ViewCast®

Profile

Established in 1996, the FBI's InfraGard program is designed to promote ongoing dialogue and timely communication between the private sector and the FBI concerning critical infrastructure protection issues. InfraGard brings together volunteer security and risk management professionals from a variety of industries to encourage a robust exchange of information about ways to protect the U.S. from terrorist and other threats.

With more than 26,000 members scattered across the country, InfraGard sought an easy-to-deploy and easy-to-access means of delivering coordinated and consistent communications to all. The solution was a ViewCast Niagara® GoStream® PLUS portable streaming video encoder, which enabled InfraGard to extend its information and education programs to members across the U.S. by streaming live events through the organization's Web site.

Industry

Government

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FBI's InfraGard Program Connects 26,000 Members via Streaming Video

The Challenge

Geographically Disperse Members

At its most basic level, InfraGard is a partnership between the FBI and the private sector, with members from business, academic institutions, and state and local law enforcement agencies. Members are organized into 86 chapters that are geographically linked with FBI field office territories. These professionals are dedicated to working together and sharing information and intelligence in order to help prevent hostile acts against the U.S.

Ironically, for an organization whose central mission is to facilitate communication, InfraGard previously lacked an effective means of delivering consistent information to all members on a national level. "We realized that many of the workshops and training sessions that our local chapters conducted would be of great benefit to the membership as a whole," said Joe Concannon, president and CEO of InfraGard's New York City chapter. "Our national conference is well-represented, but again, we were offering a great deal of valuable content that could not be easily accessed by members not in attendance."

Streaming video offered the ideal solution, by giving the InfraGard membership a neutral platform that would be easy to access and use. "We wanted members to be able to access any of our programs online, from anywhere and using any computer connected to the Internet," said Concannon. "Our next step was to find an encoding solution that would meet our requirements for ease of use, portability, and power."

The Solution

ViewCast Niagara® GoStream® PLUS

After evaluating several streaming encoders, InfraGard chose the Niagara GoStream PLUS. "Of the systems we evaluated, the GoStream PLUS was the most versatile, and we felt the system's scalability would allow it to grow with us as we continued to expand our online streaming capabilities," said Concannon. "ViewCast's strong relationship with Akamai, our online service provider, was another big plus."

The GoStream PLUS is intelligently designed to facilitate live streaming of events on location, from anywhere with access to an IP network. Users can encode multiple formats and resolutions simultaneously, and they can pre-define up to three encoding profiles that can initiate streaming with a push of a button. "The GoStream PLUS unit has given us the ideal solution by enabling members to view live and archived events from anywhere, using standard viewing formats such as Windows Media®, Adobe® Flash®, QuickTime®, and RealPlayer®," said Concannon.

With the GoStream PLUS unit, there are no limits to the type of content InfraGard can make available to its members. Online programs range from interviews with CEOs and public officials to professional development courses in topics such as project management or the impact of federal legislation and policies.

InfraGard's inaugural use of the encoder was at the 2008 GovSec U.S. Law and Ready Conference in Washington, D.C., followed by the InfraGard National Congress held in Orlando, Fla. and the New York Law Enforcement Expo. Also, in recognition of National Police Week, InfraGard used the encoder to stream a virtual tour of the new National Police Memorial Foundation Museum to members.

The Result

A Unified, Informed Membership

The online programs made possible by the Niagara GoStream PLUS encoder have provided a powerful new platform for members of the InfraGard community to stay informed of current national security issues, share information, and receive training in a consistent, high-quality manner. "Our last national business meeting in Orlando represented a significant milestone: the first time we were able to make meeting content available to all 25,000 members at the same time," said Concannon. "The value to our organization cannot be understated — streaming media has a direct impact on our mission to educate and inform."