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MARKET TRENDS: ACCESS



Remote management gains momentum as a value-added feature in the access control model

Access, time and attendance, and cashless payments all come together under remote managing capabilities

By Joanne Friedrick, contributor

Whether a company does it on its own, or employs a central station for this purpose, there is a trend in the industry toward remote management of access control systems.

The standard scenario, said Holly Sacks, vice president-marketing for HID Corp., has been for central stations to offer both intrusion monitoring and access control services, but as two separate systems relying on two sets of software, two sets of monitoring screens and different types of operator training.

However, she said, new software developments are allowing integration or embedding of access control management and monitoring into central station intrusion monitoring software.

The ability to put this on a single platform, explained Sacks, "is great news for alarm dealers and integrators" because it represents incremental business for them in the access control arena. She estimated that 85 percent of alarm monitoring customers don't use access control yet, so the potential is there.

In addition to adding access control monitoring and management, she said, they also can add related, smart card-

based functions, such as time and attendance or cashless payments.

Remote monitoring via a central station, said Sacks, frees customers from needing to have their own site-located access control systems. Other benefits, she said, are higher security levels through "really managing who has access to the building," fewer false alarms because of better alarm and disarm procedures and cost savings, especially for smaller companies who couldn't afford to do it on their own.

"What we're seeing in the central station model are people who have shown active interest in hundreds of small storefront retail outlets," she said, including one that manages its own central station.

OUTSOURCING ACCESS MANAGEMENT AN OPTION

Matt Barnette, senior business development manager for Amag, agreed that smaller organizations don't have the staff to monitor their own systems "are more willing to outsource to a third party."

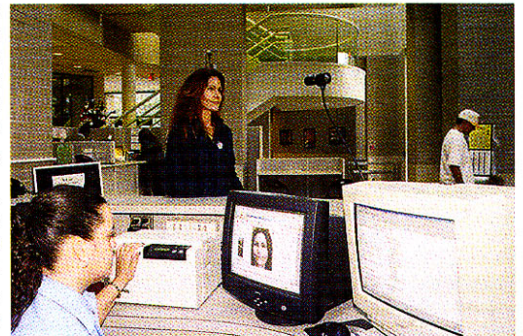
The trend in remote management of access control, said Tim Rohrbach, chief technology officer for MDI Security Systems, is to build network-centric, scalable enterprise systems.

Most companies have a network in place and can make use of it as a backbone for a remote system's TCP/IP addresses, he said.

Benefits that accrue include the cost savings of not having to staff every location 24/7, he said. Rather, Rohrbach said, the access control system can be handled from a central location.

"You still need some guards," said Andrew Bulkley, director of product strategy at GE Infrastructure, Security, but he concurred that remote monitoring "cuts down on the number of control centers up 24 hours a day."

Still, said Barnette, "these technologies aren't meant to reduce (the number of guards), but can aid the guards to do more with fewer resources. I'm a proponent of the layered approach," he said, meaning combining remote access



From a single point, such as a central station, a company can update employee access for multiple locations.

control and video.

Using the Internet as the basis for remote monitoring provides several opportunities for end users, explained Greg Goldman, chief executive officer of Synergistics. "With a web browser, you just have one place to go to update software," he said, versus other systems that require the upgrade to take place at each monitoring unit.

Ease of use is another advantage, he said. "All they need to do is get on the Internet and monitor," either as part of their daily routine or in response to a specific situation.

DON'T FORGET SECURE ACCESS

Security of remote monitoring needs to be considered, noted Jay Vaitkus, product and market manager for system integration development at Stanley Security Systems.

A standard web interface can control remote changes, modifications and deletions for the access control system, he said, but a more secure system would be required for additions and other more sensitive transactions.

A popular function is the ability to remotely receive and read reports, said Vaitkus. The information can be delivered to a security director in real time, or provided as historical reports on activities such as door alarms.

Customers interested in remote monitoring, said Goldman, begin with those having multiple locations, such as national chains, and building management companies and real estate management companies. "They are going to adopt the central station/access control monitoring concept," he said, which then "flows down into the smaller mom and pop guys."

While Goldman thinks remote management of access control is in its "early stages," it's getting more attention than in the past "and has a lot more momentum." SSN

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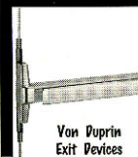
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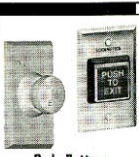
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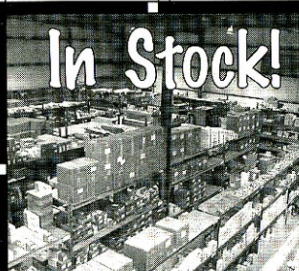
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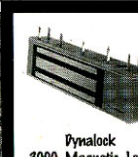


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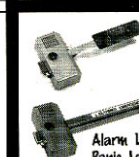


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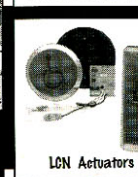
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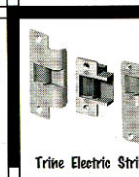
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