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Integrating Video and Access Control for Stronger Security

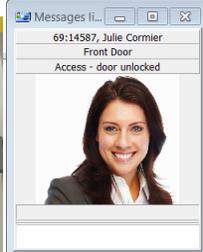
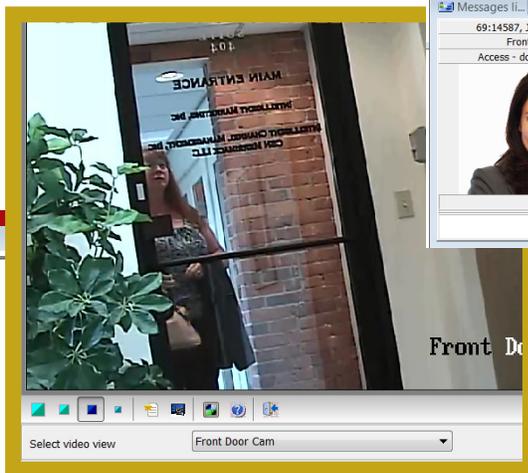
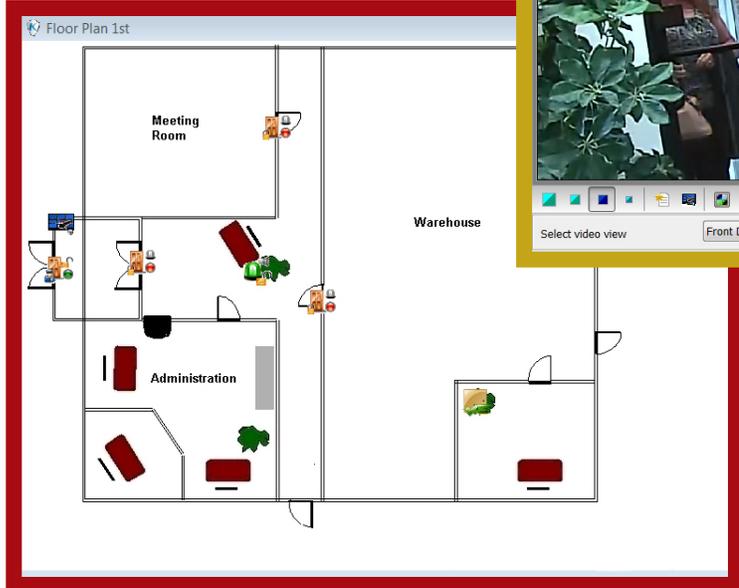
Planning and Incident Response

By: **The Setronics Technology Group**

Today's electronic security system integrators are bringing ever-increasing capabilities within the reach of those responsible for securing commercial and institutional complexes. There is a danger, however, that the greater complexity of the new systems introduced could frustrate end users and negatively tax staff resources, if not designed properly. Well-designed integration of access control and video systems can greatly improve functionality and ease of use, reduce operating costs and enhance overall company profitability.

INTEGRATED SITE MAPS

Traditionally, access and video systems resided on separate platforms. Early integration practices would typically involve low speed connections via expensive video matrix switches that enabled a limited amount of coordination between the systems. As a result of those limitations, users still needed to query each system separately, so that they could consolidate information and understand a



terms of device status, critical alarms, video and more. The display is software generated and built on a graphical layout of the site. A multi-layer display can be configured whereby the base maps of each building or site are linked to a master map as the top layer. Live icons populate each map and can include controlled doors and surveillance cameras as well as other status inputs (see inset figure).

The user at the main console or at any integrated client computer may be alerted at the graphical site map and intuitively query further by clicking on icons for more information.

Selecting a camera icon can launch associated live or recorded video. No longer does staff need to become familiar with or even memorize long site tree listings of doors, cameras etc. in order to proficiently monitor premise security.

INTEGRATED EVENT DATA AND RESPONSE

Event data from access control and video systems may also be combined to immediately detect situations that a lone staff member might miss or be slow to fully realize its significance. Consider the following scenario: An entry is attempted at an access control door by a person

complete event. This took valuable time and required users to be actively familiar with two application interfaces.

Today the technology is available to cost-effectively incorporate information from both systems into an integrated site map that visually reports premise security in

whose privileges were just revoked. The icon for the reader associated with that door alarms along with the event description (in this case an invalid card read). The camera view nearest the door displays in a separate window (see inset figure) as part of the graphical display. Is the person using the revoked card the former card user? The database headshot for the user who had last been assigned the card also displays to answer this question. Those responsible for securing the premises can then respond immediately to apprehend or deter the individual if appropriate.

A second scenario features automated coordination at a speed of response which could save a life: A call is initiated at an emergency phone and the event is also noted by the connected access control system. Immediately a pan tilt and zoom camera in the area is triggered to follow its preprogramming and it moves to view both the phone station and surrounding area. Video of the event automatically displays for a dispatcher at the main console or other stations near security staff. While personnel are already responding, enhanced recording of the event continues automatically.

It is easy to see the impact that a properly designed integrated security system can make to an organization. When making these critical enterprise decisions that involve both access control and video surveillance, again, our advice is simple: make sure that you've hired a qualified systems integrator that will identify, design and thoughtfully implement all appropriate cross functions for a seamless and unified result. When this is achieved the solution as a whole will truly

be greater than the sum of the parts.

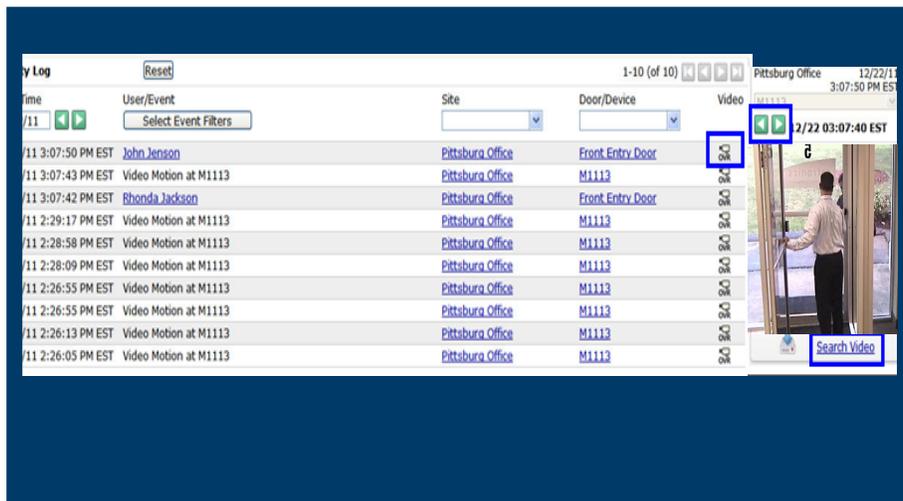
During the Investigation

At the beginning of this article we discussed how we can improve the detection and response to incidents if video and access control cross functions are included in overall physical security system design. However, some of the greatest benefits of integrated system design are realized after the incident, when evidence is being gathered as part of an investigation.

video system and - using the list of times generated in step 3 above - review the video.

An investigator needs to be familiar with both access control and video user interfaces in order to sift through the evidence these systems compile.

By contrast, when video associated with an event is tagged and available within the access control event record, investigative review can be accelerated. This integration is accomplished by some combination of tagging the remote system video clip, moving it to an event buffer within the video system, or importing it as part of the access control system. Data gathering is then consolidated to the single step of pulling up the access control event log and reviewing a filtered list of events related to the incident. With a video clip icon an investigator can simply point and click to review the video clip along with the event text.



MORE SUCCESSFUL AND TIMELY INVESTIGATIONS

When access control and video are standalone systems, an investigation involving security data proceeds as follows:

1. review a filtered list of events related to the incident in the access control event log,
2. determine if there was a camera viewing the event area for those events of interest,
3. record the times related with the events of interest, and
4. launch the search mode of the

This second approach is of course much simpler. Take the example of some valuable materials stolen within an area that has an access control perimeter. Over the time period in question there are door ajar records. To determine if any of the door ajar events were material evidence the investigator would simply call up the access control event log and review the list of door ajar events within the period of interest. Tagged video coincident to the door ajar event would be available by simply clicking on a video icon included with each event record. This much simpler process can eliminate hours of time compared to the manual synchronization and comparison of data from both systems during an entire investigation.

INTEGRATION CAN INSURE PRESERVATION OF THE 'SMOKING GUN' BEFORE IT FIRES

Deeper integration can also automate identification and preservation of evidence. For example, the archival window of a video management system is typically short compared to access event logs.

As a result, if some of the events of interest span far back in time it may be that, while there is access control data, the corresponding video data has already been overwritten. Video storage requirements are much higher. Access system logs are often archived indefinitely while most video is archived for 2 to 8 weeks as part of a 'circular buffer' where older video is erased for new data.

If the video associated with select access control events is automatically identified and archived, then key evidence can be preserved even if the investigation occurs beyond the video archive window. This selected data may be stored within the video management or access control system, depending on the products involved. As a result, a number of door or other input related video can be reviewed along with the event records to more fully understand what has transpired.

ASSOCIATE MORE INFORMATION WITH THE VIDEO VIA ACCESS CONTROL

Consider another example related to multi-tenant housing. In this case a person causing trouble is frequently gaining access to a building where all visitors must enter by the access control door. A review of the door open events can

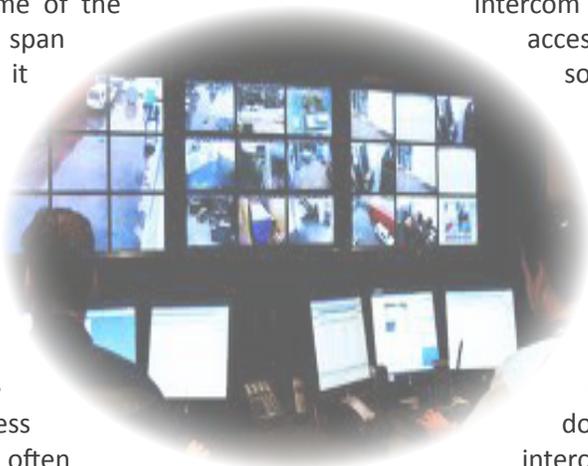
indicate that a tenant is allowing access (see picture for example). However, what if he is being 'buzzed in' by the apartment intercoms? Typically there is not enough comprehensive video coverage within the complex to determine who is letting him in by following which apartment the "trouble-maker" visited. Can further integration overcome this limitation?

One approach is to integrate the intercom system with the access control system so that intercom triggered events can also be synchronized with video via the access control system. A simple review of the door release by intercom events and the video associated allows the manager to identify both the offender and the accomplice tenant.

CONCLUSION

In this article (as well as Part 1) we have explored why an enterprise should consider insuring that their access control and video surveillance systems are well integrated. The benefits in terms of stronger security as well as reduced investigation costs can be significant. These benefits can only be realized if the system integrator identifies, proposes and implements the cross functions necessary. ■

The Setronics Technology Group is an industry-leading team of Engineers whose combined collective security experience exceeds more than 60 years for regional, national and international clients. The Group has designed thousands of integrated access control and video solutions spanning markets that include retail, healthcare, and education among others.



MORE NEWS FROM SETRONICS

Setronics, Billerica MA - is pleased to announce its recent award of the FAC64 - Statewide Contract for Security, Surveillance and Access Control Systems. This contract was created by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Operational Services Division (OSD) as the primary means to provide competitively priced security systems from qualified providers to state, municipal, public service and nonprofit agencies.

Can you use this contract? *In addition to state executive departments, cities and towns, the FAC64 contract can be used by public and charter schools, state colleges and universities, public libraries and hospitals and even state registered nonprofits. Other states also have access.*

Why should you use FAC64? *Obtaining services from Setronics via this contract enables eligible entities to procure well designed security systems efficiently and at best value without the need for an extensive public bid development and procurement process.*

Setronics will be adding details to our website to provide more information as well as easy access to our FAC64 Security Surveillance and Access Control System pricing and prompt pay discount rates. Please contact any individual listed below if you have any questions about the FAC64 program or would like to schedule a consultation.

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