

— SECURITY —

Security Technology Trends

BY ROBERT METSCHER

It is an interesting partnership we find between the security industry and houses of worship. Churches, in particular, are expected to be places of refuge — sanctuaries of spiritual strength. This only strains the partnership even more with one seeking to close off access to protect valuables and the other partner seeking to draw those in need within the walls of the sanctuary.

Security, in general, comes in many flavors, including physical, personnel, information and information systems, among others. It is, no doubt, physical security that most of us think of first when we hear the word security. So here we will focus on physical security technology trends and their application to churches. It is these technologies that we are often able to employ to create a worthwhile balance, between protection from miscreants and the availability of the sanctuary.

But first, a quick word on effective security planning. To be effective, security cannot be a hodge-podge of “point solu-

tions” that are implemented willy-nilly. Instead, an assessment should be conducted to learn, if nothing else, what it is that needs protecting and from what it needs protection. After this, it becomes possible to create an integrated protection program for managing the various threats. Most importantly, a well-planned program balances the precarious partnership between the church and its security. With that said, let’s consider just a few of the available technologies.

ALARMS

While wireless alarms may have been around for a quite some time, they are much more robust and reliable now. They incorporate anti-jamming features, “man-in-the-middle” attack defenses, along with many conveniences. Sensors may be moved with relative ease since there are no wires. The systems may be activated and deactivated remotely, similar to opening a garage door, which eliminates the

need for delay zones on the interior of the facility. This is not to say that wired systems will go the way of the dinosaurs; on the contrary, they may now be used in conjunction with wireless technologies to make them more convenient and effective. Add a sensor, move a sensor, with the ease of wireless all the while various key sensors are hardwired in place.

New monitoring technologies allow alarms to be monitored over the Internet. This further enhances the available capabilities — because computers are talking to computers in real time. No phone lines mean more efficient and cheaper movement of the data. There are risks to this as well; however, they can be overcome all the same. The bottom line here is that alarms have become more convenient and flexible.

ARMOR

Don’t think a church can benefit from armor? Well, think again. It’s not just Kevlar and steel anymore. Window glazing offers

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real benefits against burglaries, vandalism and storm damage, and now there is little or no impact to visual clarity. Glazing allows us to put a relatively inexpensive barrier between stained glass windows and the public – or the storms – that is very strong. It also allows glass to provide tremendous protection from impacts of nearly any kind. It may not be bullet resistant, but it is capable of providing worthwhile protection.

Another form of armor is graffiti-resistant paint. These are considerably more expensive and require more effort to apply, but they significantly reduce the amount of clean-up needed after a graffiti attack. If your facilities are regularly subjected to this sort of abuse, then it may be good to invest in such a product.

CLOSED-CIRCUIT TV

Closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras have also been around for quite some time, but now they are smaller and less obtrusive, and the image clarity is considerably better. Add to this fact that the newer digital images provide many other advantages—faster prints, easier review on a PC interface, smaller storage area



A safe is not just a safe anymore. There have been some changes to how safes are locked thanks to locks that allow for rotating encrypted combinations.

(hard drives instead of videotape) and the value of remote monitoring. The options aren't just color or black & white anymore, and VCRs aren't the only cost-effective option for video storage, either. Digital Video Recorders (DVRs) store the information on hard drives and provide many features including remote access, video export and video overwrite. The video overwrite allows images to be maintained for a fixed period of time before they are automatically overwritten with new images.

Remote access and remote video monitoring are only now coming into their own. With remote video monitoring services, which operate much like a regular alarm monitoring service, a watch officer at a remote station may access your video in real-time or your stored images if you so wish. Now couple this with microphones and speakers, and this watch officer is able to make inquiries and observe activities as they happen. This creates the opportunity for a more appropriate response when compared with traditional alarm systems alone. Whether a burglary or some other offense is occurring is relatively easy to evaluate, and the watch



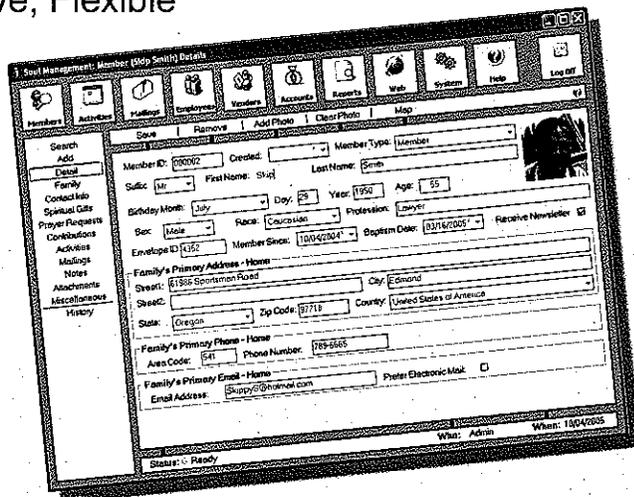
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officer is able to speak directly with the subject on the premise.

This may be very useful when dealing with vandals that can be "warned off" rather than requiring an immediate police dispatch. Images can then be forwarded to law enforcement as needed at a later time. There are several solution providers for these services with proven track records of their success. In short, remote monitoring creates an interactive response environment to better deal with the threat - what-

retina, hand geometry, fingerprints and so on. It is becoming far more cost effective and user friendly as well. Although they probably won't make traditional keys obsolete anytime soon, biometrics can fill some valuable roles. Imagine locations where it would be convenient not having a key but being able to control access.

SAFES

A safe is not just a safe anymore. There have been some changes to how safes are

courier from being involved with a burglary since each combination only works one time. These can be a really great tool to increase the safety of storing large amounts of currency.

There are a near endless stream of additional technologies dealing with the protection of many other assets including personnel, critical information, information technology systems, child care/nursery protection, and many more. One resource for finding security providers is

When considering security technologies to protect your assets, feel free to think in terms of what you want it do, rather than being limited to what you think it can do. At this point, it is entirely likely that what you think of can be done.

ever that may be - including medical emergencies and environmental hazards.

BIOMETRICS

There are currently only four ways to operate a lock: something you have, something you know, something you are or a combination of any of these. Biometrics utilizes the "are" concept and scans any measurable part of the body, including the

locked thanks to locks that allow for rotating encrypted combinations. These are routinely installed on ATMs and used by cash-in-transit providers. Their value to churches comes in the form of drop safes for which the courier service maintains the combination. There can be little concern that the courier pick-up is legitimate because the combination must be issued by a dispatcher. This also helps to prevent a

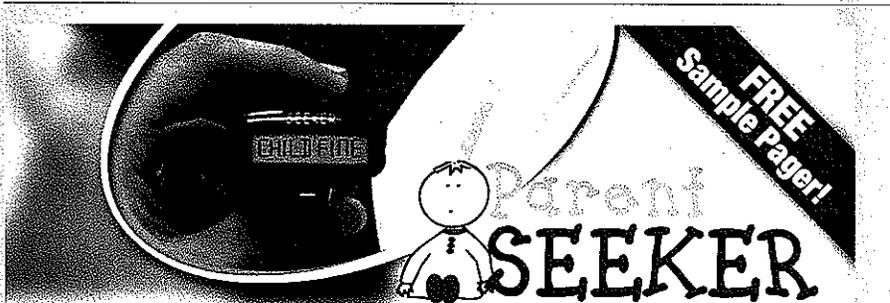
ASIS International (www.asisonline.org), which is the oldest security organization in the world with more than 30,000 members worldwide.

INTEGRATION AND THE FUTURE

By far the greatest step forward in convenience and utility has been the integration of these various technologies. It is now common to implement security features that are controlled through one mechanism - your IT network. For instance, consider an alarm system that operates in conjunction with both locks and CCTV systems, while providing external data access and electronic record storage.

The future is growing ever more interesting. In some instances, it is possible to route images from CCTV systems directly to data terminals in the vehicles of responding law enforcement officers. Within minutes, it may be possible to send a suspect's image to all of these terminals. These systems may also be integrated into facility management controls for even greater oversight. Integration will continue into the future as we, the users, demand ease and convenience of operation.

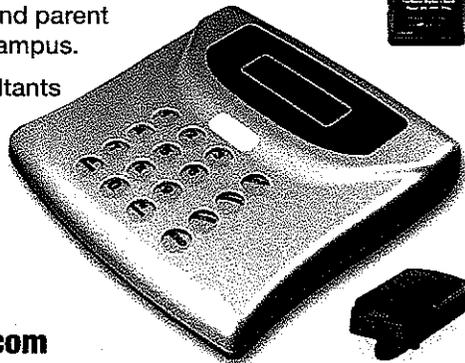
When considering security technologies to protect your assets, feel free to think in terms of what you want it do, rather than being limited to what you think it can do. At this point, it is entirely likely that what you think of can be done. **RPN**



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