

Screening visitors entering the school.

Oconto Unified School District uses network video intercom system to control access to its campuses.



Organization:
Oconto Unified School
District

Location:
Green Bay, Wisconsin,
USA

Industry segment:
Education

Application:
Access control across
multiple campuses

Axis partner:
LaForce, Inc.

Mission

When the town's Board of Education revised its security policy in 2008, Oconto Unified School District officials began looking for an integrated surveillance system that would enhance the safety of all 1,200 students, employees, volunteers and visitors entering any of the district's three schools. The goal was to devise a solution that would allow office staff at the elementary, middle and high schools to remotely identify visitors and control door locks from all three campuses.

Solution

School district officials turned to Axis Communications' partner LaForce Inc., a leading distributor of security hardware based in Green Bay, Wisconsin, for a solution. LaForce recommended that Oconto buy four Aiphone AX-DV audio/video door entry systems – two for the high school and one each for the middle and elementary schools. The four units interface with Axis video encoders to enable the video stream from each door to be securely viewed by authorized personnel over each school's existing Internet connection.

Result

Office staff feels that the electronic access control system gives them the extra eyes and ears they need at critical entrances into the three schools. The Aiphone units provide a clear image of who is at the door as well as clear two-way audio communication with the individual. The AXIS 243SA Video Encoder turns the intercoms into IP-based systems so that the video stream can be viewed over the web using an intuitive Controlware application that sits on PCs in each of the three schools' offices. This gives the staff the flexibility to monitor, communicate and control multiple entrances from more than one location. Once a visitor is identified, office staff can activate the door release relay from an icon on the Controlware screen to allow the person ingress to the building.

“Using the Axis video encoder to turn the video intercom system into an IP-based access control system means if someone is away from the office at one school, authorized staff at another can grant or deny entrance to visitors instead of leaving them waiting at the door.”

Tony Warren, Project manager at LaForce, Inc.

Keeping video transmissions secure

The AXIS 243SA Video Encoder provides a number of features to augment the security of the door system. In addition to supporting full duplex audio and 30 frames per second transmission, the embedded analytics detect motion and sound as well as loss of video. Using Motion JPEG and MPEG-4 compression, the encoder minimizes the bandwidth required to send the transmission across the network. The video encoder also supports multiple layers of protection, including password, IP-filtering, HTTPS and IEEE802.1Z to ensure that audio and video are transmitted securely over the network.

Lessening the taxpayer burden

Though the Oconto Unified School District covers 103 square miles and encompasses the city of Oconto and parts of four adjacent townships, the population being served is less than 5,000 people. Even though taxpayers wanted their schools to be a safe place for their children to learn, they could not take on the cost of a high-priced security system.

According to David Stern, president of M.A.D. Enterprise, the Luxemburg, Wisconsin-based company responsible

for installing the access control system, the video door station offers enhanced features normally associated with higher-cost systems. Not only can all three schools open their locked doors remotely, communicate with visitors via the Internet and selectively grant access to specific individuals, but they can monitor all three schools simultaneously from any of the three school offices.

Meeting the mandate for better security

With the Board of Education mandate to conduct annual lock hold-secure drills at each school, the new network video intercom system has been a welcome addition to the district's efforts to enhance school security.

In addressing the new provisions of the district's security policy, Oconto school officials have closed the books on unauthorized access to all three campuses. Today, all main doors are locked 15 minutes after the start of school to prevent entry from the outside. Anyone wishing to come into a school building during school hours must now enter through the locked main entrance equipped with the video intercom station, identify themselves and their reason for needing entry, and then wait to be buzzed into the building.

