

**Security Design Centre delivers**

# Intelligent security



Cameras improve safety across campus



Duncan Cressall

*How Loughborough University is benefiting from a new security system that makes students feel safe.*



Barrier control eliminates unwanted access and illegal parking

The prestigious Times Higher Education (THE) “best student experience” award was recently presented to Loughborough University for the second year running. Voted for by students, it is an award the university is proud to receive and one it intends to keep winning. Potential students are increasingly viewing their education as a purchasing decision. They see quality of education and the overall student experience as the most influential factors in their choice of university. The award undoubtedly helps Loughborough to attract more students, leading to increased income. The university cites its applied approach to student safety, security and campus management, instigated by the Vice Chancellor, as a major contributor to this positive student “experience”. Student welfare is the most important priority, both on and off campus.

Security Design Centre (SDC), a pioneering security system integrator based in Halesowen, worked closely with Loughborough University to establish its security needs and campus management priorities. SDC designed and installed an integrated system to include CCTV, intruder alarm and access

control, in order to improve campus safety, enhance campus management and link with many other student services, including commercial ones.

*This [CCTV] system supports our holistic approach to student welfare and means we are able to react immediately and appropriately to campus events.*

**John Thomas**

It is only when visiting Loughborough University that the sheer scale of the campus security and management task is realised. The campus covers 500 acres, is 2 km long and has 12,000 full time and 3,000 part time students - 50% living on-site with the majority of the rest in the town.

82 CCTV cameras (increasing to 167 by 2009) are used on campus - a relatively small number for such a large site! John Thomas, an ex-policeman and part of the security team responsible for the campus explains, “We use CCTV cameras externally in key positions around the campus. We also have cameras in public areas inside buildings,

such as foyers, cafes and shops. They are also positioned in the IT suites, not only to prevent the theft of computers, but to record who is using the computers and when. This enables us to enforce our strict internet use and download policies. The CCTV system is not our primary line of security, as we also use 30 mobile patrol officers on campus. The cameras, along with radio contact, help us to direct patrol officers to where they are most needed. This system supports our holistic approach to student welfare and means we are able to react immediately and appropriately to campus events. Most importantly, patrol officers are accessible to students and have become a meaningful part of the campus community”.

Loughborough University halls of residence, on-site shops, cafes, bars, conferencing facilities and library are all managed by **imago services**, an independent company that operates as the university’s landlord. Working alongside the security staff, **imago** is responsible for 6000 student rooms (invariably filled with high value TVs, computers, DVDs and iPods) with another 1300 rooms under construction for

2009. Imago is also responsible for the provision of over 50,000 meals a week. Operations Director for *imago*, Duncan Cressall, explained, "SDC has installed an access control system to manage student entry to individual rooms and social areas. Operated by proximity cards, the system combines door entry with a campus payment system. It required seamless integration between the access system and specialist "Mifare" technology, the commercial system used on site to buy meals, take out library books and use launderettes. The net result is that cash on campus is minimised, which directly reduces theft. The proximity card system is soon to be upgraded to include the university ID card.

*Security Design Centre cameras in campus cafes and bars can be viewed on-line, which students use to help decide when and where to eat, avoiding busy times or queues.*

more visitors to campus generally, (*imago* offers a year round conferencing facility for up to 3000 delegates), have seen the number of vehicles entering the university dramatically increase. A barrier control system is now in place at all the entrances to the university to regulate and monitor access. The patrol staff will check vehicles on campus and a wheel clamping system operates. Unwanted access and illegal or anti-social parking are now uncommon.

Loughborough University has a visionary approach to its security and site management. It utilises many technological solutions to achieve its objectives, supported by the use of patrol officers for overall effectiveness. Members of the security team are there to provide an immediate physical response whilst Security Design Centre's provision of CCTV, intruder and access control has significantly contributed to keeping students, staff and visitors safe. Together they have played an important role in making Loughborough University the "best student experience" in the country. ●



Below: Tony Grant & John Thomas in the security control room

*imago* provides a website containing information to help students manage day to day living such as finances, accommodation, free time and recycling. SDC cameras in campus cafes and bars can be viewed on-line, which students use to help decide when and where to eat, avoiding busy times or queues. The 10,000 hits *imago* receives each day for this service is testament to how useful the network cameras have become.

The proximity card system also helps with student welfare. Concerned parents or lecturers are encouraged to contact the security service if they suspect abnormal or unusual behaviour by a student. The integrated system can establish whether a student has been taking meals and where they have been on campus. Distressed behaviour is identified and care and support quickly offered to those in need.

Residential areas have a designated warden, both in town and on campus. The wardens will alert patrol officers to any incidents, ensure that student behaviour is acceptable and check that any complaints are genuine. Patrol officers will also liaise with student hall representatives and social secretaries by email and phone. They make it their duty to know of planned group activities and social events, especially if they might impact on the town. They will offer safety advice and can be extra vigilant when and where necessary.

Students have often been blamed for



any anti-social behaviour in Loughborough town, whether or not they were responsible. Great care is taken by the university to ensure the relationship with the town and university is agreeable and to this end patrols will also cover streets in the town with high student populations.

Any complaints from town residents about anti-social behaviour are immediately directed to the security team and followed up using CCTV evidence, wardens and patrol officers. Complainants are informed if students were responsible (they often are not) and of any resulting action taken. The university tries to handle low level discipline issues itself and in severe cases has the right to expel a student. By contrast, the town council can only issue an ASBO or a fine, which are often less effective in curbing anti-social behaviour. In the case of a serious incident, a request by the university for a police response receives immediate action on the basis that the security team has already established the incident's authenticity.

Higher car ownership by students and



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