

## Integrating Digital Video Improves System Performance and Cost-Effectiveness



**W**hat are some of the benefits I can gain through integrating digital video, and will they offset additional equipment costs?

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Recent technological advances have brought about a convergence in the security market so that dealers and installers are now seeing security devices, which were once separate, networked together into a single, seamless system, operated from a desktop PC. These developments will have an enormous impact on the cost-effectiveness of security systems and the manner in which security personnel can be utilized.

To illustrate, let's look at some examples of digital video recording. Not so long ago, when a security officer needed to find a piece of video as the result of an alarm trigger or an incident report, he or she had to go to a different location and spend hours, possibly days, searching for the relevant segment of tape. Once found, analog recording gave no guarantees on the quality of the images on that segment. This meant security organizations wasted tremendous amounts of time and often had little to show for their investment.

Need a more specific example? Suppose a security staff member wants to check an alarm trigger that occurred four days ago at 10:30 a.m. on Camera 55. As discussed above, digital technology can accommodate that request in a matter of minutes, whereas a traditional search of analog tapes would take much longer. Furthermore, digital technology as part of an integrated security system provides even more advantages.

In this case, utilizing integrated system programming, our security employee, in a matter of seconds, can view the tape segment of the alarm trigger, at a set time prior to and after the alarm.

Thus, it's clear whether this incident needs further

investigation or not. Consider the amount of time saved and how this employee's time can be better used in other areas.

Using digital video to a greater degree and for covering an expanded range of functions has the following potential effects on businesses and their bottom lines:

- Security systems integrated with digital video recording mean personnel can be directed to exactly where they're needed — where there's an incident or a high potential for incident.
- Video monitoring and the recording of how security personnel respond to emergencies provide valuable input for performance appraisals and for identifying future training needs.
- Such a system can also be used to monitor production processes, improving productivity and quality.
- With proper system integration and programming, security personnel, with the click of a mouse from a central location, can automate many different processes, such as digital recording, access control and fire detection.

As security technology continues to advance, security companies have to make sure their human resources keep pace. As with many other industries, some feared technological advances would mean the end of certain security-related jobs. In this case, improved technology has meant more interesting and more productive jobs for security professionals. Personnel who are more productive and can accomplish more value-added tasks for the organization become more valuable.

Security operations and personnel deal with matters of life and death and in protecting the assets of the enterprise. It's essential that security directors find the optimal mix between humans and hardware, and that they invest not only in their hardware, but also in their personnel.

Today's integrated security systems and those of the future will not only improve a director's ability to ensure a more secure environment, they will change the way we look at and strategically utilize our security resources.

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