



A CLEAR2THERE CASE STUDY

BRUCE SCHOOL DISTRICT SIMPLIFIES FACILITIES OVERSIGHT WITH CLEAR2THERE ACCESS CONTROL AND VIDEO SURVEILLANCE SOLUTIONS

THE CHALLENGE

Bruce School District in Bruce, Wisconsin, provides K-12 education with 85 staff members to a population of some 550 students. The school district has utilized electronic door control and surveillance technology throughout its facilities for a number of years, maintaining a safe and well-supervised environment for both students and staff.

Jim Booth, head custodian for Bruce Schools, has been responsible for the integration of technology throughout the district's facilities for much of his thirty year tenure. In early 2015, Booth determined that the existing surveillance and access control system was obsolete, and he subsequently initiated an effort to upgrade.

Booth had learned that Bruce Telephone Company (BruceTel) was introducing a line of smart services solutions into the local market, so he contacted John Manosky, the company's president and general manager, to determine if BruceTel could deliver the solution that the school needed.

"BruceTel is our telephony and Internet provider and we've had an excellent relationship with them for many years," noted Booth. "When I learned that they had an access control and surveillance platform for schools, it was an obvious point of discussion for us."

Booth identified improvements in video camera technology, the desire to eliminate the cost of maintaining local DVRs for video storage, and the need for centralized management of door controllers as key components for the new school system.

"John invited me over to the BruceTel office to take a look at the access control demo that they had installed," said Booth. "I was impressed with the intuitive nature of the user interface, and decided to 'kick the tires' on the system to see if it would meet our needs."

Manosky provided Jim with an access control set-up and a gateway that would connect his equipment to the cloud-based servers via the school's broadband connection. He also provided some basic instruction, configured the gateway, and let him go.

"I've known Jim for most of my career, and I know that he is a very capable technology user, so I was confident the he could not only understand how the system works, but would also present us with excellent feedback on the whole package," said Manosky. "It wasn't long before Jim made the decision to go with BruceTel for the new school system."

THE SOLUTION

The final configuration of equipment installed at the Bruce School District included twelve video cameras, six access control readers and electronic locks, and both access cards and key-fobs for staff use.

The cloud-based video surveillance and storage operation provided by BruceTel relies on the InfiniVi platform from Clear2there. The video storage servers are hosted by WIN, provider of an independent fiber network throughout the Upper Midwest, and the platform provides Bruce Schools with secure playback access from any Internet connected device.

The school also employs door phones at the main entrances for visitors to use in requesting access. Office personnel can view the live video before granting access.

Booth cited the centralized control of the door access readers as a major improvement. "With the old system, I had to physically connect to each card reader in order to add or delete an access card," said Booth. "The new solution is much easier. I can pull up the control panel and add, delete, or modify access parameters once, and then the change is instantly enforced at every door."

INSTALLATION & USE

Booth determined that the school district would perform the physical installation of the new equipment in the school.

According to Manosky, he assisted on the first camera and door to make sure that Booth was comfortable with the equipment and process. "We spent a little more than an hour getting the first door reader hooked up and online," said Manosky. "The instructions provided by Clear2there were laid out perfectly, so it was pretty simple. After that, Jim took over and hooked everything up in short order. When he was ready to add another camera or door control, he would give me a call and I would get it configured in the system. It was all very smooth and easy."

Booth and Manosky worked together to create access profiles for administration, staff, and coaches. The profiles incorporate standard time-of-day and day-of-week policies as well as special functions as needed.

"Jim did throw us one curveball in setting up the access profile for coaches, but with the help of the Clear2there team, we had it taken care of within one day," noted Manosky.

The school had a special rule for coaches that allowed them to swipe a key-card one time to hold a door in the unlocked state. A second swipe from the same card would lock the door. This facilitated student access to and from practice fields. "Of course, there is an override that locks the doors at a predetermined time just in case the coach forgets to swipe the card a second time – which is not uncommon," commented Booth.

Booth reviews the live video feeds and spot-checks the recorded video daily to ensure that the system is working as designed. Administrators access and review the video as needed to address incidents at the school. The system allows administrators to remotely grant door access using smart-phones or tablets.

THE BUSINESS IMPACT

BruceTel has been serving the Bruce, Wisconsin area for 75 years, and currently operates approximately 1,500 access lines. The company provides telephone, Internet, and digital TV services throughout its serving area.

BruceTel employs the smart premise services platform from Clear2there to deliver a variety of cloud-based offerings to the local market.

"Being able to offer cutting edge services to our customers—even though we are a very small company—provides BruceTel with a tremendous boost in our local market," said Manosky. "To our customers, it looks like BruceTel, but with a company like Clear2there standing behind us, we can confidently offer these services without any concern that we are getting in over our heads."

The cloud-based video archival and retrieval provided through Clear2there's InfiniVi platform operated by WIN helps BruceTel keep operational costs under control as well. Manosky reported that the movement of the video data across the network connection has not resulted in any additional bandwidth charges for the company.

"Download traffic is always greater than upload, so the peak traffic loads that impact our costs are always on the download side," said Manosky. "This makes the video upload to the servers virtually free – and since it's in the cloud, we don't have to buy or maintain any equipment in the central office."

The company participated in basic technical and marketing training provided by Clear2there, but according to Manosky, the solutions are very easy to understand and deploy.

"Clear2there has been a great partner in this business," continued Manosky. "The school project went ten times smoother than we ever could have dreamed it could. And, for every question that we came up with for Clear2there, it seemed as though they had already thought of it and had an answer ready to go."

LOCAL CONNECTION

Through the offering of smart services that are relevant to local community needs, BruceTel was able to capture new business from an existing customer and build on its reputation as a leading edge technology provider, all with minimal investment or increase in operational costs.

"As a part of the Bruce community, it is very important to our future to continue to innovate and deliver services that people want and need," concluded Manosky. "This project with the school further cements that relationship, and can serve as an excellent reference for other smart-premise projects that we will undertake going forward."

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