



Case Study

AD Network Video combines the world leading technology of the AD Group to deliver seamless security and safety solutions.

- Vertical Market: Education
- Country: U.S.A.
- End User: Suncoast Polytechnical High

Customer Challenge

Over the past 20 years, the citrus groves of Sarasota, Florida, have been replaced by suburban developments. As a result, the Sarasota County School District has grown rapidly to meet the needs of working families with school-age children.

The Sarasota County School District is the largest employer in the county. It comprises dozens of different educational institutions, including elementary, middle and high schools, as well as charter, alternative and special schools. The district also manages several support facilities, such as administrative buildings, bus depots and maintenance shops.

One of the key missions of the district is to provide a school environment that is safe, conducive to learning and free from unnecessary disruption. While crime issues on district campuses are limited (mostly vandalism), the district became acutely alert to the issues of student safety after the 1999 shootings at Columbine High School in Colorado.

“The driving issue is student safety,” says Darrell Reyka, manager of safety and security for Sarasota County Schools. “If the school is vandalized, what do you do with your students the next day? If the cafeteria is vandalized, how do you feed the students?”

Providing security is a significant challenge for a school district as large as Sarasota County. The high schools have an average of about 2,300 students.

Sarasota High School, the district’s largest school, has 15 buildings spread over 170 acres, making it more like a college campus. The middle schools range in size from 1,200 to 1,500 students, while the elementary schools have anywhere from 900 to 1,600 students.

AD Network Video Solution

The Sarasota County School District is addressing the multi-faceted challenges of security with state-of-the-art digital video technology from Dedicated Micros. Working with Dedicated Micros’ rep firm, Southeast Security Products of Pompano Beach, Florida, Reyka oversees implementation of the district’s digital video surveillance strategy. The multi-phase project plan is a high priority and is well supported by the school board and administration.

In 2006, the district standardized on Dedicated Micros’ NetVu Connected platform by deploying DM’s Digital Sprite 2(DS2), 16-channel Network Video Servers, for their high-capacity video storage, expandability, local monitor interface, network-based configuration and license-free remote viewing. To date, the district has deployed more than 2,000 cameras and 150 NetVu Connected appliances.

In addition to the school campuses, the district also outfitted the purchasing, central transportation, and primary central office complex with cameras and NetVu Connected appliances in the phase I implementation.



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Today the Sarasota School District is in the midst of implementing phase II of the plan. "Currently, we are adding more cameras and network video servers, and using intelligent technology to address challenges in the security and safety of our schools," says Reyka. "As budgets get tighter, this new technology enables us to cover more ground with fewer people."

Remote Viewing

All our Video Servers, DVRs and Security Devices have an embedded, non-PC operating system. This means that the end-user will encounter none of the problems and performance issues traditionally associated with PCs. The unit is immune from computer virus attacks even if connected to a local or wide area network.

Remote viewing is one the best ways to get more coverage with fewer personnel. The school district mans the entire CCTV system 24/7 from the central office complex using Dedicated Micros' license free remote viewing software.

"We use Dedicated Micros' CX02-16 Cbus Video Switcher at some smaller locations," Reyka says. "Using the company's KBS3 keyboard and the Keyboard Extender, we can look at any cameras on any network video server, all from one monitor."

The schools also are responsible for monitoring their own facilities. Every school administrator (principal and assistant principals) has NetVu Observer on his or her own computer and can access every camera within the school.

Administrators can easily view live and recorded video to work directly with parents and students.

At Sarasota High School, the phase II implementation boosted the number of NetVu Connected appliances from five to 14, covering 154 cameras. The school security staff monitors the entire campus using two 40-inch monitors, with a Pelco PMVC4 Multiviewer and a single Dedicated Micros KBS-3A keyboard. "This set-up allows school security staff to deploy security personnel in real time where they are needed, from the hallways to the cafeteria to the recreation areas," explains Reyka.

Digital Video Integrated with Access Control Points

The technology from Dedicated Micros helps solve the problem of how to control access points to schools and other facilities. As part of the phase II implementation at Suncoast Polytechnical High School, Reyka integrated digital video from the Dedicated Micros system at each access point with the IEI eMerge Browser-based managed security platform. The Digital Sprite 2 provides a recorded video history at each access point.

Now students need a proximity card to gain entrance to the building. Each card is programmed depending on the student's schedule. All doors usually open until the first bell and students who arrive late must come through the office to register. There are select times when certain doors are open, such as after physical education classes, because multiple students must gain entry at once.

The elevators are controlled by cards, enabling staff and disabled or injured students to use them. Certain staff-only rooms and stairwells also are access-controlled. Connecting the two systems on the network was a simple procedure done in the graphical user interface, without the need to load any software. Administrators can get on the network from any point and make things work, with excellent video integration.

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"We have the ability from the page on eMerge Browser to tag denied cards and then use the digital video from a DS2 to see who it was," says Reyka. "If a card is reported lost and it comes up as gaining entry we can quickly see who used it. Or, sometimes kids give their cards to a friend. The DS2 video is absolutely critical for identity verification in the access control system."

Centralized, Simplified Management

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The Sarasota School District manages authentication rights and firmware upgrades for the entire system over the network via Dedicated Micros' Central Management Tool. "We have multiple sites and large numbers of network video servers deployed, all of them password-protected," Reyka explains.

"With the Centralized Management Tool, we can batch-group firmware upgrades to avoid individual upgrades.

"We also use the Health Monitor tool to proactively manage the system instead of waiting to discover a problem when we really need some video. The Health Monitor application polls the NetVu Connected appliances and sends an e-mail alert if it finds a problem with record rates, hard drives, cameras or anything else. We know immediately if there is a problem."

Deterring and Solving Security Issues

Principals say the cameras have been a huge deterrent, and the security department has used the digital images to solve numerous crimes.

One time, three students — one dressed as a Ninja — spray-painted graffiti at one of the high schools. Security printed out their pictures and the teens were caught at school the next day when one of them came to the office to resolve a scheduling conflict and the secretary recognized him from the footage.

The case was turned over to law enforcement, along with copies of the incident from the network video servers. The students were arrested and charged with a felony. "Apparently his Ninja skills weren't very good," Reyka quips, "because we saw him wherever he went."

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