

Better together

With more companies investing in security systems, it makes sense to step back and think about an **integrated approach** that combines **access control systems, intruder alarms and CCTV**.

According to a 2010 survey from the Small Firms Association, 45% of businesses were victims of crime in the past two years and 60% suffered crime on two or more occasions. Theft of stock and cash, along with criminal damage to premises were the most common incidents, while the average cost of an incident was almost €3,000. Naturally, businesses have responded by investing more money in security and prevention. The survey found CCTV usage increased to just over 38% of firms, and almost 30% of companies now have some form of access control system.

Like the legs of a stool, a good security system has three parts: an intruder alarm, access control, and closed circuit TV. In the past, however, that has meant three separate systems for a company's security team to run and three different

Traditionally, installers would physically connect the three different systems via a series of inputs and outputs.



There is far more work involved in making three separate systems talk to one another so that, for example, the CCTV cameras begin recording the moment an alarm is tripped. Not only is this type of setup more time-consuming and cumbersome to install, it also creates the problem of having to deal with three different equipment vendors.

For the business itself, managing this kind of infrastructure – usually with a third party security management platform – adds further complexity and cost. There is an easier way.

Combining the three elements of a security system

and controls who gets into a building and where they go from there. When this is part of an integrated system, managed from a PC software application, it gives the operator and manager full control of the system and a full audit trail of movement within the building, backed up by visual images and intruder alarm status at that time.

Integrated systems have the intelligence to disarm the intruder alarm system only for the areas where the person entering has been granted access. In a multi-tenanted building where someone opens the door and disarms the alarm,



they could leave the whole building vulnerable. With a fully integrated system that knows where people should be going, the other areas of the building remain protected.

Integrated systems really come into their own when CCTV is included. Let's take the example of a building

protected by proximity card access; by itself that system might not prevent unauthorised entry by someone who had somehow managed to obtain a card. When you have an integrated system, the CCTV will record footage of the person entering when they present the card. If a door has been forced, that registers not only on the access control and the intruder alarm systems but when combined with CCTV, it will record

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manufacturers for the installers to deal with. At a time when there are plenty of other challenges facing businesses, this is an unnecessary complexity.

– access control, intruder alarms and CCTV – into one system is not only more powerful but also more cost-effective. Access control by its nature manages the movement of people within a building

the footage. Combining the three elements of a security system into one not only



reduces the chances of crime but can assist law enforcement if a break-in does occur.

There is a wide range of access control technologies on the market, from PIN codes and RFID cards (also known as proximity access), to smartcards or biometrics such as fingerprints or iris scans. Customers should be able to choose whichever of these options suits their needs and have all of the data fed back, ideally wire-free, to a central controller where it can be managed by the software application.

Integrated systems have levels of intelligence built into the management software that, for example, can tell when the last person leaves the building, and automatically sets the alarm and triggers CCTV monitoring. It removes the headache of having to remember to do so manually, and the risk of the possible consequences by forgetting.

Deciding on an integrated system doesn't mean companies are obliged to install all three elements at the same time. For cost reasons they may choose one or two out of the three, but by putting some thought into the security strategy and planning in advance, companies can prepare a roadmap for any



upgrades, and spare themselves extra hassle and expense in the process.

For security system installers, integrated systems are also

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more user friendly. Having one central controller makes it easy to configure and to set policies, such as who has the rights to enter and leave a particular building or room. Ongoing maintenance is also easier because it involves looking after one system rather than three discrete technologies. From a practical standpoint, it makes more sense to deal with one manufacturer for everything.

GSD's system provides the benefits of a seamless integration without the headaches associated with achieving the desired results. For example, when an employee presents their card at the front door, GSD's wireless access control system will open the door to allow access to permitted areas and disarm the GSD intruder alarm system only in the areas where the user is allowed access, leaving the rest of the premises protected against unwanted intruders.

The system will also record the video footage from VIVOTEK IP CCTV cameras for verifying the card holder is the owner of the card presented. In alarm conditions the system also records pre and post alarm events. At the click of a mouse, the

evidence required to identify and convict the offender can be presented.

We have seen the same trend in information technology, where phones and computers now run on the same networks, allowing firms to save money and manage time by combining two into one. By the same logic, combining three security systems into one brings similar benefits. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts and businesses can be sure of enhanced security without compromise. ●



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