Case Study

City of Almere

8th Largest City in the Netherlands Merges Technology and Strategy in City-Wide Expansion with Genetec Omnicast

Omnicast IP Video Surveillance becomes the Technological Building Block to Bettering the Lives of Residents and Businesses in Almere

Business Challenge

The City of Almere is an ever evolving urban region with seven municipalities in the province of Flevoland, the Netherlands. Almere is ranked the 8th largest city in the Netherlands and with a population just under 200,000, it is considered to be one of the main cities in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area. Because of its growing popularity, Almere recently undertook an expansion plan with the objective to "provide an integrated solution for environmental consideration, while at the same time attaining optimal levels of quality of life, comfort and social, economic and cultural values."

Part of fulfilling this objective meant that the city needed to complement its urban spatial planning with modern surveillance technology to heighten safety for residents and businesses, without disrupting daily lives. While they had an existing video surveillance system, the City of Almere was looking for a state-of-the-art solution that would be able to expand in lockstep with their urban growth. The city wanted to upgrade its existing devices to the latest IP cameras, and was looking for an open-platform video surveillance system which would offer centralized management and real-time monitoring from a brand new central control station.

Modernization of the City of Almere's city-wide surveillance started with a public tender. VisiOn ISP, a local integration and installation specialist, was awarded the contract by suggesting Genetec Security Center, the unified security platform which includes the Omnicast IP video surveillance system. Omnicast was selected for its support for a long list of video camera devices, and its ease of use.

One-Click Functionality and Easy Map Navigation Heighten Response

To date, Omnicast manages over 120 IP cameras which are strategically installed throughout the city with protective enclosures. All captured video is sent back to a new surveillance center, which is located in an existing building called "De Voetnoot", which has been newly repurposed to house offices for public space management.

Summary

Client name: City of Almere

Organization size: 50 employees

Products: Security Center, Omnicast

Industry: City-Wide Surveillance

Location: Almere, Netherlands

Partners: VisiOn ISP

The ease of use of the video management system has been most advantageous for the City of Almere. From a surveillance room, five workstations are running Omnicast and video feeds are projected onto an expansive video wall. Operators easily navigate through the system, and can swiftly prompt specific camera views on the video wall during an emergency.

Finding cameras has been simplified with the use of Plan Manager, the map-based interface of Security Center. When responding to an incident, operators can quickly use the city map to locate other cameras nearby and access live video within moments. Plan Manager uses simple camera icons with PTZ field-of-view to provide immediate indication of the best vantages when responding to the incident. Instant playback also offers one-click access to 10, 15 or 30 seconds before the actual live event, enabling operators to quickly see what happenings have led to the incident in question.

Granular Privileges and Reporting Enhance Compliance and Results

With simple task-based navigation, operators can quickly bookmark different events in the system for easy retrieval later on. Bookmarking also allows operators to attach notes and tag event categories or types such as 'theft' or 'from vehicle'. These tags can be used later on to facilitate speedy searches and to generate reports.

Innovative **Solutions**

Genetec

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To further simplify reporting, VisiOn ISP used the Genetec software development kit (SDK) to build a plugin called VisiOn DIS that automatically generates reports for management. The flexibility of the reporting plugin allows authorized users to select various criteria to create custom reports that include data graphs and diagrams alongside any instance of video that is associated to those criteria. The detailed event reports from the VisiOn DIS module provide both qualitative information for police and statistics by means of quantitative information, offering information about cameras' use and event monitoring.

The city's police supervisor, the senior enforcement officer and the city manager all have their own monitoring stations available in the surveillance center in case urgent investigations or incident response requires their involvement. Setting highly-granular user permissions and privileges within Omnicast, the City of Almere is able to ensure that only those with the correct authority have access to specific cameras and various system functionalities. This added layer of access privileges helps to ensure that citizen privacy is protected at all times, and that video evidence goes through the correct chain of custody.

From a secure technical hub, police supervisors are able to securely and efficiently export video evidence to help build cases against city perpetrators. Video is also accessible from a situation/crisis room, where another video wall also displays camera views, allowing city management and police to congregate if ever more critical events require a full consolidation of resources.

Projecting Growth in the City of Almere

As the city's expansion plans are underway, so too are discussions about growing the city-wide surveillance system. The open architecture of Security Center not only allows the city to continue adding the latest video surveillance devices, but also enables city management or police to eventually merge other systems within the unified security platform to evolve its city control room. These systems might include IP access control for better security through the city's public services and utilities buildings and automatic number plate recognition for improved vehicle roadway monitoring.

According to Mr. Jaap Kroese, Account Manager for Camera Surveillance at the City of Almere, "We are very pleased with Omnicast video surveillance, as the system has enhanced our views of the vast public spaces that we aim to protect and our ability to respond to any event in the timeliest manner. While technology is not the focus of our city expansion plans, it is a vital piece of the puzzle that will allow our city to continue prospering."

Infrastructure at a Glance

Omnicast manages over 120 cameras, both Axis Q6035-E and Axis Q6044-E PTZ cameras, which are connected back to the central server at the technical hub via a dedicated fiber optic network. Additional cameras can be temporarily added within a day's notice, whereby the city of Almere leverages a wireless backbone on top of the World Trade Center in Almere, offering tremendous flexibility. All video is sent back to the surveillance center which has five workstations for operators and supervisors from both the police and the local government.

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