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digital surveillance solutions

## **Case Study:** MHLT Elementary School—Minocqua, WI

MHLT (Minocqua-Hazelhurst-Lake Tomahawk) Elementary School, more currently known as Minocqua J1 School District, is a public K-8 school in Minocqua, WI. Supporting a growing roster of over 600 students, MHLT is situated in a rural area of Northern Wisconsin, approximately 50 miles from the Great Lakes.

MHLT has been working with eDigitalDeals since 2010 for security camera and VMS (video management system) design recommendations and equipment and software license purchases. The relationship initially began with the purchase of standard-definition analog cameras to add to their existing DVR. A couple years later, MHLT upgraded to a Hybrid analog/IP system and began to evaluate the increased details of digital HD cameras. And a couple years after that, MHLT decided to implement an enterprise-grade IP system running the world-renowned Milestone XProtect Professional VMS. Not only does the Milestone VMS support unlimited cameras at high-resolution, it has an ever-growing compatibility list with thousands of cameras offered by numerous manufacturers. Reliable and scalable, it was clearly the ideal choice for MHLT, especially since Milestone offers a 15% discount to all educational institutions.

Prior to deploying the Milestone system, Jay Christgau, the director of technology at MHLT, worked with Raymond Shadman, president of eDigitalDeals Inc., to develop the school's security camera design and specifications for network cabling and switching. Shadman recommended vandal-resistant dome IP cameras throughout the hallways, classrooms, and perimeter. Higher-megapixel dome IP cameras with built-in heaters were recommended for the parking lot to help withstand the frigid winter climate.

Upon receiving the camera equipment from eDigitalDeals, Christgau and MHLT's IT personnel installed the equipment themselves, recording IP camera footage to their own in-house servers, saving the school district thousands of dollars compared to local security integrators who had submitted bids for design, equipment, and installation. In addition to campus security, various other key school personnel have permission-based access to certain cameras, which allow the entire campus to be monitored at all times. The local police department has been granted full remote access to the system, which allows for fast response times to campus incidents.

The security camera system at MHLT soon started to be used multiple times a day. Per Christgau, "we use it to help with discipline, look at the adequacy of outdoor supervision, keep watch over our building and equipment, analyze traffic flows in and outside the building. There are many non-disciplinary uses for an effective video system." In addition, Christgau commented, "The system has helped resolve many student issues and helps in dealing with parents in denial about their student's behavior."

Year after year, MHLT finds new uses for the camera system and adds various cameras after consulting with eDigitalDeals. Christgau states, "The cameras go a long way toward reducing vandalism and theft after students become aware of their existence. Discipline has improved both with student compliance and with interactions with the parents of students being disciplined." After all, one of the purposes of deploying a security camera system is to help minimize and prevent any wrongdoing.

Christgau also adds, "The cameras give us the ability to record children boarding the buses as well as leaving in private cars. This has been invaluable when trying to track students leaving at the end of the day and encountering parents without custody rights trying to pickup a child."

In certain areas, eDigitalDeals recommended the use of fisheye cameras, which offer a 360° view when installed from ceilings, or a 180° view when mounted from a wall. The advantages of using a fisheye camera include the elimination of blind spots, a reduction in cameras/cable/software licenses/maintenance, and the de-warping of the fisheye view in the Milestone VMS. This allows a larger area to be monitored easily from one single camera. Multiple clients can digitally zoom-in on different areas without impacting the view of the other client, since there are no moving parts inside the camera.

After nearly four years of deploying the Milestone system and trying various brands of cameras, Christgau prefers to use only Dahua cameras because Dahua has "been by far the best performing in the sometimes harsh conditions of northern Wisconsin," even beating more expensive American-made Arecont Vision and Taiwanese ACTi. eDigitalDeals also prefers to use Dahua cameras, as Dahua now offers a 5-year warranty, 1-year advance replacement, and manufacturer-direct technical support from 5am to 5pm PST on weekdays. Furthermore, Dahua offers monthly promotions at substantial cost savings, which makes their offering difficult to beat. It is not uncommon to save over 20% in addition to the standard price discount when taking advantage of the monthly Dahua promos.

MHLT's camera system has become the model security camera system for neighboring schools. Lac du Flambeau Elementary School deployed a similar IP system with custom-built network video recorders built by eDigitalDeals, also running Milestone XProtect Professional. A couple years later, in 2016, Arbor-Vitae Woodruff Elementary School also deployed a custom NVR from eDigitalDeals, and numerous IP cameras throughout the interior and exterior of their campus.

eDigitalDeals believes that using low-cost, feature-rich cameras along with the Milestone XProtect VMS is the ideal solution for schools to have a budget-friendly world-class video surveillance system to help monitor students and campus activity, and to help ensure the safety and security of students and faculty.