

Case Study

Application: Law Enforcement
Company: Lehigh University Police Department
Country: United States

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Sony Security Solutions Help Secure the Lehigh University Campus



The Lehigh University Police Department (LUPD) is committed to providing a safe and secure environment on and around the Lehigh campus. As a means of furthering that goal, they identified the need to install a surveillance camera system at various locations around the campus. The resulting project not only created a feeling of safety on the University's campus, it also led to the unique opportunity for an integrated surveillance system with the host city's Police Department.



Background

Lehigh University is located in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in the United States. Lehigh is a coeducational, nondenominational, private university. There are more than 4,700 undergraduate and 2,000 graduate students attending Lehigh, the majority living on campus or in nearby off-campus housing. Lehigh is one of only two Pennsylvania universities to have a fully trained police force, certified by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and accredited through the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association.

Challenges

The 1,600-acre campus is located on a rolling, wooded mountainside. There are classes and extracurricular musical and athletic events that occur during evening hours. Sections of the campus border a collection of Bethlehem neighborhoods colloquially referred to as "the South Side." Renowned for its eclectic mix of musical entertainment venues, specialty retail boutiques and ethnic restaurants, this area also has an older housing stock and a mainly transient population. As a result, some of these neighborhoods experience the types of criminal activity commonly associated with larger, more urban areas.

Lehigh was an early adopter of video surveillance, mounting analog cameras in the LUPD headquarters and in the immediate surrounding area. These cameras had limitations on picture quality as well as the storage and retrieval issues associated with an analog system. Both the LUPD and the City of Bethlehem Police Department (BPD) were aware that a cooperative effort in surveillance was necessary, both to protect the LU students living in off-campus housing and to monitor activity that crossed the campus perimeter into the neighborhoods (and vice versa). To help them solve these issues, the LUPD turned to Communication Systems, Inc. (CSI), a full-service advanced technology systems integrator, located in nearby Allentown, PA.

Solution

Sony Solution

As an authorized Sony installer, CSI was very familiar with the capabilities of Sony cameras and proposed to upgrade LU's surveillance system with Sony's SNC-RH164-Network HD Rapid Dome Outdoor Camera. IP based, these cameras feature a hard and coated dome cover, making them the ideal choice for the required heavy-duty outdoor monitoring. Another aspect of this model is the Visibility Enhancer, which provides tone correction, allowing clear viewing in an area either brightly back lit or in near-complete darkness. Each camera contains three codecs (H.264, MPEG4 and JPEG), allowing better compression and storage of the footage and making retrieval easier. As the LUPD wanted to maintain their existing analog cameras, CSI also recognized the SNC-RH164's ability to be integrated into the existing system. The pan/tilt/zoom function is easy to use and can be controlled by their video management system. The initial system with four cameras was launched in November of 2009. Currently (March 2011) the LU system consists of 12 Sony high-definition cameras.

Results

The result was a Video Surveillance and Recording Management system with a central monitoring station installed in the LUPD's dispatch center. The cameras send their signal to the video management server and on to the monitoring station over the University's LAN. The monitoring station provides control of the cameras, including the establishment of pre-programmed "patrols." Incidents can be retrieved and burned to DVD or USB so as to be tamper-proof and therefore admissible in court. The core system is comprised of a Genetec Video Surveillance and Recording Management system on redundant servers with three 47-inch* LCD monitors installed in the LUPD's dispatch center.



The system is also capable of receiving feeds from other cameras owned by the City of Bethlehem Police Department, who can see and control LUPD's cameras as well, via a wireless link that was created for this purpose by CSI. The system is unique in that it allows two separate entities to view the feeds from and control each other's cameras on a permission basis. This results in enhanced surveillance of both sides of the campus perimeter. The views afforded by the Sony high-definition cameras allow unprecedented video acuity and result in the need for fewer cameras because of their range. Also, combining video with any type of alarm or call for help makes it a verified distress signal, helping police and other emergency services to respond accordingly and letting them know if an incident escalates after the initial alert.

Harder to measure, but of equal importance is the sense of security that Lehigh students (and their parents), faculty and staff report as a result of the system implementation.

In January 2011, footage from surveillance cameras helped the BPD apprehend local gang members that had been targeting and robbing LU students.

Why Sony Cameras Were Selected

The Sony cameras met the requirements of durability, reliability, cost effectiveness and the ability to be integrated with not one, but two legacy systems (both LUPD and BPD).

Quotes

Don Marron, Account Manager, CSI

"The Sony cameras that we had deployed elsewhere have been very reliable over last several years. With their proven reliability, strong factory support and the amazing video clarity of the new High Definition cameras, we could make a very compelling case for Sony."

Product List

• SNC-RH164

*Viewable area measured diagonally.