UNIVERSITY OF
CENTRAL FLORIDA

University of Central Florida Leverages Oncam's Technology to Safeguard Students and Staff

Universities face unique security challenges requiring innovative and state-of-the-art surveillance technology. For the University of Central Florida, after a foiled active shooter attack, it became an urgent mission to improve their security technology and create a centralized solution, with the help of Oncam 360-degree cameras.

CLIENT

Founded in 1963, the University of Central Florida (UCF) is a research university in Orlando, Fla., and one of the largest universities in the US. Boasting 66,000 students and over 12,700 faculty and staff, UCF is regularly recognized as among the best for quality, access, impact and value. Its 13 colleges offer more than 200 degrees from its main campus, hospitality campus, health sciences campus, online, and through its 11 regional UCF Connect campuses.

CHALLENGE

After a shooter situation in 2013, it became evident that technologies and systems designed to help increase awareness during such situations were unavailable to assist responders with real-time assessment, as systems were not integrated.

SOLUTION

UCF deployed more than 30 Oncam Evolution 05 360-degree cameras in a number of form factors for both indoor and outdoor coverage.

RESULTS

The high-resolution images from Oncam's cameras integrate seamlessly with UCF's VMS platform and are used to pinpoint anomalies, view incidents as they occur, and take in the entire scene after an event has occurred.

The Challenge

In March 2013, UCF faced an active shooter situation in which, fortunately, no students, faculty nor staff were injured.

During the University's response, it became clear that the technologies and systems designed to help increase awareness during such an event were unavailable to assist responders with real-time assessment. At the time, UCF had a wide variety of standalone solutions, including non-integrated video surveillance, access control, fire alarm and intrusion systems. Also, the IT team managing the system did not have the security expertise to maximize the benefits of its technology investments.

Jeff Morgan, Director of Security and Emergency Management, and university officials realized that UCF needed to modify how security technology was managed. As such, they appointed Joseph Souza to the role of Assistant Director of Security within Morgan's team.

"I came in to help the University optimize its technology infrastructure and focus on building a team to help with this initiative. I was able to quickly hire a camera coordinator and an access control coordinator to enhance our efforts," Souza said. "Focusing on the technology — how it is managed and ensuring it is used properly — is one of my main initiatives." The biggest challenge, Souza found, was the lack of communication between various devices, including older analog video platforms. There was a need to bring together the 58 standalone services and 12,000 access points and to create a centralized storage solution.

"While we had cameras in place in strategic locations, many of these analog-based video surveillance solutions didn't work well with the VMS solutions that we wanted to integrate, so it was critical for them to work seamlessly together," Souza said. "This meant we needed full-coverage options that were built on open-platform technology."

The Solution

Souza was introduced to Oncam by an integrator, Signature Systems of Florida. The company came highly recommended by another customer, which uses the cameras to gain situational awareness on busy city streets.

A centralized surveillance solution

"The advanced video capture technology that the Oncam solution brings to the table solidifies our goal to provide a safe and secure learning environment for students."

Joseph Souza
Assistant Director of Security, UCF

"I was very impressed with the testimonials and the fact that Oncam's open-platform technology integrated seamlessly with the Milestone software we invested in to manage all incoming video feeds," Souza said.

UCF uses cameras from a number of manufacturers, but they discovered that the existing technology didn't grant operators the ability to see the full picture within the large open spaces. UCF needed a video solution that provided the ability to gain more situational awareness and panoramic surveillance within the school's more than 200 buildings, sports fields, housing areas, retail stores and green spaces where a lot of traffic and activity take place.

The University deployed over 30 Oncam Evolution 05 360-degree cameras in a number of form factors for both indoor and outdoor use. They allow operators to record high-resolution images of the entire fisheye view, independent of what an operator is doing. Images can be processed during playback as if they were live and they can be dewarped, enabling the viewer to pan, tilt and zoom around the entire scene.

"Oncam delivers the high-resolution image quality that we need to pinpoint anomalies, view incidents as they occur and the ability to take in the entire scene after an event has occurred – and the technology works seamlessly with our VMS platform," Souza said. "The video we collect also has to be stored and managed, which is done through our partners at Pivot3. Combined, these manufacturers allow us to comprehensively protect the campuses."

Oncam's cameras are ONVIF Profile S compliant, allowing them to work seamlessly with UCF's VMS provider,

Milestone. The Milestone VMS serves as a centralized source to manage video, provide streamlined response and instantaneous video playback in the event of an incident, and the ability to access live and stored video quickly and easily. Integration between the technology providers allows UCF to modernize processes, manage risk, protect people and assets, and reduce overall cost.

"The advanced video capture technology that the Oncam solution brings to the table solidifies our goal to provide a safe and secure learning environment for students," Souza said. "As we respond to incidents, we're reminded of the importance of working with vendors that share our vision for elevating emergency response and management through effective collaboration."

The Future

UCF is in the process of building a new campus in Orlando, which will bring the University's camera count to more than 3,000, including more of Oncam's 360-degree cameras for enhanced coverage in high-risk areas.

To address potential risks head-on, UCF built a state-of-the-art Global Security Operations Center (GSOC), which serves as a central point for all technology systems. It is designed to help the Security and Emergency Management team monitor system health, augment response and increase situational awareness.

"UCF is continuing to grow, and that is one of the challenges we have with the technology we use. We must continue to implement video surveillance and intelligence-gathering solutions that enhance our ability to protect students, staff and visitors, no matter their location on our campuses," said Morgan. "Oncam is a great partner to help us achieve these goals."

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