

California Christian School Unites Students with Digital Media

Oaks Christian School implements the Cisco Digital Media Suite, a comprehensive offering of social video, digital signage and IPTV systems to keep students engaged and informed.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<p>OAKS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-12 Education • Westlake Village, California • 1200 students; approximately 90 teachers
<p>CHALLENGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showcase grand opening of new middle school facility with digital signage • Unify two campuses with robust, easy-to-use digital television model • Maintain and manage digital television with limited resources
<p>SOLUTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Cisco Digital Signs solution running across both campuses • Use Cisco Cast to broadcast four channels on both digital media panels and desktop video • Deploy 20 Cisco LCD displays throughout campus
<p>RESULTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased student school loyalty by promoting achievements throughout school • Ability to deploy videos of school news and case studies in 21st century media environment

Challenge

Oaks Christian School (OCS), based in Westlake Village, California, first opened its doors in the fall of 2000 for students in grades 6-12 at one campus. In August 2009, OCS opened a new middle school on an adjacent second campus. Currently the school has 1200 students and approximately 90 teachers.

OCS had an older signage system that was primarily dedicated for video distribution. It consisted mainly of two satellite receivers and video cassette recorders (VCRs) that distributed content to monitors through traditional co-axial cable wiring. When OCS decided to purchase the new middle school facility, the on-site staff knew that they wanted to move to a newer technology that could bridge the two buildings without expensive and dated hard cable wiring. They also wanted the new solution to be state-of-the-art and interactive, so that students and faculty alike could use it for much more than just running video.

The OCS team started looking at what digital media solutions were available to distribute media between both campuses and have the ability to expand and put it in the classrooms and put it in the hallways.

Solution

Cisco® Digital Signs a network-based digital signage system, was chosen due to the ease of administrative and video management, its versatility, and the trusted Cisco brand. Additionally, OCS was an early adopter of Cisco IP telephony, and was one of the first adopters in 2000 when Cisco started releasing the early versions of Cisco CallManager. The school readily saw that this digital signage solution could take its capabilities for communication and information dissemination to the next level.

With the help of Cisco partner CPI Solutions, Inc. of Camarillo, California, Oaks Christian School decided on the full Cisco Digital Media Suite, including Cisco Cast for video multicasting, Cisco Digital Signage, and Cisco Show and Share for web-based video administration. Deployed across both campuses but managed from a central location, the solution exceeded OCS's expectations.

“We never really knew what to expect, but we can now pull content off different websites,” says Darrell Parker, director of information systems for Oaks Christian School. “One of the missions of the school was to help students learn more about what was going on in the world, not just in Westlake Village or in the United States, but around the world. Today we are able to pull stories from different world news websites, such as Fox and CNN, and run them across a digital media network.”

OCS now has the ability to pull in information from its own website, whether it is various school activity calendars or sporting events, and display it across the network without a great deal of double entry from the OCS team. The team already maintained content for the school website. Therefore it was highly beneficial for administrators to be able to pull it in one system, but see it displayed across multiple venues via the Cisco Digital Signs solution.

The first practical application of the solution’s versatility came during the grand opening ribbon-cutting of the new middle school. The actual viewing area had limited attendee space, so OCS officials decided to organize four large meeting areas for the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, and also in the café. In each area there were Cisco LCDs and projectors connected to the digital signage network. Organizers shunted the live camera feed from the ribbon-cutting right into the Cisco system. The results were overwhelmingly successful. For example, an eighth-grade parent was able to watch the whole ribbon-cutting ceremony live from the eighth-grade room. With this configuration, both the middle school and the high school could see the event happen live and share in the entire experience.

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Results

The functionality of the Cisco Digital Media Suite has enabled Oaks Christian School to make information interesting and engaging for students with a combination of outside news and data as well as school news.

“We haven’t completely explored all of the solution’s capabilities yet,” says James Oberhaus, network administrator for Oaks Christian School. “Right now we use it in different places like the weight room and locker rooms, where students watch ESPN on the Cisco Cast-enabled televisions.” The school has also managed to blend the Cisco Cast network with the Cisco Digital Signs solution. Students can now watch outside programs in a smaller window on the LCD screen school news displays simultaneously.

The system even allows the students to showcase Oaks News Broadcasts. With the school’s high-definition, green-screen video studio, both the middle school and the high school field their own interviews and video documentaries. Once placed on the digital screens, the broadcasts are a fun and interactive way for the students to communicate beyond just a static screen. “It’s their own fellow students up there telling them what is going on,” says Parker. “They congregate around

these signs not only to watch school updates, but they also have other signage around it so they can read news from administrators and instructors at the same time.”

OCS is beginning to build a digital video library of student news broadcasts, guest speakers, and assemblies. Using Cisco Show and Share, teachers can view archived video on their computers with a just a couple of clicks. And because all computers are connected either to a TV or projector within the classroom, this solution can be used as a teaching tool. For example, the World War II

PRODUCT LIST

Cisco Digital Media Suite including:

- Cisco Cast
- Cisco Digital Signs
- Cisco Show and Share

history class has already seen benefits from the solution. Teachers are preserving the in-class interviews with local area veterans for future classes as the number of veterans from the war are dwindling.

By using this latest social video system, students and teachers are able to engage, collaborate, and learn in ways unimagined by previous generations while fostering creativity and video design skills.

Next Steps

OCS hopes the Cisco Digital Signs solution will complement its InformaCast IP speaker solution to work more effectively in emergency situations. InformaCast, a Singlewire solution, integrates easily with Cisco IP phones. It provides the ability for schools to broadcast audible messages throughout hallways, as well as offices and classrooms, much like a traditional PA system would. With the addition of Cisco Digital Signs, OCS can provide visual instructions for exiting or remaining inside the facility during a lock-down scenario in a more efficient manner.

For More Information

To find out more about the Cisco Cast, go to:

http://www.cisco.com/web/solutions/dms/cisco_cast.html

To find out more about Cisco Digital Signs, go to:

http://www.cisco.com/web/solutions/dms/digital_signage.html

To find out more about Cisco Show and Share, go to:

http://www.cisco.com/web/solutions/dms/desktop_video.html



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