

Montana State University Improves Campus Security with CBORD and NICE

About Montana State University-Bozeman

Founded in 1893, Montana State University at Bozeman (MSU-Bozeman) is a historic land-grant university dedicated to education, research, and outreach. The university enrolls more than 12,000 students on its 1,781-acre campus located in the Gallatin Valley of the majestic Rocky Mountains.

A Phased Approach

MSU-Bozeman began investigating video surveillance solutions in 2006 as a way to improve security in its residence halls. The university selected the NiceVision® solution from NICE Systems, Inc. in large part because of its tight integration with the CS Gold® campus card solution from CBORD®. The project was rolled out in phases, with the initial installation including 42 cameras purchased to monitor activity in three residence halls, as well as Miller Dining Hall. The second phase, planned for the summer of 2009, will include the rest of the university's residence halls, bringing the total number of cameras to approximately 100.

Video is monitored by Residence Life staff like RAs at the front desk of each residence hall. Motion activation makes it easy to spot developing activity, and the university has plans to tie in actions like door prop alarms in the future. In addition to acting as a criminal deterrent, the surveillance solution has allowed staff to investigate events such as broken doors and workers' comp. issues, as well as provide information to campus security to assist in investigations.

Positive Feedback

Students, parents, and administrators have reacted favorably to the increased security provided by NiceVision, according to Tom Stump, Director of Auxiliaries, MSU-Bozeman.

"The surveillance solution has become a great selling point for us," comments Stump. "Parents are very comforted by the technology, and administrators are pleased with the resulting decrease in security incidents. We expected some pushback from students, but we quickly learned their generation is used to this kind of technology. The rollout was almost a non-event from students' perspectives."



The solution has also proved easy to use. MSU held 10-minute training sessions for RAs, with five in each group. Trainees have found the system's operation quite intuitive.

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"The software is very easy to figure out," says Tricia Rabel, Assistant Director of Residence Life, MSU-Bozeman. "Our RDs had a little more training than the RAs because of the more sophisticated things they can do with the system, but everyone has found it very easy to use."

Combining Video and Access Control

The success of MSU's initial focus on securing residence halls has led to discussions of expanding NiceVision's reach into other areas of campus.

"We are ultimately looking to standardize our surveillance across campus, and NiceVision is a great option for that," says Stump. "We currently use it as a technology solution for Residence Life, but it would also fit well in other high-security locations like laboratories. Combined with the biometric access control technology we use, we have the means of providing superior security for restricted areas."

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MSU currently uses Handkey II biometric readers in its fitness center and dining halls. In the dining hall, a hand reading allows students to access their meal plans without presenting cards.

"We are getting more and more student requests to enroll in the biometric program," says Clarinda Marcoff, Director of the Cat Card Office, MSU-Bozeman. "It's so convenient. I've had managers call to thank us for such a smooth process."

Superior Service

"We have been very pleased with our relationship with CBORD and NICE Systems," says Stump. "Both companies have been very accommodating of our needs. They made a lot of stars align for us, and the solution is everything we were promised."

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Residence Life staff watching live video



Camera monitoring residence hall



Student using HandKey II at fitness center

