



# Orlando Eye Observes Highest Standards with Multi-Vendor Integration

**Crowd Challenges:** Merlin Entertainment needed a full-scale security solution for its new central-Florida triple-attraction complex: The Orlando Eye, Madame Tussaud’s Orlando and SEA LIFE Orlando. Their chief security concerns are focused on ensuring a good flow throughout the property for guests while keeping unauthorized personnel out of restricted areas. They also want extra tight access control of the ride area, garage parking and electrical rooms.

**Network Video Solution Integrated with Access Control:** To help choose the right security solution, Merlin Entertainment enlisted Signature Systems of Florida, a long-time provider of Milestone Systems video management software (VMS), Axis Communications network video cameras, and Open Options access control products. Merlin Entertainment Security Manager Phillip Wallinger, along with Signature Systems of Florida President Phil Lutes and his team, decided the best solution for the video surveillance component of the project would be to deploy 250 network cameras



operating Milestone XProtect Enterprise VMS. The solution uses a majority of Axis cameras, including the AXIS P3364-VE Network Camera, AXIS P5522-E PTZ Dome Network Camera, AXIS M3014 Fixed Dome Network Camera, and the AXIS P3354 Network Camera.

XProtect Enterprise is the perfect VMS for this vast entertainment complex because it was developed for large, multi-site installations. Its comprehensive features help operators view many locations with an unlimited number of cameras, allowing them to react quickly to incidents and efficiently export video. XProtect Enterprise includes configuration wizards and automatic hardware detection, which significantly reduce the time and cost of installing surveillance systems with many cameras. The software provides exceptional situational awareness with multi-layered, interactive maps, sophisticated alarm handling and a unique Camera Navigator for tracking moving objects. Daily operations at the Orlando Eye complex are controlled and viewed with the Milestone XProtect Smart Client. Non-stationary security personnel can also access live and recorded video via supporting applications including Milestone Mobile and XProtect Web Client.

For access control, Merlin and Signature Systems of Florida selected Open Options’ DNA Fusion software. The complex currently runs on DNA Fusion version 6.2.2.14. With DNA Fusion, the sprawling complex in Orlando can be managed via a regular client, the web, or Apple and Android smartphones. DNA Fusion provides a complete access control solution including door control, visitor management, and photo ID management in an open platform. The Orlando Eye deployment includes access control coverage for 60 doors throughout the complex. The supporting electronics for the access system is Authentic Mercury hardware and includes the latest offerings from Open Options including SSP-D2 intelligent door controllers, NSC-100 IP door controllers, a number of I/O boards, and R40 HID readers.



As a true open platform system, Open Options' DNA Fusion interfaces seamlessly with other security systems such as video, biometrics, and wireless locks. In fact, Open Options' DNA Fusion has integrated with Milestone Systems VMS products for years and was among the first access control software developers to integrate with Milestone's XProtect Access Control Module (ACM). This provides end users such as The Orlando Eye security team a simple yet powerful way to deliver access control events and data into the XProtect Smart Client which expands integration benefits for the customer by giving them a choice in where they monitor and manage their unified security system.

**Open Platform Interoperability Advantages:** Merlin Entertainment chose this three-pronged security solution with present and future needs in mind. While Merlin was impressed with Milestone's wide array of feature sets and open platform, a critical selling point was the system's deep, seamless integration with Axis cameras and Open Options DNA Fusion. Using the three together provided a top-quality, cost-effective solution for the present while offering more integration features for the future. Merlin found Milestone easy to train on, appreciated the flexibility and quality of Axis cameras as well as features like autofocus that save time and manpower. Merlin was also impressed with Open Options' intuitive access control software system for door monitoring.



#### Merlin Entertainment's Global Activities

Merlin Entertainment owns and operates more than 600 different properties around the globe, including all Madame Tussaud's and SEA LIFE aquariums. Their revenue in 2014 was £1,249 million. The Orlando Eye is a 400-foot state-of-the-art observation wheel that is the latest addition for the "Eye" brand (the most notable being the London Eye), also managed and operated by Merlin Entertainment. As the only attraction of its kind in the area it, provides a panoramic view of all of Orlando's attractions, and on a clear day NASA's Vehicle Assembly Building (VAB) can be seen from the top of the wheel.

Madame Tussaud's is internationally

recognized for its incredible lifelike wax sculptures that provide a fun, interactive museum experience. Madame Tussaud's Orlando includes sculptures of Michael Jackson, Martin Luther King Jr. and Marilyn Monroe. SEA LIFE Orlando provides a dazzling underwater experience, including a 360-degree ocean tunnel, more than 5,000 creatures and a hands-on touchpool experience. In addition, Merlin has created charitable organizations such as SEA LIFE Trust to help ensure the safety and ethical treatment of marine animals in their care.

#### Benefits of Open Platform Technology

Wiljo Ridanpaa, project manager for Signature Systems of Florida, says that open architecture technologies provide a big advantage over competitors.

"It's a no-brainer to use Milestone," Ridanpaa says. "The playback features, the carousel camera viewing, everything you get in the XProtect Smart Client interface. Being able to run it on any server or any PC with enough power makes it the best plug-and-play video management system out there. Proprietary systems bring problems because you're limited with server choice, client stations and viewing. If you buy an off-the-shelf NVR or DVR, you're locked into using that for your storage."

#### Axis and Milestone: A Great Match

Phillip Wallinger, security manager for The Orlando Eye, Madame Tussaud's Orlando & SEA LIFE Orlando, emphasized that when using Milestone software, Axis is their first video surveillance camera choice.



“Axis is far and away our preferred camera provider,” says Wallinger. “I still have not found another vendor that matches their image clarity, and the administration ability to go in with the Milestone management to change frame rates and rotations, makes them really easy to work with.”

Wallinger notes that the ability to autofocus the Axis cameras was an important factor when choosing a camera vendor.

“Axis has gone above and beyond in their arena,” Ridanpaa says. “The ability to autofocus may seem like a simple tool, but it’s absolutely essential. You don’t have to have a guy on a ladder focusing the lens while you’re talking to a guy that could be at a monitor with lag time. That feature alone is worth its weight in gold.”

Ridanpaa says he loves the processing power of Axis cameras and the convenient feature sets, like the ability to rotate views and set up hallway views with the Corridor Format. Ridanpaa also appreciates the ability to change image resolutions which improves how video gets streamed across the network, as well as tweaking the format for exporting and sending photos and video from Milestone.

“I can put a low-level technician on an Axis camera installation,” Ridanpaa says. “They’ll scan the network, see the IP address automatically picked up in the Milestone wizard and license the camera. The default settings give you everything you need. The deep Axis integration with Milestone gives you so many options and so much power.”

### **Ease of Use Saves Hours of Training**

Wallinger says that Merlin Entertainment had a certain comfort level with Milestone from prior uses.

“Merlin uses Axis and Milestone at Legoland and at their SEA LIFE facility in Michigan,” Wallinger says. “It’s worked really well in both places, so that was definitely a factor in deciding to use it again for this solution.”

“This solution is extremely easy to use,” Wallinger says. “We have all of our internal security trained on it, as well as our dispatchers and some of our administrators. They know how to change settings from 4:3 to 16:9 and how to have one camera on a view or 100 cameras.”

“It’s very dynamic when we do training,” Ridanpaa says. “In this instance the main security officer (Wallinger) was well versed in Milestone so it was just introducing him to new features. For others, it can be 1-3 hours. This covers everything from turning the computer on to rebooting the entire system.”



“The trainings go really smoothly,” says Dan Lee, who works in engineered sales for Signature Systems. “We just don’t run into a lot of problems. And with Axis, we have so many choices – types of cameras, feature sets and everything is through one manufacturer, so we’re not chasing people down to make custom brackets and things like that.”

### **Open Options Provides Premier Access Control**

Open Options’ DNA Fusion software, which provides access control for all the doors to the facility makes it very easy to control access levels for the more than 500 employees throughout the Orlando Eye entertainment complex.

“You come to the drop-down menu, and it’s just a matter of choosing which doors you want for which access levels,” Wallinger says. “In addition, once everyone has the assigned access, it’s so easy to go into their profile and add or subtract access levels.”



"The user interface is great," Ridanpaa says. "Open Options combines great hardware with software that just gets better and better. The updates aren't frivolous – we see tangible improvements every time."

Ridanpaa says that Signature Systems has long recommended Open Options and DNA Fusion.

"We have been using Open Options for many years," Ridanpaa says. "We have such a great relationship with them, and have confidence that any issue we might have will get resolved immediately with minimal hassle."

Wallinger also highlighted the expandability of Open Options, for example, with such features as badge printing and ID verification, which are all rolled into the DNA Fusion package.

### Looking to the Future

Wallinger says there are exciting future prospects for the system, especially involving further integration of the Milestone video interface and Open Options' DNA Fusion access control.

"One thing we're really excited about is integrating the ID verification option," Wallinger says. "It would allow us to see an employee's photo as soon as they swipe their badge and make the cameras shift to show video of the door they're going through simultaneously. That way you're able to verify the picture on the badge with the actual image of the person who's going through that door."

Ridanpaa says he is excited about expanding features available to Merlin through the joint integrations of Axis, Milestone and Open Options.

"We have a great starting point with the Milestone platform," Ridanpaa says. "It gives us the benefit of using mapping features in the XProtect Smart Client, which lets you quick-draw a camera or event and hover over it to get a preview. With Open Options, we also have mapping ability. You can click on the door and actually put a highlight on it to see if it's being held or being forced. All these features are in the planning stages but we are excited to have them at our fingertips."

---

### About Milestone Systems

Milestone Systems is a global industry leader in open platform IP video management software, founded in 1998 and now operating as a stand-alone company in the Canon Group. Milestone technology is easy to manage, reliable and proven in thousands of customer installations, providing flexible choices in network hardware and integrations with other systems. Sold through partners in more than 100 countries, Milestone solutions help organizations to manage risks, protect people and assets, optimize processes and reduce costs. For more information, visit: [www.milestonesys.com](http://www.milestonesys.com).