

SECURITY Dealer

CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY & PRODUCTS FOR SECURITY PROFESSIONALS

CHOOSING NEW PRODUCT LINES

20/20 FORESIGHT: VIDEO VERIFICATION LOOKS GOOD FROM HERE



By Joe Moses

A vision for the security industry's future must include proven solutions. When you are choosing new product lines, video verification is an essential part of that future. It shows the central monitoring station that a true emergency exists so operators can assure first responders that an alarm is valid.

The value of video verification can be measured in how many segments of the security industry benefit from it. Those who benefit, in addition to you and your customers, range from guard services and police and fire departments to central monitoring stations. Video verification contributes to a lower cost of dispatching

police and can improve response.

Attacking attrition is the good news for dealers in regard to video verification. With a lower rate of false dispatch comes a lower rate of attrition and a higher value attached to alarm systems. According to Keith Jentoft, vice president of Minnesota-based RSI Alarm, verified alarms provide a valuable new revenue stream for alarm companies while saving central stations from having to use additional call verification strategies that require central stations to phone a call list to verify an alarm before dispatching authorities.

"It is all about faster police response," Jentoft says. "Our verification system gives central stations ten-

What video verification is	What video verification is not
Automatic recording and video transmission triggered by alarm activation.	Not surveillance and not always-on video recording and transmitting.
Video signals delivered for viewing by the central station at the time of an alarm.	Not used primarily as archived video footage.
Designed for use with existing central station alarm formats and communications protocols.	Not always dependent on proprietary transmission formats.
A way to reduce the number of false dispatches.	Not a way to reduce the number of false alarms.
Designed to enable faster police response to a crime in progress.	Not intended for surveillance or use as "Nanny Cams."

second video clips captured by our camera-equipped PIR motion detectors. That saves the central station all the time they currently have to spend tracking down people on the call list for enhanced verification before dispatching."

OzVision, providers of video verification technologies for homes and businesses, believes that dealers have a lot to gain by installing video verification. "Video verification will greatly reduce attrition," OzVision CEO Ed Mallen states, "simply because the more touch points you have with customers, the greater their motivation to stay with you."

ONLY TRANSMITTED VIDEO IS ALARM VERIFICATION

Traditional video surveillance cameras already record and store hours of surveillance; but at the moment of an intrusion alarm there is no time for the central station to get access to video stored at the crime scene to verify an alarm. Ideally, video verification is shot and transmitted during alarm activation by a camera that has the same field of vision as the motion detector that trips the alarm. Video verification images are delivered to the central station where an operator can visually confirm that a crime is in progress.

Although video verification is tested—including 60,000 installations in Europe—it is not in widespread use in part due to

industry skittishness about new technologies. Dennis Dop, vice president of sales at RSI Alarm, finds some similarities between current reservations about video verification and old concerns voiced by central stations when audio verification was new.

"It's like déjà vu with central stations talking about two-way voice and fearing they will need separate two-way rooms and lots of extra training," he comments. "Well, they found out that audio verification was less labor-intensive than they

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Keith Jentoft

thought—and they didn't need separate rooms and lots of extra training after all."

Revenue increases from video verification are likely to add to the bottom line for dealers by increasing the value of monitoring. That's what happened when security installing companies started adding 24-hour fire monitoring to intrusion systems to increase the value of monitoring for residential and commercial customers while increasing RMR by several dollars

per account. Experience in Europe shows 10-25% higher average monthly fees with a video verified alarm.

"No doubt there has been some resistance to the idea that video can really lower false alarms and increase apprehensions," Mallen says, "but with some history behind us and several of our partners using OzVision in a very successful manner with little to no change in the operations of their central stations, we are believers that the industry will really get behind verification when they see how effective it is in accomplishing the basic goals of better dispatches."

Video verification may in fact alter public perceptions of alarm monitoring. "Video verification lets us tell a much more positive story about security alarm monitoring," Jentoft says. "Instead of being on the defensive about false alarms, we can start taking a pro-verification position and really start touting the value of what the industry has to offer."

Video verification has caught the attention of National Guardian Security Services, Inc., a provider of electronic security to multi-location businesses throughout the United States and Canada. The company recently announced an agreement to collaborate on

commercial video verification using OzVision's secure network for transmitting video verification to central stations.

Current trends show increasing displacement of high-cost physical security with video-verified monitoring. Unfortunately, because municipalities are eager to stem the flow of false alarms pouring into their precincts, users are fearing false alarms as much as they do intrusion or fire. Video verification can deliver some peace of mind.