

Digital CCTV facilitates effective school management

One of the UK's largest schools and adult education centres has seen significant reductions in vandalism and improvements in security management since the introduction of Digital CCTV last April.



Built in 1960 Kenton School in Newcastle has grown into a sprawling campus with 2,000 pupils and 3,500 adults regularly on site. Drawing pupils from 19 of the city's 22 wards, the school's determination to achieve the best in co-educational and comprehensive education generates strong loyalty amongst pupils, parents and staff.

The sheer size and openness of the school's campus led to the installation of a basic analogue CCTV system some years ago. But, as Derek Lowes, the school's Site Manager explains, it was only with the decision to upgrade the system in April 2004 that the full potential benefit of CCTV was realised: "CCTV is everywhere today but our experience proves that you need the right combination of equipment and installer if you are to make the most of your investment."



After seeking advice from Newcastle City Council, Neighbourhood Services, Security Section, Derek Lowes decided in conjunction with the security section to put the work out to tender. The security section designed and project managed the works, which was to be carried out for the transition from Analogue to Digital.

Tates Security Services Ltd, based in Durham was awarded the contract to manage the transition from Analogue to Digital. A local firm with strong digital credentials and a very hands-on approach to technical support and backup, Tates Security formed a close partnership with Kenton School. "Kenton School is fortunate to have in Derek Lowes a manager with a very clear idea of his requirements, which parts of the school are vulnerable and so on", says Jeff Tate, founder of Tates Security. "This made our task considerably easier; all we needed to do was to listen carefully to his requirements and specify the correct equipment to achieve his objectives. In this we were aided by

Norbain whose technical support is terrific and, of course, their logistics ensured that all the products were delivered on site just when needed.”



The move from analogue to digital provided the opportunity to replace some existing cameras and adjust the positioning of others for optimum performance. Rather than remove redundant cameras these were left in place to act as dummies.

The final mix of equipment includes 28 internal and external cameras. The external cameras include ten vandal resistant cameras from Vista, five Spectra 3 mobile domes from Pelco and a variety of pre-existing static cameras and mobile domes. The external cameras cover all the primary areas of concern while the four internal cameras are focused on the entrances to the school’s toilets.

“The primary purpose of the CCTV system is to monitor externally at night-time. We were getting 4-5 call outs each night but these have reduced significantly with the improvements we’ve made to the overall security of the site. The move to digital has also eased considerably the time involved in managing the recording process. The time consumed by tape management has been freed up for other activities.”

The existing four VCR recorders and multiplexers were replaced with two Dedicated Micros Digital Sprite DS2 digital video recorders (320GB) with images stored for a maximum of five days at a frame rate close to real time. Two CD writers provide the means to download incidents as required onto a portable media. Monitoring is provided by Vista monitors within the Site Manager’s office and within the security cabin at the main gate. Further flexibility is provided by DM’s Network Viewer software that enables staff to view images on their desktop PCs.

Derek Lowes is delighted with the renewed system:

“The only time I have to do anything is if we have an incident and this is increasingly rare. The relationship we have with Tates Security is excellent and I’m receiving better advice than every before. Above all else, the security of the school campus is much improved and that is to the benefit of everyone, kids, staff and parents.”

