

School District Uses Video for Training and Community Outreach



Executive Summary

Capistrano Unified School District
Education
Orange County, California
Approximately 53,000 Students, 4000
Employees

Challenge:

- Preserve professional development program despite budget cuts
- Enhance organizational communications
- Enrich curriculum

Solution:

- Capture video with any device
- Transform video for viewing on different devices with few clicks using Cisco MXE Media Experience Engine 3500
- Share video on web using Cisco Show and Share

Results:

- Developed sustainable solution for professional development
- Increased return on investment by using same solution for communications and training
- Enabled faculty teams to share curriculum ideas

Capistrano Unified School District made it easy to capture, transform, and share video.

Challenge

Serving 53,000 students in grades pre-K–12, Capistrano Unified School District (Capistrano USD) has 56 campuses spread over 195 square miles in Orange County, California. The district has grown rapidly since the mid-1990s, adding nearly 27,000 students, 31 schools, and 2,000 teachers and staff members.

Facing US\$90 million in budget cuts over five years, Capistrano USD needs innovative ways to continue its tradition of educational excellence. "The local community is very invested in the public education system, and we are committed to being very transparent and also making sure the community is aware of our successes," says Marcus Walton, Chief Communications Officer for Capistrano USD.

In particular, the district sought a way to preserve its Professional Development Academy, which previously offered teachers pay credit for courses and was emulated by districts throughout the United States. Participation plummeted when the district could no longer offer incentives and early-release days to attend classes. "We needed a new way to share new information on assessment tools, curricula, and laws," says Dr. Susan Holliday, Capistrano USD's Executive Director of Technology and Information Services. "Principals don't have enough time during staff meetings to add new content, and email isn't an effective medium for professional development."

Solution

After receiving an Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) grant, Capistrano USD decided to allocate some of it for professional development. The district found a low-cost, sustainable solution in Cisco Show and Share® and the Cisco® MXE 3500 Media Experience Engine. "What appeals to us about the Cisco video content solution is that it's so easy to use, especially the automatic conversion of video to the right file format for viewing on different types of devices," Holliday says.



“With Cisco Show and Share and Cisco MXE, we’ve enabled teachers and staff to learn at a time and place that’s convenient for them.”

Kathy Bari

Director of Educational Technology
Capistrano Unified School District

To capture video, the district uses existing video cameras, including Cisco Flip™ camcorders and older cameras with boom microphones. Whoever captures the video then uses the Cisco MXE Media Experience Engine to transform the video for the different viewing devices that faculty and staff use, including desktops and laptop computers, Apple iPads, and smartphones. Another click, and the video is published on Cisco Show and Share, where teachers and support staff can log in from any device, anywhere, to view videos that they are authorized to see.

With installation support from Cisco’s partner AMS.net, it was quickly realized how easy it was to learn Cisco Show and Share and the Cisco MXE Media Experience Engine by watching several short video clips. “Their first reaction is, ‘It’s so easy,’” says Holliday. Not having to train teachers and administrators to transform video for viewing on different types of devices saves IT staff time and costs. To make Show and Share even more convenient, CUSD is working towards the integration of Show and Share with the district’s SharePoint portal so that district users can access both systems with just one single login.

“When you make something so simple, adoption skyrockets,” says Holliday. “We see Cisco Show and Share as a long-term solution that we can sustain when the grant money is gone.”

Results

Solving Multiple Needs with One Investment

The district first put the Cisco solution to work capturing and sharing professional development sessions on defining effective instruction and student engagement, for district principals and their site leadership teams. Participants who had to miss the live session were pleased that they could view it later, at the office or home. “When we lost the budget and time for professional development, we could have thrown up our hands and said, ‘Oh well, we just won’t offer it anymore,’” says Holliday. “But we had higher expectations for our professionals to continue growing and excelling. Adds Kathy Bari, director of educational technology, “With Cisco Show and Share and Cisco MXE, we’ve enabled teachers and staff to learn at a time and place that’s convenient for them.”

Capistrano USD is increasing its return on investment by using video content in new ways. For example, in June 2011, the district used the Cisco MXE to add transitions and credits to a video of a graduation ceremony at a high school with many parents deployed overseas. District staff viewed the video on Show and Share, and parents were sent DVDs. “The video looked very professional, and both the students and their parents were pleased,” Holliday says.

Many more video content projects are in the planning stages. For example, Capistrano USD’s executive director of fiscal services is looking forward to spending just three minutes explaining the budget while being recorded by his PC camera, instead of taking much longer to write a three-page memo. With just a few clicks, he can transform the video for web viewing and publish it on Cisco Show and Share, without involvement from the IT team or video professionals. Similarly, Holliday plans to publish a weekly video tech tip, such as using the district’s SharePoint collaboration tool for sharing best practices. The district’s chief communications officer will use Show and Share to communicate with parents and other community members, and the superintendent will use it to share a welcome back video for teachers and staff.

Video content is also facilitating collaboration among teaching teams. The district’s nine STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) specialists are already using Cisco Show and Share to share and comment on useful videos that one of the teachers identifies on YouTube. “Although we block public video-sharing sites to prevent access to inappropriate content, we can take advantage of good content by letting a designated teacher find it and upload it to Show and Share,” Holliday says.



“Publishing videos on Cisco Show and Share gives teachers and staff the knowledge they need to answer questions from concerned community members. The goal is to make sure we’re all informed and have a consistent message so that we can speak with one voice as advocates for the district.”

Dr. Susan Holliday

Executive Director of Technology and Information Services
Capistrano Unified School District

Partnership with the Community

Finally, video communications is strengthening community ties. “Publishing videos on Cisco Show and Share gives teachers and staff the knowledge they need to answer questions from concerned community members,” says Holliday. “The goal is to make sure we’re all informed and have a consistent message so that we can speak with one voice as advocates for the district.”

Next Steps

Future plans include using Cisco Show and Share in the classroom, perhaps beginning with California Preparatory Academy, an online high school opening in spring 2012. The vision is that teachers will capture and share video and then include the Show and Share link in the learning management system. Students will be able to view and comment on the videos from anywhere, including home or public Wi-Fi hotspots.

In addition, STEM teachers are looking forward to using Cisco Show and Share to offer virtual field trips, providing an interactive experience to students in the classroom. For example, one teacher plans to use an iPad to capture and edit video at Trestles State Beach to be shared with students through Show and Share, and when vacationing in Hawaii, the superintendent hopes to do the same at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park.

Capistrano USD will also be publicizing its investment in Cisco Show and Share to the community to demonstrate its innovation in giving teachers resources despite a lack of time and funding. “We want the community to know we’ve made an investment in video communications to help teachers be the best they can,” Holliday says.

For More Information

To learn more about Cisco Video Content solutions to capture, transform, and share, visit: www.cisco.com/go/videocontent

Product List

- Video Content
 - Cisco Show and Share
 - Cisco MXE Media Experience Engine 3500



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San Jose, CA

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