



SAFETY AND
SECURITY

Six Ways to Future-Proof a College's Security Investments

BY PAUL SMITH

Keeping students and faculty safe on college campuses is a top priority for every education administrator. Investing in security solutions such as access control, video surveillance, and analytics can provide peace of mind and help protect the campus. However, these investments often require substantial costs. This article discusses six tips for ensuring that school security investments remain relevant in the future.

Open Platforms

Systems that are based on proprietary technology rather than open platforms limit users in several areas, including choices of complementary software tools. By investing in an open platform, colleges and universities can create a tailor-made solution that makes sense for their current needs while also allowing them flexibility to expand or modify their system in the future.

The right video management system (VMS) is critical for successful campus-wide security.

It should have all the features necessary to give administrators and security personnel complete control over their surveillance system. This capability is especially important as new technologies emerge, such as facial recognition, which uses artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms that require high-performance computing capabilities.

Potential for Expansion and Scalability

Any security solution installed on a college campus today will likely need to expand in

the future, whether it's a small-scale system or a large integrated network. A scalable solution allows administrators to invest in a product that will not run into limitations when their systems inevitably expand or otherwise evolve. Ensuring that the system can accommodate any changes, many of them unforeseen, will mitigate wasted investment and costly upgrades or replacements down the line.

Integrated Software Solutions

Integrating software solutions with existing systems can help extend the life of a system by providing more features and capabilities than were previously available. For example, integrating access control with video surveillance can provide real-time notifications when someone attempts unauthorized entry into a building or area on campus. This integration makes it easier to manage multiple technologies using one central system while also increasing overall security levels across campus.

Insight from Analytics

Analytics allow a video management system to send an alert when problems are identified; these problems can range from objects left behind to some kind of physical altercation. The proactive nature of analytics means that campus security can receive an alert, either in a central command center or on a mobile device, then address an issue quickly.

Accessibility

School personnel need to have uninterrupted, real-time access to their video management systems. Unfortunately, as camera technology improves, retrieving live video can become problematic due to bandwidth issues. For this reason, colleges and universities should invest in VMS solutions with built-in bandwidth-reducing features to mitigate the typical network issues inherent in viewing live video remotely. Additionally, being able to view

live and recorded video from any device—such as a smartphone or tablet—allows security personnel to maintain oversight no matter where they are located on campus.

Tailored Storage Solutions

When investing in storage solutions for a VMS, decision-makers should choose one tailored specifically for the college's needs—whether that's localized onsite storage, a centralized shared network location, or cloud storage. Different storage solution options are a necessity given the variance that can occur from one college or university to the next. Network strength, prior investment in centralized technology, or a vision for a future based in the cloud are all considerations that may lead to one decision or the other.

Colleges and universities should consider these six tips when vetting VMS solutions to ensure that they are able to meet campus security needs both now and into the future.

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