

INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

ASSET TRACKING KEEPS VALUABLES SECURE

Community college saves money on asset tracking with a unique automated inventory management solution

By Lindsay Page



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THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AND THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK ARE THE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY SYSTEMS IN NY STATE. THE GOAL IS TO PROVIDE A QUALITY AND ACCESSIBLE COLLEGE EDUCATION REGARDLESS OF BACKGROUND OR MEANS. NEW YORK HOLDS THE LARGEST (SUNY) AND 3RD LARGEST (CUNY) PUBLIC UNIVERSITY SYSTEMS IN THE UNITED STATES. THE SUNY AND CUNY SYSTEMS ARE SEPARATE AND INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY SYSTEMS, ALTHOUGH BOTH ARE PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS THAT RECEIVE FUNDING FROM NEW YORK STATE; CUNY ALSO RECEIVES FUNDING FROM NEW YORK CITY.

The State University of New York has 64 campuses across the state while The City University of New York has 25 campuses in all five boroughs with over 274,000 students. Both systems include universities, colleges, community and technical colleges. CUNY campuses offer 2-year, 4-year and graduate degrees with a wide variety of academic programs that include art, architecture, engineering, medicine, business and urban design to name a few.

An integral part of the learning program requires that CUNY colleges provide computing devices ranging from laptops to workstations and mobile computing devices such as tablets for students that are on

the move. CUNY's mission is to educate and graduate one of the most diverse student populations in the country and is always looking for ways to improve upon existing processes and improve efficiencies. An area that one particular CUNY college in NY needed help with was finding a way to reduce the time it spent on asset tracking each year.

Over the years, the college saw a steady increase in the number of portable computers designated to students and knew it needed to find the right automated solution that would not only protect their assets, but would also reduce the time it took for inventory management.

CUNY colleges offer a seemingly infinite array of academic programs taught by award-winning faculty, as well as sports, internships, scholarships and community service opportunities found on campuses throughout New York City's five boroughs. CUNY's combination of quality academics, remarkable affordability, financial support and the convenience of 25 modern campuses offers a remarkable educational experience. This philosophy of providing excellence has been instilled throughout all CUNY colleges and continues to be the driving force behind everything CUNY does to create a better environment for students and staff.

CHALLENGES FACED

A major challenge at one CUNY college was tracking inventory within the classrooms to ensure that valuable items such as laptops and AV

equipment did not leave predefined zones. In addition, the college was looking for a technology that could read and identify when a portable computer was removed from the premises and who removed it. It was important to the college to be able to identify the person as well as the asset.

This particular CUNY college was tracking a significant amount of portable computers on a daily basis. The computing devices are mostly mobile and located in every classroom and in every facility, making the task of taking inventory long and expensive. The college was spending way too much time on inventory management and typically conducted an inventory audit annually and was required to allocate internal resources to handle it.

This created a situation where inventory management turned into an extremely costly function. The college needed to a solution that would help reduce inventory costs and improve asset protection immediately. Due to an increase in portable computers, the college knew it was time to find the right solution to these issues and contacted their trusted security systems integrator, David Gonzalez, security solutions specialist and product specifier at Simplex Grinnell. The college was looking for an asset tracking solution that could do more than just track assets; it also needed to integrate with the college's video management system.

Another challenge the college faced was avoiding human error when an asset was returned. By using a manual system, there were instances when a student returned a laptop or portable computer and there was no record of it being returned. The college needed a solution that could help reconcile and ensure that all returns were tracked properly.

TO THE RESCUE

Following a comprehensive evaluation of the college's asset tracking needs, Mr. Gonzalez recommended OffSite Vision Holding's EmergenZ™ Asset Secure solution, a revolutionary new, asset tracking technology. OffSite Vision specializes in real-time physical security and safety solutions, and developed this new technology to give school administrators and property managers the ability to automate inventory management and account for valuable assets in real time. EmergenZ™ Asset Secure utilizes specialized identifiers that verify and track enabled assets, sending immediate alerts if assets are taken outside the school's classroom or beyond preconfigured perimeters.

"I was thoroughly impressed with OffSite Vision's asset tracking solution and found the open architecture and ability to integrate seamlessly with a Video Management System a winning combination," said David Gonzalez.



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"I'm looking forward to continuing the collaboration between Simplex Grinnell, OffSite Vision and CUNY on future security projects."

This new solution gave students and faculty the ability to 'check-out' and 'check-in' a computing device to give security personnel a real-time view on who has a device. In addition, it provided notification to security when a computing device was being removed without being properly 'checked-out'. It also allowed school administrators to run instant inventory reports with a click of a button. OffSite Vision was extremely responsive to the needs of the college and never said "no" to any requests and delivered a state-of-the-art technology in a three-month timeframe that has improved the college's day-to-day operations and inventory management efficiencies. Additional customer benefits include an easy-to-use automated system, a simplistic dashboard, and the option of web-based data delivery.

"Our open platform offers interoperable feeding input data with existing security systems. The solution can be integrated to Video Management and Access Control Systems and turnstiles to quickly prevent unauthorized removal of assets," said Mark Eklund, president at OffSite Vision. "We knew that CUNY was looking for a superior asset tracking solution and listened closely to their needs and delivered a technology that works."


Unique asset pairing capabilities allow security to assign specific ownership rules to assets and employees, set alert parameters such as sounding alarms, turning video cameras & sending text alerts if an asset is detected with the wrong employee or person. With the EmergenZ™ Asset Secure solution, a security alert can be set to immediately trigger when an asset leaves an assigned location for added security. Powerful data analytics are immediate and exact and offer secure, encrypted data. Users can view dynamic on demand real-time reports that help achieve 24/7 accountability for inventory tracking and identify and

account for the location of tracked assets at all times, which significantly reduces the cost of inventorying assets and theft rates

DELIVERING THE RIGHT SOLUTION

Working closely with the security and public safety teams at the CUNY college allowed OffSite Vision to implement the right solution that would eliminate manual inventory and track assets 24/7.

"Having the opportunity to collaborate with David Gonzalez and the CUNY team with a pilot program has contributed to the success of our solution and accuracy rate. We are looking forward to continuing our efforts and working with other departments throughout CUNY to help improve asset management and emergency response," said Mark Eklund.

Since the new asset tracking solution has been implemented, the CUNY college has reduced inventory costs significantly by reducing labor costs associated with taking inventory and has reduced computing device shrinkage by 50 percent annually. The college has seen significant cost savings due to the EmergenZ™ Asset Secure solution in a short timeframe and will continue to raise the grade with this new real-time inventory management technology. OffSite Vision is committed to doing more when it comes to asset management and continues to work with schools throughout the country to help improve asset management and emergency response. 

Lindsay Page is the editor of Campus Security & Life Safety magazine.

Sources:
<https://getschooled.com/dashboard/article/1426-suny-vs-cuny>
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