



With complete coverage, UK university doesn't miss a trick

Client

Leeds Metropolitan University, in the north of England, provides higher education to 28,000 students with 2,900 staff. The campus buildings are also open to the public.

Challenge

The university wants to provide better coverage in open spaces where the size of the area, a large footfall, or obstructions make monitoring difficult. It also wants to replace aging technology with a solution more fit for the future.

Solution

Five Oncam Grandeye 360-degree cameras have been installed on campus, covering two main campus entranceways, the retail area, and the ground floor of the library. In addition to 360-degree visibility they provide virtual PTZ functionality and de-warping of footage for better tracking and viewing quality.

Results

Within a few months of installation, the Oncam Grandeye cameras helped in the apprehension of one suspect and supported the police with their enquiries into other criminal activity. The solution's inconspicuous nature, together with the increased coverage and higher quality footage it delivers, have allowed Leeds Metropolitan University to be more effective in protecting students, staff and the public.

With open access to the public as well as its 31,000 students and staff, Leeds Metropolitan University's city campus is always a hive of activity. In such a busy environment, the security team has its work cut out to ensure safety and reduce theft. Cameras in key locations are vital.

Caught in the act

A man at a campus shop tries to pay for his goods with three fake £20 notes. Though in this instance the clerk doesn't accept the forged notes, the man remains confident that the attempt won't have any repercussions — while paying, he has kept his head down to avoid the fixed camera over the till.

What he hasn't noticed are the two inconspicuous Oncam Grandeye 360-degree cameras in the retail area. They've captured his every move, from the moment he entered the shop right through to the till, with his face clearly visible before he hides it from the fixed camera. The police are amazed with the quality and completeness of the footage, which they can use as part of a wider investigation into the use of fake banknotes across the campus and city centre.

In the words of Lorraine Foster, security manager at Leeds Metropolitan University: "our job just got a whole lot easier!"

Minding the shop with unbroken coverage

Five 360-degree cameras from Oncam Grandeye have been installed in the university's city campus, providing total situational awareness over two main entranceways, the retail area, and the library areas.

Traditionally these areas have been a challenge to monitor effectively, requiring a number of fixed or pan-tilt-zoom (PTZ) cameras to eliminate blind spots or track movement. With the Oncam Grandeye 360-degree camera, the university can

typically replace three or four of the university's existing cameras and obtain better coverage. Add to this their small size and unobtrusive appearance, and it becomes much easier for Lorraine and her team to do their job without making people feel that their privacy is being invaded.

"It would be costly and unsightly to provide equivalent coverage with traditional cameras," says Lorraine. "We want to keep students, staff and the public safe, not make them feel like Big Brother is watching them. With the Oncam Grandeye technology, you can't tell that they are cameras if you don't know what you're looking for. A colleague from another campus thought they were a part of the air conditioning system!"

Increased coverage, improved visibility

An added bonus is that, where the 360-degree cameras have replaced fixed or PTZ cameras, the university can assess whether the old cameras can be re-used in other areas to provide better overall coverage of the campus.

"It's streets ahead of what we could achieve before."

**Lorraine Foster
Security Manager
Leeds Metropolitan University**



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"But even if we take old cameras out of circulation when replacing them, we're still getting better value with the Oncam Grandeye cameras," says Lorraine. "They are cheaper than a PTZ and only a little more expensive than a fixed camera; they integrate well with our existing Honeywell NVR technology; they are straightforward for OpenView, our security maintenance provider, to install; and they deliver amazing coverage and quality of footage, streets ahead of what we could achieve before."

While the university's PTZ cameras can be used to track movement, the slow speed of camera movement makes it relatively hard to do so reliably, and when you use them to focus in on one part of a scene you lose overall situational awareness. Because of this, the university has essentially been using its PTZ cameras as fixed cameras. With the Oncam Grandeye solution's virtual PTZ function, the security team now has a practical way to track movement with ease, while still maintaining 360-degree coverage at all times.

The Oncam Grandeye de-warping function allows footage to be viewed without the 'fisheye' effect caused by 360-degree filming. As the incident with the fake bills in the campus shop proved, the resulting quality and completeness of the footage is a real advantage for the authorities, allowing for faster and more accurate identification of suspects. In another incident within the first six months of the cameras' deployment, one of the entranceway cameras supported

the tracking, catching and identifying of a suspect linked to a string of burglaries on the campus.

A clear vision for the future

The Oncam Grandeye solution has come as the university begins a complete review of its security control room and network, with a view to considerably revamping it. The university not only wants to take advantage of new technologies and IP networking, but is keen to get ahead of the game in conforming to new Home Office regulations for the use of surveillance cameras.

"Our existing network of close to 400 cameras, almost all of them analogue, has served us well, but as the university has grown and become busier, the system has struggled to keep pace," explains Lorraine.

In the Oncam Grandeye cameras, Lorraine has found a technology that she believes can form the basis of the future system. There are already plans to install more of them in the rest of the library as part of its refurbishment, and Lorraine is hopeful that she can start using them on the university's other campuses as well.

"The Oncam Grandeye cameras have clearly proven their value," she says. "Their quality and coverage allow us to do more to prevent theft and protect people. A security system designed to use these cameras to their full potential will be a real benefit to our university for years to come."



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