Case Study

The Orlando Sanford International Airport

Genetec's Omnicast surpasses expectations at one of Florida's busiest airports, providing passengers and personnel alike with superior protection and security.

Renowned for its beaches and amusement parks, Florida has become a hotbed of tourist activity. It is no wonder then, that the Orlando Sanford International Airport (SFB), known as Central Florida's Gateway to the Sun, is one of the busiest Airports in the United States. Established in 1968, the Orlando Sanford International Airport is perpetually frequented with heavy traffic, large operations, and almost two million passengers each year.

Business challenge

In an airport of such capacity, response time to incidents is crucial for effective decision making and thus, for ensuring the safety of personnel and visitors of the airport. Although SFB did employ an older commercial-grade analog CCTV system to monitor security issues, this system did not have the functionality nor the capacity to properly archive video recordings, since it utilized VCR technology. This legacy technology imposed many limitations for security personnel at SFB, since not only were the playback of the tapes limited to proprietary equipment, but the image quality was extremely poor due to tapes being re-used and overwritten on a monthly basis. Similarly, there was no way of verifying that live camera video feeds were actually being recorded as anticipated, and maneuvering amongst and extracting archived video was not deemed an easy or quick process.

Thus, in order to keep all business activities, employees and the high-volume of passengers protected at all times, SFB's management knew they absolutely required a new system that would fulfill their diverse security needs.

Airport security needs

With years of experience in airport security and loads of knowledge on the existing system, Bryant Garrett, CFO and Chief of the Sanford Airport Police Department, was responsible for overseeing the selection of the new system. His requirements were simple. First, he wanted a system that would be integrative, scalable, and flexible. With these features, not only would they be able to capitalize on existing hardware investments and grow into future needs, but according to Mr. Garrett, "a non-proprietary system would [also] allow [SFB] to get competitive bids from multiple hardware vendors." Additionally, he wanted to be able to have a multiple camera screen presentation and the functionality to

manipulate PTZ cameras. Most importantly, he wanted to be able to quickly switch from live to archived videos and easily export selections of archived videos in high-quality format for other authorities to review from another monitoring station.

Ultimately, SFB needed a system with simplistic applications, reliable support and advanced technology which could ensure accurate information and timely management of security issues. Stressing high efficiency and functionality, and with the advice of a Genetec integrator, SiteSecure, Mr. Garrett and SFB decided that Genetec's advanced IP security surveillance solution, Omnicast, was the best choice.

The perfect solution

Not only did Omnicast meet all of SFB's requirements, but the solution exceeded their expectations. SFB decided to begin their analog-to-digital security conversion with the 150 cameras which were already in place and added another 80 cameras which were positioned throughout the premises by SiteSecure. Using existing fiber-optic cable, SiteSecure was also able to build a dedicated IP video network for SFB. With this new IP infrastructure, Omnicast's open architecture enabled SFB to both keep and choose their preferred server and hardware, and additionally gave "[them] a very scalable solution which [they] could grow very easily," claimed Andy Bowman, VP of engineering at SiteSecure. Mr Bowman has been working with SFB for a few years on upgrading their security system. Likewise, the flexibility of Omnicast's layout gave airport authorities the opportunity to choose their screen presentation and to adopt the functionalities of PTZ controls and cameras which were originally found on the legacy system.

Furthermore, the intuitive drag-and-drop user-interface proved popular with SFB's personnel who found it to be simple and

uncomplicated. "The user-interface was one of my favorite features," explained Mr. Garrett. "For example, changing names of the cameras is as easy as changing the name of a Microsoft word document." Another one of Mr. Garrett's preferred Omnicast features was the video bookmarking. With this unique function, SFB is able to flag a specific selection of video by a simple click of the mouse, which then stores the video instance in an accessible folder. Once they are ready, they can go back to the bookmark which they flagged to review the video content in question, at which point they will be able to determine if a breach had taken place.

Similarly, Omnicast's unique features also fulfilled SFB's greatest necessity: superior archiving capabilities. With the new system, Mr. Garrett and his staff were able to archive for extensive periods of time, sort through a lot of data and cameras very quickly, pull the essential data and if necessary, save it in high-quality format to send to others for review. In addition, the failover and redundant features available with Omnicast offered the insurance that recorded videos are properly backed up, making the system completely fault-tolerant.

With the combination of all these features and the warrantees that were described as the "the most comprehensive in its class," Mr. Garrett concluded that Omnicast was in fact the perfect solution by the following statement: "Omnicast software makes it very easy to get what you need."

The benefits

Today, many different users situated amongst multiple locations can take advantage of these Omnicast features on a daily basis. "Its ability to offer viewings of live and recorded video from basically anywhere in the airport where there was access to the network, was a huge plus for [SFB]," stated Mr. Bowman. Terminal managers monitor aircraft traffic at the gates, ground and airline activity, passenger congestion amongst the terminal and customs clearance, and all door access throughout the large premises. Additionally, law enforcement supervises the site from a remote dispatch center which is manned 24/7.

Already, the system has increased the efficiency of decision making at the airport and has also contributed to the prevention of security breaches. On a few occasions, SFB has avoided the need to evacuate passengers from the terminal for a very aggravating rescreen, when security officials had concerns that a security breach had perhaps occurred. After reviewing archived footage of the incident in question, "Omnicast was quickly able to identify that a breach had not occurred," claimed Mr. Garrett, and operations continued as usual. Similarly, with many different individuals

passing through high-security zones within the airport, sharp image quality gives security personnel the ability to assign culpability in case an intrusion occurs.

Overall, both Mr. Garrett and Mr. Bowman were very happy with the implementation of the new system and SFB's staff appreciates the advantages that the system has to offer on a daily basis. Equally, they were both impressed with the support that they received from Genetec. "One of the major reasons we always lead with Omnicast when we are proposing an NVR system, is because [Genetec] has always taken good care of us," claims Mr. Bowman. "When you have problems, you need to know that you have someone to depend on and [Genetec's] support has always been fabulous." Mr. Garrett was also eager to add: "It was refreshing to have the level of service when dealing directly with Genetec; where our previous vendor was not quick to respond, I have found Genetec to be very responsive."

The Omnicast solution has enabled SFB not only to save money, but to also significantly improve their response time and decision making process within this critical environment. Yet again, Genetec's Omnicast solution has ensured that today's rigorous airport security requirements have been met and due to their initiative to invest in an advanced and reliable security system, the Orlando Sanford International Airport is fully contented with the increased level of security it can now offer its passengers and personnel.