

SITUATION

Devastating wildfires have continued to plague Northern California. Being able to recognize smoke versus clouds, fog or steam, especially during very hot, dry or windy weather, is invaluable when it comes to early detection.

That's why PG&E decided to test FireScout's artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning capabilities, expanding their network of cameras across Northern California in an effort to enhance fire watch and response capabilities.

SOLUTION

In 2021, PG&E tested FireScout's wildfire detection on 46 newly installed high-definition cameras across high fire-threat regions as part of their new AI testing program.

FireScout's wildfire AI provides advanced cloud-based intelligence that protects people and property with 24/7 coverage. It can detect wildfires in a minute or less, integrates seamlessly into existing emergency response processes, offers very low cost of ownership and the highest accuracy available.

This technology helped PG&E improve situational awareness and intelligence to help mitigate and prevent wildfires, with the ultimate goal of saving lives and property.

46

HD Cameras

24/7

Coverage



RESULTS

With the help of FireScout's AI technology, PG&E received many alerts within moments of actual 911 calls. The FireScout system provides alerts via text and email at the first sign of smoke, allowing PG&E personnel to pinpoint where the smoke is coming from and determine if it is a fire that is a threat to the public or PG&E assets.

In some instances, the technology was able to send an alert ahead of 911. On August 4, 2021, PG&E's Howell Mountain 1 camera, equipped with FireScout's AI software, identified smoke one minute before the fire dispatch and several minutes before manual camera movement. The smoke that was detected ended up becoming the River Fire. However, several other fires detected throughout the pilot program were contained to under an acre, revealing the value of early fire detection technology and AI's potential to reduce fire size expansion.

PG&E plans to continue using FireScout's leading-edge technology on a more expanded basis. By the end of 2022, the company aims to have nearly 600 cameras installed, allowing it to view more than 90% of the high-risk areas it serves in real time.

Detections earlier than IRWIN-reported data

Fire Name	Camera	Date	FireScout Detection Time	IRWIN Time	Difference	Acres
VALENBURG	WolfMtn	06-21-2021	14:39:54	14:55:20	-0:15:26	.01
PINETOP	HowellMtn2	07-03-2021	16:16:32	16:16:54	-0:00:22	.01
STAR	GardenBar	07-24-2021	13:30:17	13:30:39	-0:00:22	.01
RIVER	HowellMtn1	08-04-2021	13:58:12	13:59:43	-0:01:13	2619
PLEASANT	BarrRanch	08-10-2021	12:22:16	12:24:30	-0:02:14	.01
RAVINE	HowellMtn2	08-10-2021	17:57:58	17:58:28	-0:00:30	.01
WOLF	WolfMtn5	09-07-2021	06:42:26	06:50:10	-0:07:44	.01

“Alchera’s FireScout gives us a really critical early jump to get our eyes on a fire.”

Eric Sutphin

Supervisor, Hazard Awareness & Warning Center,
Pacific Gas and Electric Company

FireScout

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