Industry Leaders

Idesco works with SVA in NYC to redefine campus safety with centralized security platform

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For more than six decades, the School of Visual Arts (SVA) has been a leader in the education of artists, designers and creative professionals. Comprised of more than 6,000 students at its Manhattan campus, 35,000 alumni in 100 countries, 1,100 faculty and 700 staff members, SVA has built a reputation as one of the most influential artistic communities in the world.

With its classrooms, facilities and offices occupying space in more than 15 buildings in Manhattan, campus safety has always been a priority for the college. In addition to ensuring the personal safety of all members of its community, it is critical for the college to secure computer equipment, specialized technology and other high value academic and administrative assets.

SVA Security Challenges

SVA already had stand-alone video surveillance and door-access systems on campus, but was interested in upgrading their overall security system to create a safer environment for all and to simplify the management of security operations college-wide. "We needed a centralized system," says Cosmin Tomescu, SVA's chief information officer. "We were looking for a solution that would easily integrate with the majority of the equipment already in place. The objectives were to minimize the impact on our security office and to reduce the cost of re-cabling every location."

In May 2014, the college's administrators contacted Idesco Corp. to initiate the upgrade. A leading provider of security solutions and SVA's security partner since 2011, Idesco has worked with other high-profile New York City campuses, including New York University and Pace University, and has built a reputation for being on the forefront of such technologies as access control, video surveillance, ID badging systems, biometrics, turnstiles and visitor management.

"Idesco has secured some of the largest campuses in the tri-state area so we know what it takes to design, manage, install and service a security system that will keep students and staff safe and secure," said Andrew Schonzeit, president of Idesco Corp. By working with a security integrator they trusted, SVA could rest easy knowing that the right security professionals were on their team and could advise them properly.

SVA's existing access control system included 400-plus proximity card readers for door access, along with standalone wireless door locks. SVA also maintains more than 700 surveillance cameras in outdoor and/or public areas such as sidewalks, building perimeters, entrance lobbies, common areas, stairways, hallways, classrooms, basements and roofs.

SVA asked Idesco to find ways that the college could do more with this existing system. "We analyzed and reviewed SVA's security platform and found that their solution did not allow them to use their system to its fullest capacity," said Michael Troiani, service manager at Idesco. "Basically, their campus was comprised of isolated silos of information that did not interact. Our objective was to connect data silos, create software connections that mitigate risk, secure all buildings and protect people and property." SVA reviewed all options, selected a new security platform and asked Idesco for help to implement the system that they wanted.

To facilitate the upgrade, Idesco enlisted the help of braXos Security Software, a specialist in physical security middleware. BraXos developed a software application to pull the existing access control database including all time zones, access levels, card readers, inputs/outputs, and schedules and import them into the newly specified system. Due to the high level of coordination, the project was completed within three months and the system transition was seamless.

Security Command Center Gets Renovated

Migrating to a new security platform allowed SVA to implement significant changes in its infrastructure. The college's security command center was renovated, with new computers and screens that are used for continuous passive monitoring of all critical high-traffic areas on campus. The new system offers long-term digital archive capabilities that allow security staff to access historic footage quickly and efficiently.
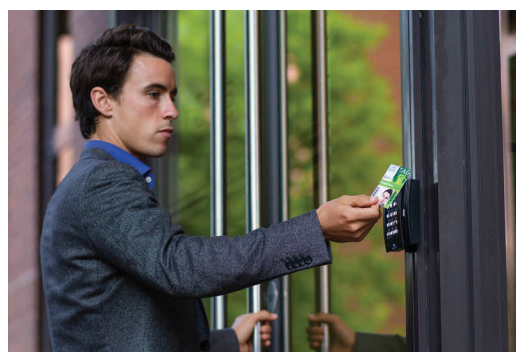
Future Plans At SVA

Idesco will continue to pave the way and break new ground with their innovative security solutions. In the fall of 2016, SVA plans on opening its newest building, a 150,000 s/f, 14-story residence hall that will accommodate more than 500 students and feature a number of specialized facilities and amenities.

Keeping students safe and secure now and in the future is the motivation behind the recent installation at SVA. Idesco, SVA and braXos proved that teamwork is a crucial element to any successful security system upgrade. When everyone involved understands the benefits of a centralized security platform, effective changes can take place that protect not only physical assets but also the biggest asset of all... our students!

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