



SUCCESS STORY
Higher Education



TUFTS UNIVERSITY | PROBLEM SOLVED

Tufts University is growing its video security deployment across three metropolitan campuses by using the NetApp® E-Series solution.

Tufts University: Setting the Curve for Campus Safety

Following the Boston terrorist attack in 2013, Tufts University has been rapidly expanding its video security deployment to cover each of its three Boston area campuses. The university replaced its previous network video recorder (NVR) solution with exacqVision video management software (VMS) that runs on centralized NetApp E-Series storage. This system enables the university to easily and affordably manage its increasing data requirements with room to grow.

ZERO
downtime

238TB
no additional headcount

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“This storage is perfect for video. It is economical, it is easy to deploy, it is easy to grow, and it works well. It simply does everything that we need it to do.”

Cope Frazier
Storage specialist, Tufts University

Tufts is a leader in American higher education. Featuring a unique combination of research and liberal arts, Tufts is known globally for its innovative programs, including the highly respected Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts. The university's 11,449 graduate and undergraduate students study a range of disciplines at 10 schools across three campuses in the Boston area: Medford-Somerville, Boston, and Grafton.

In the months after the Boston Marathon bombing and the citywide search that followed, the Tufts University Police Department began its Video Security on Campus project to centralize and expand its video security solution across its Boston campuses.

Historically, the school's video security solutions were managed by individual groups across campus. Cameras were writing to independent digital video recorders with no centralized management. To effectively grow its camera deployment, the Tufts campus police department knew that it needed to bring together the solutions from each of the school's geographically distributed campuses.

In the first phase of the project, the police department began by replacing older cameras with Axis 1080p high-definition cameras throughout the university, with each camera feeding data back to the police station for real-time monitoring. To ensure the success of the project, the university needed an enterprise-grade storage solution with the speed to provide campus police continuous, uninterrupted access to real-time video feeds and with the reliability and cost-efficiency to archive and retain video for evidence.

After choosing exacqVision VMS, Tufts campus police partnered with the university's central IT department to provide the infrastructure that was needed to support the new solution. After evaluating storage from several vendors, the central IT department selected the NetApp E-Series solution.

“We originally configured the storage to support Windows-based software with iSCSI,” explains Cope Frazier, storage specialist at Tufts University. “But when we learned that we would be deploying Exacq's video management software, we had to quickly reconfigure the storage to support Ubuntu Fibre Channel (FC) SAN. NetApp E-Series gave us that flexibility.”

EASY TO DEPLOY, EASY TO MANAGE

Although Frazier was new to E-Series, he was able to quickly deploy and provision the storage on his own.

“It could not have been easier,” says Frazier. “We had purchased another 2 days of professional services for the storage expansion, but by doing it on my own, I was able to save those days and bank them for future projects.”

The NetApp E-Series solution makes it easy for the department to manage 238TB of video data with no additional headcount. An intuitive GUI enables Frazier to see at a glance what has been provisioned and the health status of every disk in the pool.

SEAMLESS SUPPORT FOR 100% GROWTH

Over time, the scope of the project has more than doubled in size as the police department continues to add cameras across the Tufts campuses. NetApp E-Series provides a high-density, scale-out solution, allowing Tufts to add performance and capacity on demand, without disrupting ongoing operations.

“Of course, doubling our infrastructure has caused us some growth issues, but the storage has been the easiest part,” explains Frazier. “It has been really easy to stay flexible in response to the needs of campus police. They can add cameras as they need them and don’t have to be locked into a particular configuration.”

Today, Tufts can store up to 12 months of video data for each of its cameras, with the ability to add more cameras and to accommodate lengthening retention periods. “We haven’t yet had to delete video data to make room for more,” says Frazier. “It’s just not something we worry about.”

HIGH PERFORMANCE, HIGH AVAILABILITY

Dual redundant controllers, multipathing failover, and disk pools provide high-availability access to video recordings. Since deploying the solution, the university has had zero downtime for its video security solution, even with a hard drive failure.

“When the drive failed, the controller sent out an email advising us of the failure, and NetApp was able to walk me through replacing it over the phone,” says Frazier. “It was so simple. In the future, it’s something that I will be able to do on my own because the software will tell me precisely where I have a failed disk.”

The solution also provides the high performance that the university needs to supply real-time, high-definition video to campus police. Performance is optimized to support simultaneous video streams from each of its cameras.

OPTIMAL STORAGE FOR VIDEO

As the Video Security on Campus project moves into its next phase, Frazier feels confident that the infrastructure will be able to grow with it. “This storage is perfect for video. It is economical, it is easy to deploy, it is easy to grow, and it works well,” says Frazier. “It simply does everything that we need it to do.”

SOLUTION COMPONENTS

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