

# College Distributes Eye-Catching Announcements and Emergency Alerts

College of Southern Nevada uses the Digital Media System to distribute multimedia content to digital signs in high-traffic areas.

## Executive Summary

College of Southern Nevada  
Higher Education  
Las Vegas, Nevada  
40,000 students; 2800 faculty and staff

## Challenge:

- Notify students, faculty, and staff of upcoming events
- Improve emergency response
- Reduce campus clutter

## Solution:

- Replaced posters with networked digital signs that are centrally controlled

## Results:

- Enhanced campus communications
- Reduced costs associated with poster creation and cleanup
- Minimized IT workload

“ We wanted to capture the attention of a new generation of students and faculty who are accustomed to interactive, multimedia communications.”

### Josh Feudi

*Interim Chief Information Officer*  
College of Southern Nevada

## Challenge

The largest institute of higher education in Nevada and one of the four largest community colleges in the United States, the College of Southern Nevada (CSN) registers nearly 40,000 students each semester. The college operates on three campuses in Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, and Cheyenne, as well as 12 remote academic centers in four counties.

The college's five-year plan includes broadening and improving communications with students, faculty, staff, and visitors. Timely communications over such a wide area—40,000 square miles and more than one million square feet of facility space—creates challenges. The college needed an effective way to disseminate emergency information, as well as to publicize recruiting events, theater performances, advertisements for campus services, and other events and services. “Email is effective only when people happen to be in front of their computer screen or using a smartphone,” says Josh Feudi, interim chief information officer for CSN. “And posters are easily overlooked, quickly become outdated, and contribute to campus clutter.”

Inspired by the TV kiosks used in airports, CSN became interested in using network-connected digital signs to communicate across its multiple sites. “We wanted to capture the attention of a new generation of students and faculty who are accustomed to interactive, multimedia communications,” Feudi says.

## Solution

CSN looked for a digital media solution that would support a wide variety of eye-catching content, including video, static displays, and scrolling information. Ease of use was paramount, both for people who submitted digital content and the IT staff who scheduled distribution. The IT group wanted a centralized system that would let them add content once and then easily control where and when it was distributed.

CSN found its solution with the Cisco® Digital Media System, a comprehensive suite of digital signage, desktop video, and Cisco Enterprise TV applications. "The decision was easy because we already have a Cisco network and the skills to manage it," says Feudi. "Having an end-to-end solution from a single vendor really simplifies management."

The CSN IT group introduced the Cisco Digital Media System in spring 2007, replacing the digital signage installation from another vendor that had never operated properly. Today, multimedia content is published on more than 60 flat-panel screens and distributed to all three campuses and the college's remote academic centers. The digital signs are connected in areas where students or faculty tend to congregate, such as lab entrances, coffee shops, tutoring areas, elevator waiting areas, campus entrances, and common areas for faculty.

To submit content to be displayed on the signs, faculty, staff, and students go to a website and attach video, images, and text. CSN's multimedia developer manages content scheduling and distribution through the Cisco Digital Media Manager, an easy-to-use, web-based content publishing tool. "I use a simple web interface to schedule when and where content is displayed," says Eric Garner, multimedia developer. "I select the dates, times, and display locations, and the content appears on the right screens at the right time." When the college recently received a visit from foreign dignitaries, Garner set up a special welcome message to appear on each campus when they arrived, as well as in the college president's office during a private meeting.

## Results

### *Richer Campus Communications*

Students, faculty, and staff can hardly miss upcoming events because the digital signs are everywhere. Recently, the college planetarium submitted a full-motion video from NASA to promote its ongoing shows. Disney has submitted video content to recruit students for summer work opportunities. The Red Cross, American Cancer Society, and other national organizations have teamed with the college to recruit volunteers and solicit support. The college's theater department advertises upcoming performances on three separate monitors placed throughout the building. Soon live video from college regents' meetings and special events will play on select screens throughout the campuses. Ongoing communications like these help students feel more engaged and make the most of college opportunities. "People appreciate knowing what's happening around campus, and we've heard nothing but positive comments about the Cisco system," says Garner.

### *Enhanced Emergency Response*

Campus safety ranks as a top priority for CSN, and the Cisco Digital Media System enables timely emergency communications. The IT group authorized three campus administrators to create and publish emergency messages. They just log in on a secure web page, type the message, and indicate whether it should be published on all screens or at select campus locations. "After a police emergency near campus, we immediately published an alert message that explained the event and the actions that we were taking," says Garner. "This helped us avoid panic. We provided updates as we received them and continued displaying the messages until the emergency was resolved."

### *Easy Management with No Additional Overhead*

The system requires very little ongoing management. "The Cisco network and Digital Media System are both reliable, which means we don't have to spend a lot of time troubleshooting," Feudi says. The IT group already had the skills to operate Cisco network equipment and needed no additional training to operate the Cisco Digital Media Manager.

*Reduced Energy and Paper Costs*

The screens used in a previous digital signage deployment could never be turned off. The new flat-panel displays used with the Cisco solution can be turned on and off automatically over the network, which is saving an estimated 30 percent annually in electricity, extending the life of the displays, and helping the college conserve energy. In addition, by reducing the need for posters to announce events, the Cisco Digital Media System has reduced the costs of paper, photocopying, and custodial services.

*Strengthened Reputation for Educational Excellence*

CSN has been approached by universities and major hotels that want to see the Cisco Digital Media System in action. "Using advanced technology contributes to our reputation as an innovative educational institution," says Feudi. "Prospective students and faculty see that we're committed to excellence, and that reflects on our educational programs as well as our use of technology."

**Next Steps**

CSN plans to install digital signage in all new campus buildings. In addition, the college will install digital signs in local high schools to display recruiting information.

"We plan to extend our use of digital signage to educate students and prospective students about the college's offerings, services, and cultural events," Feudi says. "The Cisco Digital Media System is a powerful tool for helping us communicate effectively with students who have grown up with multimedia content."

**For More Information**

To find out more about Cisco Digital Media System go to: [www.cisco.com/go/dms](http://www.cisco.com/go/dms)

**Product List**

## Routing and Switching

- Cisco Integrated Services Router
- Cisco Catalyst® 6500 Series Switches

## Video, Cable, and Content Delivery

- Cisco Digital Media System, including Digital Media Player (DMP) 4300G-DS version 2.42.1 and Digital Media Manager (DMM) version 5.41

## Security

- Cisco Adaptive Security Appliance 5540



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