Case study

The University of Mississippi

Integrating Schlage® AD Series wireless locks with BadgePass™

Project scope

For students, a college dormitory is a home away from home. For university housing departments, a residence hall or a collection of residence halls can be a management challenge equal to a small town. With thousands of students to serve each year, colleges are constantly scratching their heads as they look for ways to better manage these communities, including how to increase security while improving efficiency.

The University of Mississippi (also known as Ole Miss), like most universities, has regularly evaluated products and services that can help better serve students even as the total student population grows. With more than 20,000 students, 40 percent of whom live in on-campus housing, the members of the Housing IT Department have their work cut out for them.

Challenge

Prior to 2009, Ole Miss had only mechanical locks throughout the campus, so students used a physical key to access their residence hall and room. This posed a security threat as there was no way to deactivate a lost or stolen key — both common problems with a campus of this size. Additionally, there were significant costs associated with replacing or rekeying mechanical locks.

Looking to improve security and reduce the time associated with managing keys due to frequent turnover, the university decided to invest in an

The university integrated Scchlage AD Series wireless locks with BadgePass TotalCard to better control access rights in residence halls.

electronic access control and visitor registration system. The goal was to find a solution that was simple to install, fit within budget and could manage access rights and privileges at all 14 residence halls and two apartment complexes.

Solution

The school added Schlage® AD Series wireless locks using BadgePass™ TotalCard in 2009 to secure all of the interior resident doors. The AD Series provides many of the same benefits of a hardwired system but without the wires. This allowed the school to secure doors that were traditionally difficult to run wires to in the past, making installation quicker and more cost-efficient. Real-time monitoring, audit trails and centralized lockdown capabilities create a safe and secure environment. The AD Series was designed on an open architecture platform so that it can easily be integrated into virtually any access control system, including BadgePass.

TotalCard is a powerful campus card system that allows colleges and universities to easily identify, validate and track students and faculty members. Students can use their ID cards for a variety of things both on and off campus including purchases, utilizing meal plans, attending events, accessing dorm rooms and other campus facilities, tracking attendance in class and more.

TotalCard is designed to work within each university to provide user-friendly account management, reporting and system administration. The system's modular design combined with the AD Series scalability allows campuses to implement features and applications one at a time, in phases or all at once, depending on specific campus needs. The system can easily expand with a campus as its needs evolve.

Results

Prior to implementing TotalCard, Ole Miss students gained access to their residence hall and room with a standard mechanical key. The biggest security risk to this method occurred as students lost their keys, because there is no way to "deactivate" a lost or stolen key. By migrating to wireless locks and credentials for access, cards can be immediately deactivated in the system as soon as they are reported lost or stolen, minimizing the risk of unapproved access. Furthermore, the process of granting access is far simpler with an electronic system.

When considering options for access control, the campus was very concerned with cost and ease of installation. Today the campus has installed nearly 3,500 AD Series wireless locks—adding security and convenience to every residence hall at Ole Miss. By implementing wireless locks, they were able to minimize installation and wiring costs, while still providing electronic access to each individual room. To further simplify things, each wireless lock is battery powered and system administrators receive notifications as batteries need to be changed, ensuring locks are online and active at all times.

Once the system was chosen and locks were installed, the campus needed to consider how credentials would be issued and activated. At Ole Miss, ID cards were mailed to each student's home address during the summer. This solved the issue of long lines at the campus card office on move in day, but with no way of accounting for students as they moved in, it created a problem of inaccurate records.

The housing department approached TotalCard for help building a solution to ensure each student "checked in" while moving in before accessing their room. TotalCard facilitated an integration between the access control system and StarRez, the campus housing management system, allowing room numbers and access privileges to be instantly assigned to students once they've presented their credential and checked in at the front desk of their residence halls. StarRez

is a comprehensive student housing solution that includes online housing applications, online roommate and room self-selection, as well as complete integration with other campus systems like TotalCard.

"We manage all of our student room assignments in StarRez, so we knew an integration between the two systems would help to simplify the move in process," explains Chris Thornton, Systems Administrator for Student Housing. "To check in, students present their prox cards to a reader at the front desk of their residence hall, at which time their room assignment and access privileges are activated instantly in TotalCard. This is great for us because students get fast and easy access to their rooms and we get an electronic list of who has moved in already and who has not."

The campus also benefits from use of TotalCard's electronic visitor registration system at each residence hall. Students are asked to meet their guest in the lobby of their building, at which time both the student and guest present an ID and a record of the visit is logged. The system accepts both student ID cards and driver's licenses for fast enrollment and electronic reporting, giving administrators easy access to information about who is coming and going in each building.

The combination of electronic door access and visitor registration adds extra security to residence halls of any size. By implementing a fully integrated one-card system like TotalCard, a housing department benefits from the features and functionality of multiple applications without the headache of managing each system individually. When used with the AD Series, the campus gets the security that's expected from Schlage plus the added convenience of electronic locks.

About Allegion

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