

# SUNY - BUFFALO



## 10 Years Going and SUNY-Buffalo Still Expanding Campus-wide Security with Milestone Software

### The Challenge

After successfully implementing Milestone IP video as a security solution in the Campus Dining and Food Shop, medical school and athletics departments, the State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo (UB) and systems integrator Digital Surveillance Solutions (DSS) have set out to create a widespread, standardized platform across all locations with a centralized command, managed by the University's Central Computing department.

### The Solution

IP network cameras were first installed in 2004 at UB. Today, Milestone XProtect Corporate video management software (VMS) connects nearly 800 devices across the University at Buffalo campuses, and the system continues to grow. The surveillance hardware is a best-in-class mix of various Axis static and PTZ cameras.

The university has deployed Blue Light emergency phones around campus, which are integrated with Milestone's open platform architecture. When someone picks up a Blue Light phone to make a call, that data goes through the

**Organization**  
SUNY-Buffalo

**Location**  
United States

**Industry Segment**  
Education

**System Integrator(s)**  
Digital Surveillance Solutions

**Milestone Partner(s)**  
Axis

**Solution**  
XProtect Corporate

**Number of cameras**  
approx. 800

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Milestone rules engine which is set up to move the nearest Axis PTZ camera to view the phone station, provide real-time situational awareness and record the video. As a call comes into police dispatch, Milestone “pops” the image of the phone calling in on a large monitor and the operator has instant awareness of alerting location.

“About a year ago, DSS took over the maintenance contract for our Blue Light phones. Since then, they have repaired issues that the previous vendor had been unable to resolve for years,” said Joshua B. Sticht, Deputy Chief of Police, Operations, University at Buffalo. “DSS stepped in and got the system operating as expected. Also, a contractor recently damaged the protective dome of an exterior camera. When we contacted DSS the next morning to place a work order, they already knew of the problem and had arranged for replacement parts. They have been extremely proactive.”

In recent years as new projects and departments come on board, like the School of Engineering and the Educational Opportunity Center, the university continues to develop best practices. Slowly, they are coalescing around a centralized platform that’s managed by Central Computing (CIT) and utilized by UB campus police. Campus police have access to camera views across the campus, but they share the management responsibilities with Central Computing.

“Central Computing does a great job of managing the system and providing high quality process and procedure for access to the system, making sure everything is secure, backed up and properly maintained,” said Michael Blumenson, President, Digital Surveillance Solutions.

There is also a support contract component with the system that DSS has been awarded, to maintain the Milestone XProtect Corporate software, Axis cameras and emergency telephones that are deployed campus-wide.

“We’re trying to move the whole university toward an efficient, full centralization of all cameras and surveillance recording systems, but it’s a heavy lift requiring a great deal of coordination with decentralized decision-making on a very big university platform,” said Blumenson.

## Advantages

In choosing Milestone, UB has gained flexibility and scalability, efficient centralized administration, wide geographic distribution, Power-over-Ethernet hardware, cost efficiencies of using the standard IT resources – both the equipment and network infrastructure, as well as the IT Department’s expertise and maintenance routines for keeping the system up and running, upgrading and expanding as needed.



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Certain departments have taken advantage of the new security system in place—especially those which deal with expensive and dangerous materials. For example, the Chemistry Department has material handling issues. They need to make sure that only authorized people are using the equipment and materials, which must be locked up securely. There are instances where they need to monitor experiments, research procedures, and the proper disposal of waste, etc. The medical school has similar challenges, with its biological agent research lab that must follow not only the school's safety rules, but also federal requirements for security.

Central Computing stores video data for 30 days' availability online, which is then sent to tape as a backup archive. Some departments hold on to video for two to three weeks, unless special instances require more retention. Campus police have live monitors in dispatch, so a dispatcher is consistently interacting with the system and can react quickly to alert officers in case of an incident.

## Distributed Architecture

The University at Buffalo is the largest and most comprehensive campus in the 64-campus the SUNY system. The buildings crawl along what is called 'the spine' that connects them. The distributed architectural design was a conscious decentralized approach to discourage too many people congregating in any one place, in response to the riots of the late 1960's and early 70's when ground was broken on this site.

Enterprise Infrastructure Services (EIS) is the department within IT that houses the servers and controls the network security campus-wide. There are 30,000 students across 3 campuses: north, south and downtown. Back in the 1970s, all IT services were centralized, but then after the expansion of computing and networking, the outlying departments weren't getting enough service, so they created 5 major IT nodes across different areas of the university, including the medical school, engineering and life sciences. Each has its own IT staff in addition to Central Computing.

## Lighting up safety issues

Although the university was using older analog technology, around 2001 Blumenson saw an opportunity. He was working in IT on different client server projects and his boss approached him with a problem.

"It looked like someone was misusing materials and computers in the research laboratories at the medical school, and he asked if anyone wanted to start working on setting up some cameras," said Blumenson. "I thought it sounded interesting so I raised my hand and took it on."

What began as small experiments in different spaces quickly became real



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installations in computing labs, anatomy labs, storage areas, data centers and office spaces. It started morphing and just kept growing. Any time there was an issue relating to theft, vandalism or misuse, Blumenson would figure out a way to put a video camera there.

Through experimentation, they started out with little USB web cameras, which would run into inexpensive recording software on PCs.

"We'd do crazy things like cobble together USB cords and throw these things over a wall, letting them hang there to cover a hallway or adjacent office, but it worked," said Blumenson. "We were capturing footage of people stealing things, and overall started to control the environment, but it was hard to manage."

Blumenson began looking at more sophisticated systems like Milestone IP video software so he could better manage things, automate recording and archiving, and make it easier for people to have credentialed access to the video. More requests started coming in from different administrators, so accessibility grew in importance.

"It wasn't a recognition that IP video was the up-and-coming way to go, it was sort of happenstance," said Blumenson. "I was working in IT and looking for devices that would work on the network, because we had a lot of infrastructure for the network. Milestone turned out to be the perfect solution."

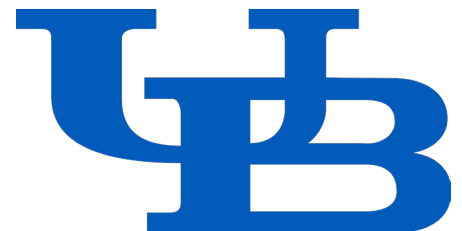
In 2007 the New York State Power Authority began offering grants to public institutions that would replace or upgrade lighting. A lot of bigger college campuses in New York were able to add other elements into those lighting projects, relating to security.

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## Open platform IP video enables continued growth

Opportunities for expansion continue, as UB is growing in the downtown corridor. In the next year, the medical school is putting up a beautiful new building with 200-300 cameras, all connected via Milestone.

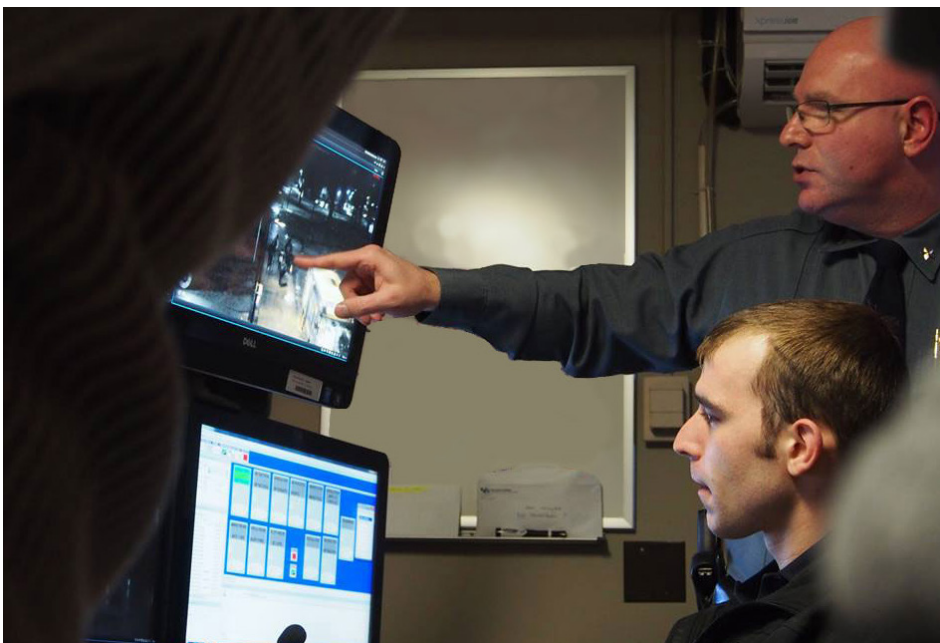
More new buildings are under construction, so new projects abound such as perimeter monitoring, parking lots and other areas needing security.

As more people in the university saw what DSS could accomplish with their early systems, it wasn't long before they wanted camera systems of their own. More departments want the security coverage of assets that are increasingly more valuable and therefore riskier to lose or have damaged. Milestone XProtect Corporate provides the flexible platform to scale out the system over time and



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Milestone Systems is a global industry leader in open platform IP video management software, founded in 1998 and now operating as a stand-alone company in the Canon Group. Milestone technology is easy to manage, reliable and proven in thousands of customer installations, providing flexible choices in network hardware and integrations with other systems. Sold through partners in more than 100 countries, Milestone solutions help organizations to manage risks, protect people and assets, optimize processes and reduce costs.

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