



Spotlight feature on:



Why monitoring doesn't have to be so alarming

Cougar Monitoring held a seminar event with Milestone Systems, Optex, Raytec and Samsung, and with independent security consultant Tony Lloyd of Lloyd Asset Protection.

The aim was to provide best practice advice on how to deter crime, reduce false alarms and comply with the BS8418 standard for remote video monitoring sites. Following the successful event, the organising companies provide an overview on the five steps to follow to get an effective remote video monitoring system. We revealed some alarming facts. After more than 30 years of extolling the virtues of CCTV monitoring, and the millions spent developing new technologies, systems and solutions that are capable of extraordinary things, fewer than 10 per cent of all CCTV systems installed are currently monitored. Perhaps even more alarming, 95pc of all of the alarms they generate turn out to be false. When an alarm receiving centre (ARC) may have to manage 3,000 alarms from a single site in a single weekend, the challenge is brought into sharp relief. So what are the steps that an installer should take to create the 'perfect' remotely monitored site? Lets break a typical installation down into five component parts: detection; lighting; cameras (and camera view); video management software (VMS); and monitoring.



Providing the alarm 'trigger'

The first challenge is in understanding that any remotely monitored system is effectively

event driven; every event requires a 'trigger'. That trigger is the detector. There are many types of detection technology available to match an equally diverse number of applications: For example, passive infra-red (PIR) detectors are used to protect outer perimeters, these detect the approach of a potential intruder; fibre optic detection systems will detect an intruder attempting to climb over or cut through an outer fence or wall; laser detectors and active infra-red (AIR) beams are ideal to create virtual



perimeters and for flat roof applications when an intruder is looking for a more adventurous way to break in. Whatever the detection device required, choosing the right system can be influenced by a number of factors. The configuration of the site, the environment, movement of vegetation, animals or light and the requirements of the system, whether it is temporary or permanent, and the connectivity available. The variables are considerable and ensuring the detectors are fit for purpose is essential. Often a mixture of different technologies will be preferred, rather than a 'one size fits all', to create different 'layers' of detection

5 STEPS FOR EFFECTIVE REMOTE VIDEO MONITORING



but always with the detection patterns aligned with the cameras' field of view and appropriate lighting.

Shedding new light

Lighting is indeed one of the most interesting – and overlooked – of challenges that an installer will face. Some installers make the mistake of believing what they can see with the naked eye will be sufficient for their lighting needs. It rarely is. Indeed some form of additional lighting, whether it is IR (for black and white cameras in particular) or white light (for colour CCTV) will inevitably be required. Quality of installation, and choosing the appropriate technology for the task, is essential. Lighting can be used with intelligence to create smarter, more responsive and greener systems. For instance, invisible IR lighting can be used to constantly monitor a site at night, and visible White-Light illumination can be triggered on demand via a detector upon motion detection, only when and where needed for a short period of time. This is highly effective at warning off intruders and deterring crime, and also minimising running costs. The quick start nature of LED technology makes lighting on demand. High lux levels are not always required and often result in reduced CCTV image quality, excessive light pollution and energy consumption. Designing lighting to suit the requirements of your scene is critical; many low light cameras can generate excellent nighttime images from as little as 2 to 3 lux.



Spotlight feature on:



Getting the right picture

Without cameras, nothing will be seen. The role of a camera is broken down in Home Office guidelines into four distinct observation categories: detect; observe; recognise; and identify. Once an intruder has been detected the operator within the remote monitoring centre will at first be able to see whether it is indeed a person that has triggered the alarm, or whether there is some other cause. Assuming it is a person, they can be observed to assess whether he has criminal intentions. Once this has been established, the camera will not only recognise what the intruder is doing, but also be able to provide an image that will help identify that individual for use in any subsequent criminal proceedings. As with detectors and lighting, different types of cameras will be used for different applications: black and white or colour; static or pan tilt zoom (PTZ); analogue or digital. Regardless of the type of camera required, the security of the site and the effectiveness of the remote monitoring will stand or fall on the quality of installation, understanding the benefits of matching the detection and camera view, and the role of lenses and iris control in providing a focused image throughout the depth of field.

Video management software

The fourth of the five factors that determine a successful remote solution is the video management software (VMS). The VMS is essential for ensuring that detectors, cameras, lighting etc. integrate seamlessly not only with each other, but also wider technologies that may be installed as part of a total site security solution such as access control. When all of these elements are in

Event feedback

Some great feedback came in following the event.

Chris Billinge, MD of Clarion Security Systems said: "It's a breath of fresh air to hear that System design and Monitoring is being approached in such a way as to ensure

they are employed not on a price but on an appropriate service level basis." And Tony Lloyd of Lloyd Asset Protection said: "As independent security consultants, our role is to advise our customers on the best and most appropriate solution to protect their assets and this event delivered a good overall summary of the different disciplines that combine when designing a security system that works."



place, the final piece of the jigsaw is the remote video response centre (RVRC) itself. All RVRCs must be accredited to BS5979 (Cat II) and be able to log and record all of the information that is transmitted to it. The bane of any RVRC operator's life is of course false alarms, and the best RVRCs will work with the installer and their customer in ensuring these are kept to a minimum by including an engineer walk test in their service and an environmental 'soak test' to assess the impact of the local environment. Indeed experts believe that with the right system design and a professional installation, it is conceivable to reduce false alarms to zero.

Trained operators

With the help of the installer, site owners should provide

full site details and be given and sign for a response schedule detailing the RVRC actions. Trained operators within the RVRC will work with the customer in agreeing the appropriate levels of response, whether that is an audio warning, to call the key holders, dispatch a mobile response team or – when a criminal action is taking place and can be clearly seen – to summon the emergency services.

Summary

Keeping intruders at bay and protecting valuable stock and equipment from theft or damage is always the objective of any site owner, and a remotely monitored CCTV system undoubtedly presents the greatest opportunity for achieving this goal. However, the quality of monitoring depends on the reliability of the security system put in place. An integrated system comprising accurate and reliable detection, the right lighting in the right spots, high quality camera images matching the detection and the lighting fields, and finally a video management system configuring and enabling all security elements to communicate together, will bring a much stronger level of security.



For more information
 Tel: 0844 85 666 85
 Email: info@cougarmonitoring.com
 Visit: www.cougarmonitoring.com



The Open Platform Company



Independent Security Consultants to the Commercial Property Market

LLOYD
 Asset Protection Ltd.