College Bookseller Opts for Enterprise-Wide Solution

BARNES & NOBLE COLLEGE BOOKSELLERS SERVES FOUR MILLION U.S. STUDENTS AT CLOSE TO 700 CAMPUSES NATIONWIDE

Steve Welk's job as Director of Loss Prevention at Barnes & Noble College Booksellers got a lot easier when the company began rolling out March Networks video surveillance systems to its stores at colleges and universities in 2008.

THE leading campus bookstore operator in the U.S., the company manages almost 700 stores across the country, serving four million students and 400,000 faculty at prestigious universities such as Harvard, Yale, Boston University, Cal State and Texas A&M.

When Barnes & Noble began exploring a replacement for its collection of tape-based systems and digital video recording systems, the company turned to security systems integrator NAVCO to recommend a single enterprise-wide networked solution.

"We relied on NAVCO's expertise and knowledge," said Welk. "They got to know our business and recommended a March Networks® solution. We've been thrilled with the results ever since."

The video recording systems are cutting down on internal theft, reducing shrinkage attributable to shoplifting and arming loss prevention staff with evidence regarding fraudulent slip-and-fall claims.

College booksellers are particularly vulnerable to textbook theft, said Welk. "Textbooks are the biggest part of our business and the biggest part of our shrink problem because they can be turned into cash on the street."

March Networks systems are much easier to administer than the company's first generation DVRs, he said. "It's significantly easier to make changes and upload software updates to stores across the country. We push them out from here (the company's head office in Basking Ridge, New Jersey). Previously, the store managers had to get involved."

BARNES & NOBLE COLLEGE BOOKSELLERS

Based in Basking Ridge, New Jersey, Barnes & Noble College Booksellers (bncollege.com)is a privately held sister-company to Barnes & Noble, Inc., the nation's largest bookseller. Currently, it operates almost 700 campus bookstores across America.

The expandable onboard storage capacity of the VideoSphere™ 4000 Series NVRs and the ease of accommodating IP cameras also contributed to the decision to select a March Networks solution. Using all four hard drive slots and 750 GB drives, Barnes & Noble College Booksellers is able to store 3 TB of video per NVR.

Despite their higher cost, the bookseller is actually saving money using megapixel IP cameras because one IP camera is able to cover more area than a single analog camera. "We can zoom in on a particular area with great clarity, so we were actually able to save money on cameras by using fewer of them."

Cameras are installed to provide coverage of aisles, cash offices, customer entrances and shipping doors.

The installations range from one to four NVRs, depending on the size of the store, the largest of which is 70,000 square feet (6,503 sq m).

Store managers and loss prevention managers in the field have access to live and archived video and are able to use March Networks Investigator software to retrieve, view and copy video evidence. Managers are able to view live video from their office, but primarily use the system to investigate incidents after the fact, said Welk.

Welk, who is based at the company's home office in New Jersey, accesses the system to review any health alerts generated by March Networks Enterprise Service Manager software and view live video from the stores. "If I see something I don't like – for example, a shipping and receiving door that's open – I'll call the store and point it out. They're just amazed. 'How do you know?' they'll say. 'You're not here.'"

Standardizing on one video surveillance system, said Welk, will simplify administration, maintenance and training.

The system has performed flawlessly and store managers have found it easy to use.

"We had some March Networks staff join us for a training session in Boston and the feedback we got was just phenomenal. Everybody commented on how easy it is to operate."

NAVCO

NAVCO (www.navco.com) is the largest privately held national system integrator in North America. NAVCO provides electronic security and networking communications solutions for a wide range of industries throughout the U.S. The company prides itself on bringing the best product, software, application knowledge, service and support together to create solutions engineered for a fast-moving converging world.