

SUCCESS STORY

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

Business Challenge:

Pepperdine University School of Law (Malibu, Calif.) first experimented with wireless network connectivity in 2001 to allow students to access the Internet and the school network remotely from their laptops while working in the law school.

“We installed nine wireless antennas on our first floor and began supporting about 200 students,” said David Dickens, network services manager, Pepperdine University School of Law School. “At that time, wireless infrastructure was pretty new to the educational industry. We weren’t exactly certain how well it would be received and if it would prove mission critical to the students.”

Once the system was up and running, students began connecting to the system via their laptops as they walked around the building. “Students tried to use it vigorously at first because it was a source of convenience and it was something new,” Dickens added. “Within a very short period of time many of the students began to depend on it. Wireless connectivity became the norm for them. They spend three years of their life here. Our product is more than just their education; it’s their life.”

As system use grew around the law school, the existing wireless infrastructure had challenges supporting all of the users. The school wanted to improve the system but lacked the in-house expertise. “We wanted to bring in wireless experts from the outside – someone who understood the technology, physical mechanics, and was well known with experience.”

Solution:

WirelessGuys came to us as a reference from another law school. They brought in real-world test equipment and did an extensive analysis of our radio spectrum, density problems and student usage. Then they came back to us with a strong proposal that technically diagnosed our issues and provided a viable solution. With their help, it became clear that we needed to take our wireless program in a completely new direction. From the start, it was obvious that WirelessGuys knew what they were doing. They had such precision in their diagnoses and planning.”

With the WirelessGuys proposal, Dickens and his team were able to secure the necessary support and funding to move forward with the project. The new system consisted of 40 access points and omni antennas strategically positioned around the law school facility.

Business Challenge:

- Enabling wireless network connectivity for law school students in and around the law school building
- Existing technology needed upgrading
- IT staff was spending hours a day troubleshooting existing system
- Had several high-density areas such as large amphitheater holding 600 students

Solution:

40 Cisco Access Points and 40 Cisco AIR-ANT omni antennas

Results:

- “Bulletproof system,” said Dickens. “We now have a quality of service that is ubiquitous.”
- Reduced IT staff maintenance time by several hours each day
- Wireless support for over 600 students

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"WirelessGuys was professional, efficient and met our production goals on time," he added. "They effectively worked in our high impact environment without being disruptive. This was very important to us as the students needed to keep studying and using the law school during this whole process. There was no opportunity to simply shut down the law school while the wireless project was underway."

Success:

"Truth be told, the new wireless system has been all but bulletproof. Based on our challenges and the WirelessGuys solution, what we ended up with has been an amazing change! Students don't even recognize just how much they've benefited from the work of WirelessGuys because no one notices the changes to the wireless network unless the system goes down. And it just hasn't."

He continued, "It has actually changed my job! I spend much less time – hours and hours – working on wireless now. I am now able to work on other areas/projects that I just couldn't get to before."

"We went from around nine to about 25 bi-directional antennas, high power units and power Ethernet for extended reach. The magic wasn't just in the new technology. It was that WirelessGuys knew how to tune the system and make the necessary planning decisions. That is what we value them so highly for. The expertise they brought to the table was just incredible!"

"Despite the 4-foot thick steel and concrete walls we have here, we now have a quality of service that is ubiquitous. We don't have a problem with our wireless network anymore."