consisted of four Sony SNC-RZ30N Pan/Tilt/Zoom network cameras connected to a Sony Network Attached Storage server running Sony's Real Shot camera manager application software over the Cisco Systems network. The system's 720 GB storage capacity holds approximately 30 days worth of archived images. But as soon as William's team began to appreciate the new possibilities the system afforded, additional cameras were added.

"The system is essentially maintenance-free and training staff to use it is simple," Williams remarked. "The price of a single policeman or campus supervisor pays for the whole installation on a campus. The big difference is that those salaries are a recurring cost. Here, after the first year, you're saving money. At \$55,000 per campus multiplied by our 11 campuses, we could see savings of better than half-a-million dollars annually."

The arrival of the Sony e-Surveillance system at the Grossmont School District closes one chapter in the institution's history while opening a new one. Before, security was assumed. Discovering the reality that such assumptions are unfounded came with a high price. Now, the demonstrable value of e-Surveillance has restored confidence and will continue to provide the sense of security essential to maintaining a healthy learning environment.