HEXAGON

Case study

The future of managing campuswide security plans

University of Vermont | *USA*

Many schools, colleges and universities rely on video management systems as the hubs of their physical security operations. However, as they look to the future and consider the benefits of taking an integrated approach to managing campuswide security plans, the road ahead can be unclear. A daunting variety of systems and solutions is available at a wide range of price points. This is the challenge the University of Vermont (UVM) was facing.

The challenge

An extensive and expanding CCTV camera network positioned in and around the buildings and grounds owned and controlled by UVM is a cornerstone of its safety and security operations. This infrastructure is crucial to the activities of the police dispatch team, a group of on-site officers who monitor live camera feeds, coordinate incident response and use footage to conduct investigations. The team relies on the performance of the university's video management system, and for many years, UVM has entrusted its video management to Hexagon, a leading provider of physical security solutions with a wealth of expertise in the education sector.

The university initially deployed an open-platform IP video surveillance solution, NiceVision, before migrating to VisionHub in 2017 to take advantage of continuous improvements in video management technology. As a result, its estate of almost 500 cameras (predominantly IP cameras from AXIS) and CBORD CS access control system were integrated, with cameras mapped to entry and exit points around the campus.

When Hexagon announced the launch of its next-generation enterprise-class video management system Qognify VMS in 2022, UVM was excited about its capabilities. The university saw a chance to improve how its police dispatch team managed real-time emergency events, as well as opportunities for better post-incident investigation and daily on-campus surveillance. For these reasons, UVM was one of the first organizations to make the transition to Qognify VMS.

Fast facts

Vertical market
Educational facilities

Products
Qognify VMS

The solution

The university opted for an on-premises deployment, transferring UVM's entire camera system to Qognify VMS. During the rollout, it was vital that the duties of the police dispatch team remain uninterrupted.

Harlan Howard, an equipment technician at UVM's CATcard Service Center, explained, "The university is required by the police to keep 30 days of recorded camera footage so that they can review it if an incident is reported. Together with Hexagon, we took the decision to run VisionHub and Qognify VMS side by side during the deployment. The transition took place over 60 days and was very smooth. In fact, throughout the process, the police dispatch team was already using Qognify VMS as its sole interface for accessing video."

The result

A major benefit for the police dispatch team is the ability to quickly create and conduct virtual patrols. Qognify VMS designs a route around campus, and the relevant cameras are selected. Live feeds from these cameras are then automatically cycled and displayed on one of the team's monitors.

"The feedback we have from the police is that this is one of their favorite features of Qognify VMS," said Howard. "In essence, this proactive monitoring has given them an extra patrol, which has resulted in them being able to catch more people in the act."

Another advantage is the ease with which video footage can be exported for evidence purposes. "It was quick before, but Qognify VMS makes it much easier for officers to share video regardless of their technical skill level," said Howard.

In addition to the improvements for the police dispatch team, the new system is also making it easier for UVM's CATcard Service Center to manage its expanding camera network.

"It is now a much more streamlined process," said Howard. "It may take half an hour to physically install a camera, but it is the work of a few minutes to add it to the network via Qognify VMS."

This speed of installation and easy camera management has helped UVM as the number of cameras in use around the campus continues to increase.

A good example of this is the university's Fleming Museum of Art, which houses Vermont's most comprehensive collection of art and anthropological artifacts. During the pandemic, the previous video management system enabled administrative staff to monitor live camera feeds remotely. Now, with the museum's doors open to visitors, the number of cameras has increased to more than 30, and live monitoring through Qognify VMS helps provide peace of mind to exhibiting artists — they know that their work is being kept safe.

Cameras are also being used to monitor transaction points at unattended dining facilities around campus, where students can purchase food using their CATcards. These, too, are connected to the network and managed by Qognify VMS.

Looking to the near future, the university hopes to take advantage of a Homeland Security grant to increase and improve camera coverage across campus.

"The positive experience of the police dispatch team in using Qognify VMS is driving the initiative to expand our surveillance operations. They recognize that more cameras integrated into the system will lead to them dealing with more incidents quicker and more effectively," said Howard. "For us in the CATcard Service Center, Qognify VMS means we can provide better support to the police and be far more efficient in how we manage and maintain our core security systems."

The customer

Located in New England, UVM was founded in 1791 and is one of the oldest universities in the U.S. UVM is also a top research institution and the largest employer in the city of Burlington. Its campus is spread across 460 acres in Burlington, with a population of more than 11,000 undergraduates, 900 graduate students and over 4,000 full- and part-time faculty and staff. Being a largely open campus in the heart of the city, UVM is at the center of the community and provides a number of shared public spaces.

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Harlan Howard
Equipment Technician, CATcard Service Center
The University of Vermont

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