

Panasonic

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

PUBLIC SAFETY ENGAGEMENT AT THE HEART OF INTELLIGENT CAMPUS SECURITY SOLUTION

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
FINDS PANASONIC'S I-PRO
NETWORK SURVEILLANCE
CAMERAS THE PERFECT
PROACTIVE SECURITY TOOL

The University of Delaware's Office of Campus and Public Safety continues to espouse the value of and expand its Intelligent Campus Security Solution (ICSS) video surveillance program. Over the past several years, the University has continued to upgrade and broaden its video surveillance and security solution, relying on Panasonic's SmartHD cameras to improve overall campus safety.

Mark Seifert, project manager and also the manager of Emergency Communications and Information Technology at the University of Delaware's Newark campus, believes the cameras not only serve as an important security and safety asset, but a crime deterrent and emergency management tool benefitting the thousands of students and others who attend or visit the largest university in the state.

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Case Study: University of Delaware, Newark, DE

FIVE-YEAR-PLAN DEPLOYMENT

The Office of Campus and Public Safety began Phase 1 of the IP surveillance project, built on the university's existing fiber optic backbone, in May 2010. Phase II of the project was completed in 2011 with additional cameras and the unveiling of a new Video Monitoring Center at the Public Safety Building, adjacent to the University of Delaware Campus Police 911 Call Center.

Since it began its camera installation program and with the initial installation of some 30 devices by a former manufacturer, the university has continued to upgrade to Panasonic, adding cameras in targeted areas approximately every 12 to 18 months. When the Office of Campus and Public Safety brought in systems integrator Protection 1 Security Solutions, Chicago, the decision was made to standardize on Panasonic i-PRO cameras for their outstanding images, ease of installation and ability to upgrade and add new cameras efficiently and seamlessly to the university's network. Now, only Panasonic cameras are being installed campus wide.

The university has installed Panasonic's i-PRO SmartHD WV-SW396A PTZ dome network cameras in the majority of the exterior installations and the WV-NW502S Day/Night fixed dome camera for the lion's share of interiors. The WV-SW396 is a 720p, high-definition, weather-resistant unit that delivers 36x optical zoom with auto tracking capabilities. Its specialized rain wash coating enables water or droplets to flatten onto the surface of the camera dome providing better visibility in wet and rainy conditions and lowering overall maintenance costs. The WV-NW502S also offers 650TVL of resolution, a 2.8mm to 10mm auto iris lens and three-way mounting for flexible wall or ceiling installations.

The university currently has some 400 cameras across campus, and continues to add additional cameras as new buildings are constructed or renovated or in areas where additional safety measures are deemed necessary. In addition, outdated cameras at the end of their lifecycle are being replaced with the new i-PRO cameras.



COMMAND AND CONTROL

The University's state-of-the-art Video Monitoring Center is staffed 24/7 by the 911 center and the university's local police department who have real-time access to all campus cameras. The Video Monitoring Center, adjacent to the 911 Center, uses video management software to proactively monitor specific areas of the campus identified as problematic based on recent crime trends, so dispatchers can focus on those locations and receive real-time alerts. For example, in the event of bike thefts, cameras can show views of campus bike racks. If thefts are occurring in the library, camera views pinpoint those interiors. Cameras record and store video feeds on motion to conserve bandwidth and storage space, but the Office of Campus and Public Safety continues to experiment with and test additional video analytics and camera tracking functionality to make recordings of video feeds even more efficient.

"We stress an intelligent model of policing where we monitor crime trends and develop a strategic plan of the areas we want to focus on rather than just 'fire up' all 400 cameras, which would be impossible to watch. That way, our dispatchers can direct their efforts on known crime and problem areas," Seifert says.

The Office of Campus and Public Safety, like the university's overall goal to 'engage' students and the community, takes a proactive approach to security, encouraging stakeholders and students of the research university to help prevent potential incidents. As a result of awareness and participation, the University has been able to decrease incidents of crime and theft and has successfully apprehended suspects as well.

Case Study: University of Delaware, Newark, DE

“We have proactively prevented crime, and solved crimes with the cameras as well,” says Seifert, who referenced a shooting on a campus basketball court in August 2013, just before students began arriving back on campus for fall semester. “One camera captured the suspect firing the weapon multiple times but fortunately, no one was struck. The outdoor pan-tilt-zoom (PTZ) camera captured the entire incident as well as the suspect’s vehicle. We later used the Newark (De.) Police Department license plate reader technology to obtain the tag and registration information of the car. Video surveillance captured the incident, provided suspect vehicle information and fostered other leads, ultimately leading to the arrest of the offender,” he says.

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Cameras serve numerous other functions. The University of Delaware’s 22,000-seat stadium is also part of the camera network and provides a 360-degree field of view of all spectator seating as well as surrounding facilities and parking lots. During game days or public events, the Panasonic cameras can be monitored by the Office of Campus and Public Safety from a remote command post. A video surveillance workstation allows operators to proactively monitor each camera and operators can select multiple views or use preset video tours which automatically rotate among different areas and views of the stadium to ensure full coverage of pre-game and game events both inside and outside the stadium.

“We use the cameras to actively manage the event,” Seifert continues. “Before the game we focus on the exterior and crowd management and traffic control. Once the game starts we spin the cameras to manage the interior. In the last four years we’ve had incidents where spectators suffered from cardiac arrest or medical distress. We were able to quickly pinpoint the exact spot with the cameras and direct paramedics to the proper location. So it’s not just about crime prevention but it’s an important tool for emergency management,” he says. “In addition,” he adds, “during harsh winters cameras can assess the grounds around campus and determine potential closures – or when it’s safe to reopen.”

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CAMPUS COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIPS

The University has a strong philosophy to involve students, faculty and the community in its ongoing success – including the reporting of criminal activity. When additional cameras are ready for deployment, such as in a new residential space, public safety meets with design engineers to consider camera placement. In addition, the University of Delaware Student Government Association (SGA) often assists with the selection of the location of new cameras, depending on recent crime trends or challenging areas. The Office of Campus and Public Safety conducts a safety walk with SGA at least two times a year to identify traffic issues, crime zones or safety gaps, such as areas of fear or crime to potentially address those areas with new video cameras. Even the UD Grounds Department also has a hand in assuring cameras are used properly – if new trees or landscaping is added, consideration is given to the location based on currently installed cameras and fields of view.

The University of Delaware Office of Campus and Public Safety operates one of nine Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) in Delaware. All 911 calls placed from the campus phone system are answered by the University of Delaware Police Communications Center (UCOMM). The University of Delaware Police Department is a full-service police department – one of the largest agencies in the state – with 50 sworn officers and 25 civilian officers and support personnel, including vehicle patrol, detectives, community policing, bike, foot and canine patrol. Some 15 patrol cars are also equipped with Panasonic’s in-car Arbitrator 360™ HD mobile digital video evidence capture and recording system and is in the process of installing Panasonic Toughbook G1 tablets, as well as investigating the new Panasonic body-worn cameras.

From campus to community, the University of Delaware takes a comprehensive approach to its video surveillance system, and the results have been the ability to keep students, faculty and visitors safer and more secure.

