



SMU

Southern Methodist University

Case Study



Security has always been important to the administrators of America's schools and universities. But, it is also now becoming a factor in college selection. Parents and prospective students want to know that the college they select is safe and secure. The Jeanne Clery Campus Crimes Statistics Act requires that all universities publish an annual security report that documents their crime statistics. Most universities post this report on their web sites. With so much visibility, it is little wonder that universities are taking an even more proactive approach to campus security.

For the campus police at Southern Methodist University, student and faculty safety has always been Job 1! Southern Methodist University is a private university located in an urban setting in Dallas, Texas. Its 186 acre campus, 76 buildings and total enrollment of 11,000 present a significant challenge to the campus police.

Recently the SMU campus police department decided to replace its existing Digital Video Recorders with a more stable, reliable solution. They selected Video Insight of Houston, Texas, based on several factors. First the Video Insight products use an industry standard Dell computer, not a proprietary machine. This was important from a maintenance point of view. Secondly the Video Insight products possessed all of the key functionality that was required. With the Video Insight Network Client all cameras can be viewed from one central dispatching station. The SMU Campus Police Chief especially likes the ability to use the Network Client from his desk. Eventually the campus police will also use the web client to view activities from home or on the road. The SMU campus police also like the fact that Video Insight is a US based company. The Video Insight technical support provides excellent support and readily assists with any problems that might arise. Finally, the SMU IT staff was very supportive of the decision because of the SQL and .Net based architecture and the frequent product updates. Also with their previous surveillance software, each server had to be administered by going to the physical location of the server. With Video Insight, they were also able to perform remote administration of each server from the central office.

SMU campus police have installed 13 Video Insight servers and over 100 cameras in various buildings and parking lots throughout the campus. Some cameras are monitored live at the central campus police office whereas the recordings of other cameras are only viewed as necessary. Since SMU does not yet have a high speed backbone, they also needed the ability to store digital recordings on site at each building. SMU will eventually expand the use of the Video Insight products to include many of the other buildings on campus. They also intend to install network IP cameras in some locations. A big advantage of the Video Insight products is that campus police can view both analog and digital cameras from the same screen. SMU can leverage its existing cameras while also taking advantage of the new IP technology. In addition, SMU may soon be the site of a certain new presidential library. Video surveillance will obviously be a very important part of the security infrastructure.

With the aid of the Video Insight products, campus police have caught numerous incidents of parking lot arm breakage, car burglaries and other vandalism. The surveillance systems clearly provide a deterrent to future crime. While campus crime can never be completely eliminated, the Video Insight products go a long way towards providing peace of mind to students, parents, and staff.