



APPLICATION CASE HISTORY

ACCESS MANAGEMENT SPECIALISTS

George Mason University

George Mason University, located in the heart of the Northern Virginia Tech Corridor in Fairfax, Virginia, has grown exponentially since its official founding in 1972. Originally a branch campus of the University of Virginia, GMU today is home to more than 30,000 students who pursue degrees among its 80 undergraduate programs on its 670-acre residential campus.

Over the past eight years, GMU has opened nearly 30 new facilities and renovated countless others to bring its physical plant to over 170 buildings. GMU has invested several hundred million dollars in the construction of new facilities that include student residence halls, research buildings, a hotel/conference center, retail outlets and faculty/staff housing. One common thread for all GMU's facilities is the need for physical security and access control. When the university decided that it needed to update and replace much of its access control and video surveillance system, it turned to RS2 Technologies and to S3 Integration, a valued RS2 Dealer/Integrator.

Physical Security and IT - Working Together for Success

The decision to change to an RS2 system was made by a group of GMU personnel, but the primary players in the decision-making process were the "tag team" of Jim McCarthy, Director of Physical Security, and Danny Anthes, Senior Manager of Information Technology for Auxiliary Enterprises. McCarthy oversees the Security Operations Center, card access, CCTV, security officers on GMU's five campuses, and is directly involved with the design and implementation of all security operations. Prior to GMU, he was the Director of Corporate Security at Renown Health at Reno, Nevada, served as Deputy Chief of Public Safety at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, and spent many years with the Harvard University Police.

Anthes has worked in higher education for almost 15 years. He started at GMU managing IT systems in Student Housing (including card access control) and then moved to Auxiliary Enterprises to oversee technology for Housing and Residence Life, Dining Operations, Parking, Print Services, Student Centers, and the GMU Patriot Center. He is also responsible for systems management for Physical Access Control and CCTV, overseeing these systems' entire life cycles, from planning to deployment to maintenance.

Working with McCarthy and Anthes were RS2 Northeast Regional Sales Manager David Bensky and S3I Senior Account Executive Brian Piccolo, who helped McCarthy and Anthes and their staff design a system that met GMU's requirements for utilizing as much of its existing hardware as possible,



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Jim McCarthy, GMU Director of Physical Security



RS2 Technologies

integrating it with the latest locks, cameras, and other equipment, doing so in a user-friendly (but more powerful) access control system, and eliminating the training hassles and recurring software maintenance fees that had been a few of the less desirable facets of the old system. “Klunky” was how McCarthy described the previous system. “It was a huge training issue, as it would sometimes take 2 hours to train people how to use the most basic parts of the old system.” Anthes agrees, adding that “trying to maintain the functionality of the old system was a huge headache.” McCarthy interjects that “When we added that to the cost piece, such as the licensing, which was getting ridiculous, it was a no-brainer to go with RS2. We calculated our ROI on the RS2 system to be about 1-1/2 years.”

“Must Haves” - Scalability and Functionality

Speaking from “the police side,” McCarthy also liked the RS2 system’s integration with his CCTV system and the functionality and ease of use of its interactive map feature. The access control system is integrated with an exacqVision VMS (video management system), which was also handled by S3I. At the time of the system installation, GMU had a mixture of over 500 analog and IP cameras operating on 14 completely different types of legacy DVRs. Through the efforts of S3I’s Piccolo and RS2’s Bensky, all the integration objectives were achieved and GMU got what McCarthy and Anthes feel is “a scalable system that has grown –and will continue to grow– along with the university. “Our growth here at GMU will continue.” says McCarthy. “We continue to announce the construction of new buildings and we’re aggressively renovating older buildings, which includes installing access control.”

In the past few years, McCarthy has been involved with more than a dozen different construction and renovation projects, so he needed a system that would be robust enough to keep up with GMU’s growth plans and that would be scalable, open, and intuitive enough to be easily used by security professionals at the university level. (The pace of construction at GMU dictated that the university started a “Building Patriot Pride” section of its website to keep employees and students apprised of construction projects, including construction-related traffic issues. The section currently has 44 pages of postings and alerts.)

RS2 and S3I - A Winning Team

Both McCarthy and Anthes are highly complimentary of the RS2 – S3I team of Bensky and Piccolo. They both feel that, during complicated installations of the type they managed at GMU, communication between the university, the integrator, and the access control solution provider is one of the key ingredients for a successful project. S3I coordinated the integration of RS2’s Access It!® Universal access control software, a combination of hardwired and wireless IP locks (more than 4,000 combined sets) from Assa Abloy and Allegion (formerly Ingersoll Rand), and the exacqVision VMS. GMU is running the same system (RS2’s Access It!® Universal Enterprise Level solution) across five different campuses.



The GMU Research Observatory



Exterior of the Johnson Center



Inside the Johnson Center

Piccolo commented that, in addition to being able to provide a “cost-effective, open platform solution using cutting edge technology,” RS2 was “quite frankly, just a much easier and friendlier company to work with. That was important to us and it certainly was important to GMU.” Piccolo was very familiar with RS2’s extensive portfolio of educational installations, which includes college/university installations ranging from small to very large campuses at such institutions as Rockhurst University, the University of Pittsburgh, Purdue University, Loyola, the University of Texas – Brownsville, Anderson University, Indiana Wesleyan University, Valparaiso University, and many others.

When asked what two or three key things they would tell their counterparts at other universities (Security Directors and IT Directors) who are researching and comparing access controls systems (and integrators) for their institutions, McCarthy and Anthes had their own lists. On the technical and cost side, McCarthy listed TCO (total cost of operation), system adaptability and ease of use. On the “soft side”, he cited “trust, honesty, and the ability and willingness of the system manufacturer and the integrator to communicate with me.” Anthes echoed McCarthy’s adaptability and scalability criteria, and added that he placed a very high value on the knowledge of the support staff, citing RS2’s Knowledge Base feature, its “How To” documents and “quite frankly, knowing that when I call them, I’m going to get a real person on the other end of the line.”

The Bottom Line - Student Safety

The bottom line for both McCarthy and Anthes, however, was that the security system that they have installed, with the help of RS2 and S3I, should give parents a level of confidence that their sons and daughters are protected “not only in their residence halls, but everywhere on campus.” McCarthy says “GMU prides itself on providing great security for our students. The university has shown that it is willing to spend the money that is needed to provide the best security available. Don’t get me wrong – we don’t waste money. We’re cost-effective. Whenever possible, we try to do some of the installation work ourselves. But, when we spend our security budget, we want the best value for it. That’s what we got with RS2 and S3I.”

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About S3 Integration

S3 Integration (S3I) is a relationship driven organization that provides comprehensive integrated security management systems and services. S3I is an alliance of some of the industry’s most talented individuals combined with the most technologically advanced products available today.

About RS2 Technologies, LLC

RS2 Technologies, headquartered in Munster, Indiana, is a technology-driven developer of cutting edge access management hardware and software. The company’s hardware line includes a wide range of system control processors, input/output modules, multiplexers, card readers and proximity and smart cards. RS2 offers the industry’s most advanced, easy-to-use software with its **Access It!**® line of access control software. RS2 is a Microsoft Certified Partner with ISV (Independent Software Vendor) software solutions competency status.



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