



JACKSONVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY

SYMMETRY & BIOMETRIC READERS ARE SECRET TO SECURITY SUCCESS

Jacksonville State University (JSU) prides itself on providing a residence life experience that fosters community and growth for each student. They offer several different options for their 1,600 students to make JSU their home away from home and provide an environment where students can live and learn.

To achieve this positive environment, the JSU Residence Life Department insisted their residence halls impart a safe and secure atmosphere for students. A 25 person task force was created to review the current security procedures and protocols in place, identify weaknesses and make recommendations on where to improve. Recommendations were made and as a result, JSU chose installing integrator Gorrie-Regan who teamed up with G4S Technology to install a Symmetry Enterprise Security Management System (SMS) integrated with hand geometry biometric readers at the perimeter doors in its ten residence halls. Students are now required to key in their ID number and place their hand on the biometric reader to gain access into their residence hall.

"During our research phase, we found that hand geometry readers provide an enhanced level of security," said JSU, Director of Housing & Residence Life, Kevin Hoult. "Students must enter their student identification number into the keypad and then scan their hand to gain access to their hall. Anyone can get another student's ID card and use it. Students know their own ID number and of course, always have their hand with them. The 1:1 verification makes the process faster in processing time and also more reliable and more secure by reducing false positives and false negatives."

Hoult felt protecting the perimeter doors was a cost efficient option, as opposed to adding readers to every individual

student's room door. It was not financially feasible to implement access control on each and every room door.

JSU's philosophy is that students should feel a sense of security where they live. The Symmetry SMS and physical access control system are promoted throughout the recruitment process and has become an attractive security feature of the campus.

"We want our students to feel like this is their home away from home," said Hoult. "The Symmetry system and access control system are received very positively to make sure our students are safe."

Symmetry integrates with JSU's Banner enrollment software. A student's name and information are automatically exported from the Banner system into the Symmetry SMS. Once in the Symmetry Software, the hand geometry enrollment is done directly in the software via a software integration that has been developed by G4S Technology and used at many sites that utilize hand geometry readers. It allows for fast and easy enrollment. The Symmetry SMS instantly and automatically sends the hand geometry digital representation of the data to the intelligent, distributed panels in the field that are specially designed to store these hand geometry templates.

Each panel can store up to 50,000 hand geometry templates. This additionally enhances the speed of the transaction as no server communication is needed for access and additionally the students do not need to present a card with the template stored on it. Students receive instructions on how to use the Symmetry system and follow security rules.



“Symmetry is a state-of-the-art security system, and we like the enhanced security it provides over a traditional card swipe system.”

“Symmetry operates over the network and can push out templates from a central location to the residence hall door and intelligent network control panels,” said installing integrator, Gorrie-Regan Director of Sales, Scott Wilson. “We installed a new network to provide ample room for the system to grow.”

An intercom is located at the perimeter door of each hall. A student can use the intercom to notify the main desk if he or she needs assistance entering the hall. The front desk staff can communicate and view the student on the monitor, as well as determine if they should grant access to the student.

Parents also like the security system. On occasion, the Residence Life Department receives a call from a parent claiming they have not heard from their son or daughter. The Residence Life Department refers to these calls as “wellness checks.” The Symmetry system activity report and the faster ‘last 25 transactions’ under the cardholder record are checked to see when the last time a son or daughter used the system. If they have been entering or leaving the building, the transactions are logged into the system. The Department then notifies the student to call home. If there hasn’t been any activity, the Department can investigate further and notify the parents.

Symmetry workstations sit in the main Residence Life Department, Residence Life Coordinator’s residence (a live-on-campus position), in the JSU Police Department, as well as in each residence hall by the front desk. The front desk student staff are trained on the system and have the authorization to allow someone to enter the building. Pelco’s Digital Sentry Camera system is installed separately, but on the same workstation, so students can monitor all entrances. Each level of staff, including the residence assistants (RA’s) have different access levels to help manage the security system.

“If there is an alarm within the system, all of the Symmetry workstations are notified visually and audibly,” said Gorrie-Regan’s Wilson. “The student employee at the front desk evaluates the alarms and submits a report on the incident. If the alarm requires assistance, the university police are contacted. In most cases, a door is held open for too long and the alarm is quickly acknowledged.”

JSU will soon enter student photos into the Symmetry SMS to coincide with the students’ records such that when a student presents their hand to a hand geometry reader for access, the activity screen will display their picture under the live access transactions screen. This will add another layer of security to the system.

Gorrie-Regan will implement Symmetry in a new 400 bed apartment complex along with several more cameras. Overall, JSU would like to install more cameras in all parking lots and on all building exteriors.

“Symmetry is a state-of-the-art security system, and we like the enhanced security it provides over a traditional card swipe system,” said Hoult. “It’s an easy, user-friendly system to learn and use.”

About G4S Technology

G4S Technology is part of G4S plc, the world’s leading international security solutions group.

G4S Technology provides fully integrated building security systems throughout the world, protecting everything from small offices and schools to large multi-national organisations and high security Government facilities. G4S Technology has been providing unified security solutions for over 30 years, delivering 30,000 systems across 80 countries, to mitigate risk and protect staff, premises and assets.



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