From Fragmented Security to a Unified Campus Ecosystem

WHY PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES ARE MOVING SECURITY TO THE CLOUD

BY NAPCO SECURITY TECHNOLOGIES

For private schools, colleges and universities, protecting a campus has become both more important and more complex. Administrators are responsible for students, faculty, staff and visitors moving through classrooms, residence halls, laboratories, athletic facilities, administrative offices and other spaces—sometimes across multiple buildings or campuses.

Yet many institutions are still addressing today's security challenges with systems accumulated over decades.

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Access control may have one database. Intrusion security another. Locks, identification and badging may be managed separately, while video surveillance resides on yet another platform. Each can bring its own software, servers, maintenance requirements and upgrade cycles.

The result is not simply complexity. It is technology and hardware debt that can become increasingly expensive to maintain.

A new generation of securely cloud-managed platforms offers schools an opportunity to rethink that model. Rather than purchasing and maintaining individual security technologies in silos, institutions can increasingly bring access control, identity and credentials, badging, locking, intrusion security and video together as a unified ecosystem.

At NAPCO Security Technologies, we believe this convergence represents one of the most consequential changes in campus security in decades. Our MVP Cloud Access Platform reflects this approach, integrating cloud access control, wireless access locks, intelligent access panels, multiple credential technologies, intrusion security and video-management integration within one expanding platform.

The significance goes well beyond moving software to the cloud. It is about enabling the technologies protecting people and property to work together.

Identity Is Becoming the Center of Campus Security

One of the most important developments is the convergence of physical security and identity.

Traditionally, a badge might open a door, a separate system might arm or disarm a security area, and another application might be required to investigate the corresponding video.

Today, **identity can become the common thread connecting those functions.**

Modern access platforms can support smartphone wallet/NFC and Bluetooth mobile credentials alongside proximity cards, MIFare smart cards, PINs and multi-factor authentication.

That flexibility is particularly valuable in education because campus populations continually change. Students arrive and graduate. Adjunct faculty may teach for a semester. Contractors require temporary access. Visitors may need permission to enter a particular area without gaining unrestricted access elsewhere.

A cloud-managed environment can allow authorized administrators to enroll users and credentials, modify permissions and instantly add or remove access without being tied to a particular security workstation. Access schedules and permissions can determine

where and when an identity is valid, while entry activity and door events can be centrally monitored.

The fundamental security question therefore becomes: **Who is this person, where should this individual be permitted to go, when should access be permitted, and what should the security ecosystem do when that credential is presented?**

Identity and badging are no longer peripheral administrative functions. They can become fundamental components of campus security policy.

Emergency Lockdown Must Be Both Digital and Physical

The value of convergence becomes especially apparent during an emergency.

Schools need the ability to rapidly communicate with occupants, including text and other emergency notifications that tell students, faculty and staff what is happening and what actions they should take.

But communication is only one side of emergency response. A text message saying "lockdown" and the physical act of securing a campus should be coordinated parts of the same strategy.

Campus-wide lockdown can be implemented with a consistent locking approach based on an institution's preferences and security strategy. Solutions can include mechanical lockdown locks with occupant-visible status indicators, helping people inside a room quickly confirm that a door is secured, as well as standalone or networked electronic locks equipped with badge readers.

Electronic solutions can accept campus ID cards, mobile-phone credentials and/or PIN codes and can also incorporate lockdown-status indication, benefiting both occupants and first responders during an emergency.

For electronic and networked locks, battery life and physical durability are critical considerations, particularly across a large campus where hundreds or thousands of battery-powered openings could otherwise create a significant maintenance burden.

Advanced wireless locking can provide years of battery life while delivering rugged construction for demanding everyday use. NAPCO's locking portfolio encompasses cylindrical, mortise and deadbolt locks as well as exit-trim and panic-bar solutions for interior and exterior door applications, with an emphasis on low maintenance, durability and code compliance. Trilogy Networx locks, for example, are cited as providing typical battery life of three or more years, depending upon operating frequency, programming and credential types.

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Commonality across a campus is itself an important advantage. Classrooms, residence halls, offices, laboratories, storerooms, common areas and perimeter openings can share a familiar family of locks, operation and appearance, while electronic and networked openings can additionally share credentials and centralized control.

When networked together, those openings become part of the larger security ecosystem. At the first indication of trouble, authorized personnel can lock down an affected area—or potentially an entire campus—quickly from the central system. Conversely, doors can be globally unlocked or placed into free-passage mode just as rapidly when conditions require it. NAPCO's cloud-access architecture supports remote management and lockdown or unlocking of interior and exterior doors by area or globally.

Networked locking adds another significant benefit: centralized visibility and audit-trail reporting. Door and access activity can be monitored by the central access-control system, giving authorized personnel greater awareness of activity across controlled openings and a record of door events.

And the investment is not limited to emergencies. The same locks and access infrastructure protecting a campus during a crisis can serve its everyday needs—from dormitories and classrooms to offices, storerooms and other controlled spaces.

Access, Security and Video Become More Valuable Together

Consider an access-controlled door opening unexpectedly after hours.

With disconnected systems, determining what occurred might require security personnel to move between several applications. Who entered? Was a valid credential used? What was the security-system status? What does the camera show?

Convergence Changes that Workflow

NAPCO MVP is designed to integrate access with NAPCO security systems, providing coordinated access and system-disarm credentials, shared administrator and user privileges, and unified system status and controls.

Integration with leading video-management systems can provide visual verification of door events and centralized security management across facilities or multiple sites.

Instead of simply knowing that something happened, personnel can more quickly establish the context around an event.

For universities operating many buildings—and private schools where a smaller administrative or security team may carry broad responsibilities—that simplification can be extremely valuable.

Cloud Management Changes the Economics

Security convergence is occurring alongside another important transformation: the shift from capital-intensive security infrastructure toward cloud services and predictable operating expenses.

Traditional enterprise systems can require significant capital expenditures for servers, dedicated PCs and supporting infrastructure. Those assets then have to be maintained and eventually replaced. Software versions age, servers reach end of life and older hardware may struggle to accommodate new functionality.

A cloud-managed architecture changes that cycle.

NAPCO MVP is structured around a predictable monthly, per-door cloud service, helping institutions reduce the large upfront capital expense traditionally associated with access-control infrastructure.

This CAPEX-to-OpEx transition is about more than accounting. It can reduce dependence on onsite servers and dedicated security PCs, minimize local hardware and software upkeep and help eliminate disruptive upgrade cycles. MVP provides automatic system updates and enables authorized personnel to manage doors from a smartphone or web browser.

Instead of periodically replacing an aging technology stack, institutions can adopt a service architecture designed to remain current and expand over time.

Build for the Campus You Will Have Tomorrow

Schools and universities rarely remain static.

A private school may build an athletic facility. A university may renovate residence halls, add laboratories, acquire another building or open a satellite location.

A modern security architecture should accommodate that growth rather than penalize it.

NAPCO MVP is designed to scale from a few doors to thousands, with buildings, users and credentials added as needs change. It supports multiple facilities and locations without requiring an institution to replace the underlying system simply because it has grown.

That creates a fundamentally different technology roadmap: start with what the institution needs today without designing itself into another technology dead end tomorrow.

Cybersecurity Is Now Physical Security

As physical security becomes connected, cybersecurity also becomes an essential part of the discussion.

A cloud security platform should be evaluated for more than convenience. Data protection, encrypted communications, administrative

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controls, resiliency and independently audited cybersecurity practices all matter.

NAPCO's architecture incorporates encrypted communications, and its MVP security criteria include SOC 2-audited cybersecurity for data and privacy protection.

Cloud-managed also should not mean that doors cease operating if a network connection is interrupted. MVP is designed so access-controlled doors and elevators can continue operating during network interruptions according to their configuration.

Cybersecurity, physical security and operational continuity are increasingly parts of the same conversation.

The question for educational institutions is no longer simply, **"Do we need a new access-control system?"**

A better question is:

"If we were designing campus security today, would we deliberately build separate systems for identity, badging, access, locking, intrusion security, emergency response and video—or would we want them working together?"

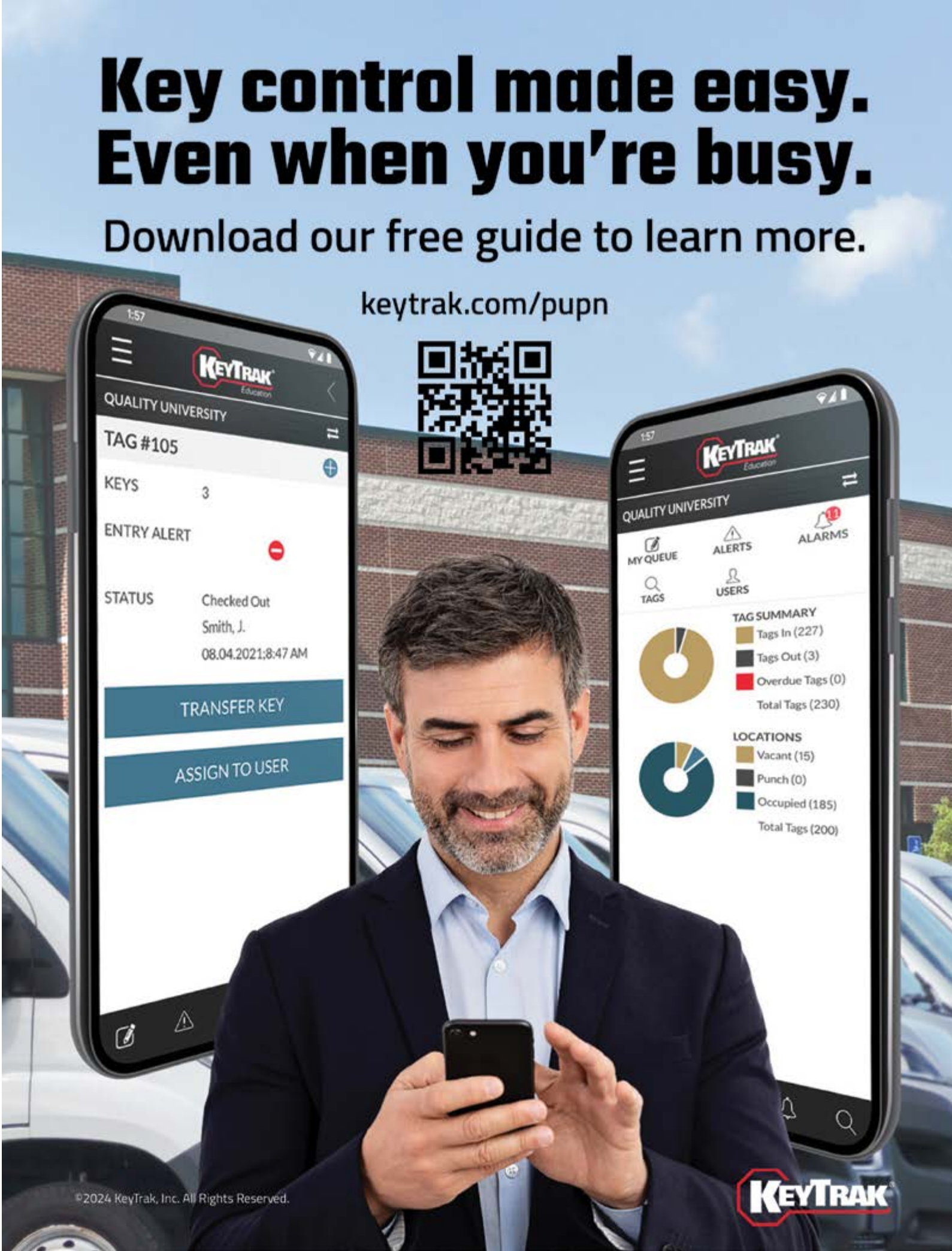
NAPCO has been creating and delivering security technology for education and other demanding markets since 1969. Today, the MVP Cloud Platform brings that experience in access control, security and locking technologies into a modern, scalable cloud architecture.

The opportunity for private schools and universities is significant: connect identities to credentials, credentials to doors, doors to locks, access events to security and video, and security systems to emergency response—all while simplifying management and moving away from costly technology debt.

The future of campus security isn't about having more separate security products.

It's about making the entire campus security ecosystem work as one.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Natare Corporation is a global leader in stainless steel swimming pools and aquatic systems. Based in Indianapolis, the 100% employee-owned company designs, manufactures, and supports innovative pool solutions for competition venues, universities, resorts, waterparks, and aquatic facilities worldwide.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