

biometric identification systems to verify all people entering and leaving sites. These systems can be installed within a day, and are often compatible with existing company identification databases.

"People are becoming much more proactive about security measures," said Gary Bradt, vice president of Utah-based **Silex Corp.**'s biometrics division. "They are willing to take risks to get the right security system installed."

Unit prices for biometric identification stations and systems have been dropping, due to more efficient manufacturing and rising market volume. A typical Silex biometric station -- handling fingerprints, PINs and proximity cards -- now costs about \$1,200 and can be installed in less than two hours. The operating software requires about three hours of staff training.

Biometric systems have lent themselves to a variety of creative security solutions: No guard is needed, yet a programmed biometric lock can control who can gain access to a room, what equipment they can operate, as well as what times particular groups or individuals can have such access.

Ironically, said Bradt, government agencies have been slower to adopt this technology than the private sector. It is now widely used by hospitals, banks and schools, particularly for securing areas with computers, communications centers, valuables, or medical equipment and supplies.

Such systems are also gaining popularity in high net worth apartment buildings, where biometrics offers a sophisticated and relatively unobtrusive form of security.

Regardless of the degree of security enhancement, retrofitting an existing site requires careful planning. CompuDyne's Roenigk said that for his company, a typical retrofitting of a major site takes anywhere from three to six months. "It can be done on a rotational basis, even while a building is in use," he added.

Building security ideally includes consideration of the potential risks in the surrounding environment. When Miami-based **Security Solutions International** trains first responders in how to deal with a terror attack, they stress the concept of "circles of security".

"We draw on Israel's experience with terrorism," said Henry Morgenstern, chairman of Security Solutions. "This training provides first responders with abilities to prevent, recognize and deter terror activity."

Many security experts say the best prepared sites are military installations, because they maintain the biggest perimeters. But in practical terms, in an urban setting, access controls offset lack of perimeter.

"Government agencies face the biggest challenge," says Stanley Security Solutions's Mostow. "Most anticipate more [site security] regulation coming. The biggest challenge is helping customers get prepared to meet those new standards." ■

