

Press Release

„Uncouple software from hardware“

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Axis Communications and Nedap Security Management discuss why open standards and flexible IP solutions are important for security.

Both Axis and Nedap feel the importance of a scalable and flexible security solution for the end user. Daren Lang, Regional Manager Business Development Northern Europe at Axis Communications and Daryn Flynn, Business Development Manager UK at Nedap Security Management discuss how this can be achieved and emphasize the need to uncouple software from hardware in order to respond faster to changes.

Security systems are becoming ever more complex and sophisticated. Which aspects are most important to the user?

“Our experience shows that a scalable, flexible solution is of the utmost importance for the end user. After all, what’s the point of an extensive security system that is only designed to address today’s challenges, but in a few years will be obsolete. Never forget: in an increasingly networked world, people want simple, user-friendly, flexible and open systems. Therefore, Axis has always based our products and services on open IP networks — not only in video security, but also in access control,” says Daren Lang. “But before we talk about new technologies, first let’s look at today’s market” he continues. “Many analog, hybrid or IP solutions available today have the problem of being proprietary systems, offering very limited flexibility. Integrating third-party products is practically impossible. Users therefore very often have to make a long-term bet on just one vendor. Upgrading or expanding security systems, whether it be cameras, audio or card readers is often complex, expensive and time-consuming, because cables have to be laid and connected to a main unit or a central server. But the industry is changing. IP is an interesting alternative here and offers a wide choice of different functions that can’t be implemented with analog technology alone. But most of all, it is the users’ expectations for remote access, high image quality, event management, simple integration and better scalability that are setting the pace for developing IP systems. For example, IP systems are easy, fast and inexpensive to install, thanks to a flexible, open platform, which makes easy networking with other IP-based areas possible at all levels of operation.”

Daryn Flynn confirms: “Exactly, openness to additional features and integration with other parts of a security system is essential for the end-user. Because their needs will change over the years, a flexible and open system is able to adapt to those changes. The physical security industry doesn’t seem to have caught up with the idea that systems should be developed that are able to meet future change. With almost any current physical security solution, proprietary software and hardware combine to provide specific functionality. A change in functionality, therefore, requires both software and hardware to be developed. Such systems don’t allow for fast responses to changes affecting end users, and they don’t anticipate future needs. From a client’s perspective, systems based on proprietary hardware and software require a significant investment every time a change needs to be made, making them inflexible and expansion unnecessarily expensive. To meet the needs of users, software and hardware should be decoupled and open standards should be used.”

The access control market is fiercely competitive. In what direction do you think developments will go?

“We believe that the adoption of both generic hardware and open standards will benefit end users significantly and is transforming the industry. Uncoupling software from hardware allows manufacturers to respond faster to changes,” Daryn Flynn states. “Moreover, it will enable innovation, as the time to get new products and features to market will decrease. This will allow the entire security industry to react to change quicker, and it will also encourage the industry to be proactive and innovative. The adoption of open standards will, ultimately, result in a different type of competition. Openness will make products more transparent and create fair competition focused on added value, unique features, product usability, design and innovative ideas, instead of hardware prices.”

"We see it the same way," adds Daren Lang. "An example is the security corridor which can be found in retail stores. It separates the sales area from the room where the money and sensitive data are stored. An integrated system with access control and video surveillance provides visual data. Using intelligent functions, such as "tailgating" software, the camera recognizes when several people are present in the passageway. The result: an alarm goes off in the video management system and recording starts. Plus, the security system notifies the security managers, who choose to authorize entry or not."

What are the technical advantages of an open system compared to a proprietary one?

Daren Lang of Axis explains: "Conventional access control systems usually depend on fixed cabling of each element — the card reader, the door opener, the door locks, the door position switch, etc. — to a central unit or server. With proprietary systems, end users are often tied to a single vendor for hardware and software." And even then, one shouldn't underestimate how complex these systems are to manage. Installation and configuration of a proprietary system is often much more laborious than an open one, requiring personnel trained for that specific system. IP systems, however, use existing network infrastructures. "Power over Ethernet" (PoE) powers electric door openers, readers and other components. This means that the data connection and the power supply run through a single cable, which greatly simplifies cable installation. Color-coded connections make installation fast and simple. Plug & play and off you go! Because IP-based systems don't have to be hard wired to a central control unit or a central server, flexible, scalable, non-proprietary installations can be done quickly and easily. These solutions are not only versatile to use, but they also save money. That is because a network-based system is no longer bound to a specific scale but can be expanded door by door and reader by reader as needed."

Daryn Flynn adds: "Additionally, the use of open standards will further improve the freedom to integrate different solutions from different manufacturers. This will prevent vendor lock-in, and enable users to deal with legacy systems. Introducing open standards allows clients to mix and match not only the cameras they need or the card readers that best fit their budget, it also allows them to select the specific functionality that suits their security policy."

About Nedap and Axis

Nedap and Axis build on years of cooperation. What started with the integration of Axis cameras into the AEOS Security Management Platform becomes now a full integration including access control. By connecting AEOS and AXIS A1001 Network Door Controller you add more value to your security system. Besides the standard functionality offered by Axis, you also have full access to all functionality of AEOS. From visitor management, anti-passback and security scenarios to fine grained access rights modelling. This solution brings you a fully equipped access control system.

These developments are possible because the two companies build their solutions on the same philosophy; both Axis and Nedap develop open systems with solid API's. They use standards already available in the market, like ONVIF. That is why the roadmaps of Nedap and Axis align.

Both companies are exhibiting at the IFSEC, 21-23 June in the Excel in London. You can find Nedap at stand F1475 and Axis at stand E1000.

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