

Video in penal system

The flat, rectangular concrete building sits mysteriously in the yard. Its size demands respect. Approaching the 6 meter high wall with its revolving steel door, one knows: Those inside are not the only ones under surveillance. In the new central prison at Lenzburg, Switzerland, twice as many cameras as guards observe the life of those inside as well as outside the cells. They are part of a state-of-the-art video surveillance system, designed and installed to meet the client's special requirements.



With the 72 fixed and 8 pan-tilt-zoom (PTZ) dome cameras from Panasonic and XProtect[®] video surveillance software from Milestone, Siaxma (a Milestone certified partner), did not use its own products, but certainly a great deal of its own know-how. Video specialist Thomas Rudin gained the confidence of this client with convincing arguments, thus winning the public contract. Rudin is also a member of the 'CCTV System Committee' in the Swiss Association of Security System Installers. His ace in the hole: IP video for operation of the entire network-based surveillance system instead of the originally planned analog equipment.

This approach provides significant advantages: More flexible operation, better image quality, simple configuration by customers and multiple upgrade possibilities. The enormous quantity of data - in the past the relevant images from each camera were saved for 7 days - is stored on two Pivot3 servers installed especially for this application; a third runs in parallel as a redundant security feature. In the outdoor area infrared spotlights also ensure surveillance by recording images during the night.

Software supports humans

The Milestone software is a leader in the market. "As a certified partner, Siaxma not only has the right product; one of its major strengths is integrating systems from third parties with existing or new infrastructures", summarized Thomas Etter, Deputy Security Instructor for the central prison. "We then linked the video system to the present access control system, the intercom system and the security control system.

For example, if someone reports from one of the intercom stations or opens a door at a medical location, the image from the corresponding camera appears immediately on the monitor", explained Etter. This "on-demand" feature facilitates our work in the control center, particularly at night, when only one prison officer is on duty. Moreover, it saves storage space while still guaranteeing complete retraceability of all events. The Pivot3 server saves the images only when the camera registers movement, whereby the last 20 seconds before the event is also recorded.



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The floor plan for the Milestone coverage is subdivided into zones; all camera locations are interlinked and can be controlled via mouse click. The most important can be switched on with the keyboard, where over 20 fixed settings - i.e. the exact image sections - can be programmed. Otherwise the pan/tilt/zoom motions of the camera can be controlled with either a joystick or mouse.



"The Milestone software allows us to complete such configurations ourselves to the greatest extent, so that we can adapt it quickly to our specific requirements", added Thomas Etter. "Since the central prison is a new building and our everyday routine with the prisoners is being developed step by step, our requirements may change. But the video surveillance system remains independent and flexible."

Cooperation with general planners

"The consultancy company *Arnstein+Walthert Sicherheit* had the overall responsibility for planning the security solutions in Lenzburg and we have already realized many projects with them. The cooperation between the general contractor, the client and Siaxma was excellent from our point of view, particularly because the client side was represented by really competent people," reported Siaxma.

"I can return this complement", said Christian Harder, Deputy Security Chief and Security Instructor at the Lenzburg Penitentiary.

Visions of the future

Incidentally, Christian Harder had an interesting idea: Using "cable car cameras" in the outdoor area in the same manner as for TV broadcasts from sports stadiums, particularly in a prison. This would reduce the number of cameras, while improving the coverage of the surveillance area per camera. This provides a little food for thought.

Basic project data

Building floor space: 8800 m²
Building volume: 32,550 m³
Number of cells: 107
Staff: approx. 40
Number of fixed dome cameras: 72
Number of PTZ dome cameras: 8
Number of Pivot3 servers: 3
Infrared spotlights: 20
Display monitors: 4x 20" and 1x 50" monitors
Control stations: 2



About Milestone Systems

Founded in 1998, Milestone Systems is the global industry leader in open platform IP video management software. The XProtect® platform delivers powerful surveillance that is easy to manage, reliable and proven in thousands of customer installations around the world. With support for the widest choice in network hardware and integration with other systems, XProtect provides best-in-class solutions to video enable organizations – managing risks, protecting people and assets, optimizing processes and reducing costs. Milestone software is sold through authorized and certified partners. For more information, visit www.milestonesys.com



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