

Swinburne University makes students' lives easier by counting them.

People counting solution from Axis helps top university deliver transparency as a service so students can be more productive.



Organization:
Swinburne University of
Technology

Location:
Melbourne, Australia

Industry segment:
Education

Application:
People counting

Mission

For over 25 years, Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne has consistently ranked among the top 400 universities in the world. With this well-respected status comes a large number of students. CIO Derek Whitehead had the idea of increasing 'transparency as a service' to guide students towards free study areas that, as Assistant Director Shane Skidmore said, "would save time and increase their productivity".

Solution

The university tested different people counting solutions to reach the desired goal. However, many of the systems they tested were flawed in various ways; "non-bidirectional counting, expensive and accuracy issues" as claimed by Chris Goetze, IT Security Officer, responsible for developing the surveillance ecosystem.

With AXIS People Counter, the university was able to integrate the new technology alongside its current system, significantly reducing costs. Along with implementing the people counting solution, the IT department also developed an HTML5 mobile web app, so students easily would find free study space on campus by using the app.

Result

The cooperation between the IT department and the on-campus library has resulted in the technology already being set up in 8 campus study spaces. Kim Tairi, Associate Director of Information Management has said that "using available technology in an innovative way is a win for the students." As the new system is rolled out, more locations will be added which will ultimately provide a better service for the students at the university.

“The fact that we are able to use our existing camera infrastructure and access the counting data in real time, gives us a much better chance of predicting the occupancy level at a certain study area.”

Chris Goetze, IT Security Officer, Swinburne University of Technology.

Save time and increase productivity

Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne is amongst the world's top 400 universities. Throughout its more than 100-year history, the university has pioneered innovation and made practical use of the latest technology developments.

“With more than 30,000 students enrolled at Swinburne's Hawthorn campus, due to consolidation of Higher Education students to that campus and the construction of new buildings at the campus, it is not always easy to know where student study spaces are, let alone find a free study space,” says Shane Skidmore, Associate Director, Applications from the IT Services Department at Swinburne University of Technology.

The idea to increase transparency as a service to the students was born when the Swinburne CIO, Derek Whitehead, had a vision after he visited a shopping center and noticed how cars were counted in the parking lot, resulting in visitors immediately being directed to the available parking spaces.

“He thought that perhaps the same paradigm could be applied for counting students entering and exiting the campus' study spaces. Knowing immediately where to go and where there are places available, would save time and increase their productivity,” says Shane Skidmore.

Easy installation for people counting

The IT department at Swinburne has installed cameras embedded with AXIS People Counter around the campus' libraries, while developing an HTML5 mobile web app that allows students to find where there are free study spaces available on campus.

“We tested various technologies for people counting, but they all came with some flaws; non-bidirectional counting, expensive, accuracy issues, etc. Since we already had cameras for surveillance, we started exploring the possibility of using them for counting about a year ago, which eventually led us to test Axis technology. The fact that we are able to use our existing camera infrastructure and access the counting data in real time, gives us a much better chance of predicting the occupancy level at a certain study area,” says Chris Goetze, IT Security Officer responsible for developing the surveillance ecosystem.

Using available technology in an innovative way is a win for the students

The IT department has been working in close cooperation with the library at the campus throughout the roll out phase. At this stage, eight campus study spaces have been included.

“Although it has not been that long since the service was launched, we have already received great feedback and appreciation from the students” concludes Chris Goetze.

According to Kim Tairi, Associate Director of Information Management, “The Library manages most of the student study space on campus and we wanted to provide students with real time information about available space. Using available technology in an innovative way is a win for the students.”

New locations will continue to be added as needed, providing even better service to the students – a practical yet visionary technical solution to an everyday student challenge.



Swinburne University of Technology
www.swinburne.edu.au

Swinburne University was established in 1908, achieved university status in 1992 and offers 236 undergraduate, 173 postgraduate and 125 TAFE programs. It has three campuses in Melbourne; Hawthorn, Croydon and Wantirna as well as one in Sarawak, East Malaysia. The number of student enrollments in 2012 was 18,805 in Higher Education, 13,750 TAFE, the Equivalent Full Time Student Load, including 7,500 international students from more than 100 countries. The university employs more than 2,800 staff (including seasonals) and boasts a worldwide alumni network of over 90,000 people.

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