

On-Net Surveillance Systems Case Study

Buncombe County Schools

Buncombe County Schools Deploys Large-Scale IP Surveillance System Across Its 41 Locations

Highlights:

Client: Buncombe County Schools

Product: ONSSI's NetDVR 64

Project scope: 41 campus locations in total, over 350 cameras, an estimated timeline of 3 years

Integrator: CrossSurveillance

Application: Monitoring of multiple wireless and traditional cameras for theft, vandalism and mischief prevention; storage of images for subsequent proof of evidence.



Background

Buncombe County, NC is a bucolic mountain area with all the means and infrastructure you would expect in a busy metropolis, and a school system hosting approximately 25,000 students. The county is both large - about 7th in size in the state - and spread out, taking roughly one hour to drive across. Although this prosperous area, counting many white-collar professionals and retirees as residents, knows relatively low levels of criminality, the school district of Buncombe County was given the green light to implement a video surveillance system for preventative measures at all school levels. From the high schools down to the elementary schools, each level has different security needs, which in turn lead to different surveillance system specifications. One advanced solution, which offers all the necessary features, is needed.

Why ONSSI?

Buncombe County Schools Telecommunications Specialist Eric Arthur: "Our team of IT professionals at Buncombe County is deploying this large-scale project mainly on its own, so we had clear requirements for flexibility and ease-of-use. NetDVR definitely complied, and even exceeded our expectations in several aspects."

Requirements

Since both the area of perimeter to cover and the number of cameras needed were unusually large, the installation would be seen as a pioneering breakthrough by other counties, if successful. Therefore, a clear list of requirements was established, and all system aspects of installation, operation and maintenance were carefully considered. An internal team of 11 people performed the first line of support, together with equipment and software installations. It was going to be a long-term, large-scale project, in which the whole county IT department would be involved, as well as a number of security and district people.

The main requirements specified that the system should provide the following features:

- System strength and performance capabilities: to be able to monitor and store images at all locations
- Ease of interface: Non-IT people should be able to operate the system
- Ability to add traditional and wireless cameras
- Non-proprietary solution: the system should run on standard Dell computers, with whom the district has a statewide contract, and no additional hardware should be needed apart from the cameras
- Ability to maintain the system in-house: The internal team of IT professionals should be able to work on any aspect of the software
- High-flexibility: The system has to allow easy-to-perform additions and modifications
- Motion detection for selective recording
- Versatile alarm notification mechanisms



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Solution

In-depth research was performed to determine which solution would be the most appropriate. Technology Director Monty Fuchs and his team reviewed the different options available on the market with system integrator CrossSurveillance, who provides the Buncombe Schools with equipment and a secondary line of support. The team downloaded the demo version of ONSSI's NetDVR-64, the main platform, in a complete suite of digital IP surveillance software. They installed a number of IP cameras and began to run the system on their computer screens through a standard Web browser.

Satisfied with the user-friendly interface, the ease of installation, operation and maintenance of the software, they then reviewed the rest of the requirements in their checklist and found that NetDVR-64 satisfied them all. Motion-activated, it can be set to record and store meaningful events only, thus saving copious amounts of storage space and subsequent viewing time. It provides off-premises notification, which can be set to alert either one or several operators by e-mail – or two-way pager - for access to specific restricted areas. The system administrator can then remotely log into the system and verify the cause of the alarm, which is particularly appreciable considering the average distance often needed to travel to arrive personally at the premises.

Results

The estimated timeline for project completion is three years, one for each school level. Although the team started with the district's high schools, which are generally more prone to vandalism or mischief than schools serving much younger students, the elementary schools also quickly benefited from the new system. 4 of them are now in the process of being equipped with a monitoring and intercom solution at their entrance and exit doors. The intercom and "buzzer" are completely and seamlessly integrated with NetDVR.

The authorized users quickly realized that they could refine a number of parameter settings to customize the system even further. For instance, they specified that video capture stills should be sent with alarm notification messages via e-mail, and that a specific notification protocol could be performed at night time. In terms of additional system use, it was found that by placing the cameras strategically in "hotspot" areas, the schools could better spread their security personnel out across campus.

Concerning the primary requirement of ease-of-use and self-explanatory interface, Eric Arthur, telecommunications specialist and project administrator, reports: "We did not have the time or luxury to go through volumes of installation or operating manuals. We needed to plug in the cameras and get down to work. That's exactly what we did with NetDVR, and we found it was great to work with their user-friendly, but detailed interface. Also, it's completely non-proprietary, so it saved us a lot of money on that large deployment".

Another existing system feature that the team plans to use in the near future is the capability to store video recordings at multiple locations on the network. "This is clearly another advantage of choosing a network-based IP solution", Eric Arthur adds, "You can have multiple archives and perform all administration remotely".

About ONSSI

ONSSI (On-Net Surveillance Systems, Inc.) is a premier provider of software-based surveillance management solutions located in Suffern, New York.

The company is a market leader in digital video surveillance systems based on live network video technology - also known as Video over IP technology. On-Net Surveillance Systems Inc. offers a full range of software products, specifically developed for the professional video surveillance industry and tailored to the needs of the end-user market. The flexibility of the IP technology results in significant advantages over other digital video solutions. ONSSI's products are available through an extensive network of IT Systems Integrators and CCTV Integrators. Contact your preferred integrator to discuss On-Net Surveillance Systems Solutions. For more information or to find an authorized dealer, please visit www.onssi.com



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