

CASE STUDY

Niscayah Solves Network Video Surveillance Problems for Hickman Mills C-1 School District



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Executive Summary:

School security directors often keep a keen eye on the latest security technologies that come to market, and then deploy these solutions to ensure their school has the best technology to protect students and employees, deter and catch vandals and to keep the bad guys out.

The same can be said for early technology adopter Hickman Mills C-1 School District in Kansas City, Missouri, a large consolidated school district with 7,047 students in Kindergarten through 12th grade, when it deployed its network video surveillance system five years ago.

Wanting to increase school safety and deter vandalism, Hickman Mills embarked on a large-scale surveillance project with a small, local integrator. They spent \$400,000 to install 195 IP cameras in its hallways, cafeterias, gymnasiums and outside buildings, implementing a digital video network connecting its 16 facilities in the district with school officials centrally monitoring the network video system.

Each year vandalism was costing the school \$80,000, while damages when the stage curtains were set on fire by an arsonist in 2000 cost \$1 million.

"We were experiencing a high incident rate of intrusions and break-ins in our buildings, especially during extended absences, such as holidays and summer break," said John McEntee, Director of Safety and Security for Hickman Mills.

The Dilemma:

The new network security system, and number of facilities monitored - eight elementary schools, two middle schools, two senior high schools, two special education schools, an early childhood development center, and central administrative offices - turned this network video surveillance system into a very large project. Despite the investment in the local security integrator and their expected expertise, the network security system didn't work.

Instead of full motion video, the school had a system that delivered still images like a photograph. And, the system proved difficult when it came to retrieving video - it was a challenge to locate the actual video of an incident, such as video showing a fight between students in a hallway or surveillance of a person vandalizing the outside of a building.

"The biggest thing was that it didn't work for months at a time," said Tracy Dale, IT Supervisor for Hickman Mills. "It was billed as a network-based video surveillance system and an intrusion detection system."

In addition to network problems, the school district found the local integrator they had selected was unresponsive and

despite several attempts to solve the problem, the integrator was not able to come up with a solution. Plus, its office was located on the other side of the state.

"The expectations were not met. There were all types of delays and problems dealing with them one-on-one," said McEntee. "It's the service, after all, that's so very important."

The Solution:

After struggling with the system for several years, Hickman Mills called in Niscayah for a full assessment of its network video surveillance system. The goal was to identify problems with the system and then hire an integrator to fix it.

Niscayah embarked on an extensive analysis of the Hickman Mills system. They evaluated all the cameras to make sure each camera was working and identified any that were not. Next they tested the network connection and the processor on the back end. Plus, they looked at the location of each camera.

"The school had made significant investments with no tangible results and no way out," said Ed Meltzer, branch manager for Niscayah in Kansas City, Missouri. "How do you explain to the public that your investment is not working?"

What Niscayah learned was that the network video processing system installed for Hickman Mills had been manufactured by a company no longer in business. There was nothing wrong with the 195 IP cameras installed, but the power supplies for the cameras were under-powered, causing frequent down time. And, the video management software of the system needed to be replaced. A few cameras in hallways also needed to be adjusted, because they were positioned too low and taller students could touch and move them.

"It was marketed as a network video system, but it never delivered video," said Eddie Meltzer of Niscayah. "It delivered multiple still frames, it was proprietary and there were numerous problems with the system itself."

The fix for the system was simple to accomplish, according to Meltzer and Niscayah Account Executive Jon Gann, who compiled the assessment on the schools network system. It involved upgrading the camera's power supplies and implementing a new network video recording solution along with adjusting a few camera locations.

"We presented a report to the board of education and proposed budget on the project, and they voted to have us implement the solution, too," said Meltzer. "The task originally was to make recommendations and identify what it would cost to solve the problems and we wound up winning the job."

Over a period of just a few short months, Niscayah upgraded the camera power supplies throughout the school district. And

McEntee, Director of Safety and Security for Hickman Mills, collaborated with the school district's IT department to implement the new network video recording solution. The project initiated collaboration between the schools' security director and IT departments.

"John was the one who recommended having IT involved," said Dale. "We talked about bandwidth and how it would affect the schools operations. We needed to understand the impact this would have."

The Benefit: Real-Time Video

Now, school administrators and principals at each school, can access either real-time video or archived surveillance footage of an incident. Instead of having to view 600 jpg images taken during a 10 minute span of time, administrators can easily pinpoint the video to view and call it up. "The new software, everything works 10 times better," said Dale.

Despite needing to make a few additional improvements, such as upgrading the school district's 20 PTZ cameras, Hickman Mills has had numerous positive results.

McEntee reported that the numbers of assaults are down and so are break-ins. "The network video system is also helpful to administrators when there's an incident, such as who provoked the incident and who threw the first punch," said McEntee.

In one recent incident, school officials, on their own accord, used the system to view surveillance footage captured during a break in. "The administrators took it upon themselves to see what they could learn," said McEntee. "They pinpointed the video and identified the kids because one of them had his face uncovered. He didn't think the cameras worked!"

An Overview

Solution:

Niscayah provided real-time networked digital video surveillance by evaluating the system at Hickman Mills and efficiently identifying and solving the problem. It upgraded power supplies for the school district's 195 IP cameras. And, it replaced the school district's video management software. The project also involved the collaboration of Hickman Mills' IT and security department.

The improved solution from Niscayah enables Hickman Mills and its administrators to monitor in real-time the safety of its students and employees during the school season and school breaks.

Core Benefits:

- One point provider for system evaluation, testing and trouble shooting
- An in-depth understanding of IP systems and the platforms required to make them work
- Real-time video, and on site video management accessible to both security personnel and school administrators
- Consistent and comprehensive service

The Client:

Hickman Mill C1 School District

In 1902 Hickman Mills C1 School District became the first Consolidated School District in the state of Missouri. Over the past 100 years, the Kansas City, Missouri school district has grown from less than 100 students to an enrollment today of 7,047 students. Today, the school district operates 16 buildings - eight elementary schools, two middle schools, two senior high schools, two special education schools, an early childhood development center, and central administrative offices.

Systems Integrator:

Niscayah

Niscayah is skilled at identifying security vulnerabilities and leading the way in creating more intelligent security solutions; integrating sophisticated new technologies and setting new standards for others to follow. Niscayah begins each project by analyzing our customer's risks and threats with a thorough site survey and vulnerability assessment. We use this investigative data, in conjunction with specific project goals, to develop an overall security program. This leads to design recommendations that are appropriate, actionable, and are compatible (when required) with outside entities or pre-existing technologies.

Our Systems Integration Group has the experience and the skills to integrate, install and service the latest security technologies with advanced computer networks. These technologies include CCTV, video analytics and surveillance, biometrics, access control systems, perimeter intrusion detection. Properly deployed, an integrated combination of security technologies delivers higher levels of detection, assessment and response.

For further information on Niscayah, please visit the company's website at www.niscayah.us

Niscayah is one of the largest international security systems integrators, offering complete solutions for commercial customers, with specialized offerings in industry segments such as banking, chemical, healthcare, retail, educational and enterprise organizations. Niscayah is part of Niscayah Group AB, an independent company that is publicly traded on the OMX Nordic exchange in Stockholm and has approximately 6,000 employees and operations in 14 European countries, Australia, the United States and Hong Kong.



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