

CASE STUDY

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON AT SUGAR LAND

Overview

- The university needed to connect classes across all campuses
- The solutions needed to fit into their budget and easy to use
- They were able to scale the solution across multiple campuses and clinics



The University of Houston at Sugar Land (UHSL) was using Instructional Television, or ITV, as the primary video model to deliver classes remotely. They also used legacy video conferencing equipment and were experienced many challenges with it. Not only was it very expensive, but it was also difficult to operate and required a staff member trained specifically in telecommunications to initiate and receive calls and support the technology.

With advancements in the campus-wide networks and video conferencing technology, John McKee, the Technical Services Manager, and his team were challenged to plan, organize and implement a new video resource project for UHSL.

During an 18-month feasibility study that included comprehensive surveys and a focus group comprised of UHSL faculty and staff, John and his team uncovered the primary needs for their video delivery system. They needed to find a solution that would provide a high-quality audio-video infrastructure that was cost-effective and could integrate with the latest technology. It needed to be easy for both students and faculty to use, but flexible enough to provide multiple connection methods to standardized across the campus and connecting sites.

Action

Armed with their requirements, John's team sought out a solution that would meet their needs. They met with several strategic partners and ultimately decided that IDVideo Phone, a cloud-based video conferencing service built on the Vidyo infrastructure, would best meet their needs.

UHSL chose the IDVideoPhone service, specifically the IDVP-Plus account, which can provide HD audio-video as well as easy to use content sharing. The previous hard codec model utilized a proprietary system and the challenges of supporting that model were extremely costly and had constant connectivity and quality problems. The H.264 SVC in the Vidyo product was far superior to the H.264 AVC in their old unit.

Results

In addition to UHSL, this model was deployed at their other two campuses in Katy, Texas, and Victoria, Texas. There were a total of 13 endpoint classrooms and five endpoint conference rooms that accessed the IDVP-Plus service. Over 400 students attended classes by academic videoconferencing. In addition, the UH School of Nursing's Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) program piloted the IDVP-Plus service over iPads at clinical locations across Fort Bend County.

"End users have easily adopted to the Vidyo product using the IDVP-Plus service. We are constantly complimented on the quality, flexibility, and ease of connectivity of IDVP-Plus," John explained.

The cost of implementing and delivering this model was about a third of the cost of other systems. Incidents with delivery have declined by over 70% over the first two years of implementations and the negative feedback on academic videoconference classes was tremendously reduced.

"I don't worry anymore about connectivity issues. I don't care what kind of equipment they have; Whether it's legacy equipment, desktop or laptop computer, an iPad, or even just a cellphone, I can connect people together. That's the beauty of what IDS service offers us."

In the future, John plans to add recording capabilities and on-demand options to their program. "We continue to look for ways that content collaboration can be enhanced. Our ultimate goal is to be able to provide service regardless of the academic program's needs. We do not want to be wed to a propriety format that cannot adapt to whatever delivery method a program or faculty member wants to use."

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JOHN MCKEE

TECHNICAL SERVICE MANAGER



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