

Credit Union on the Cutting-Edge

Centris Federal Credit Union Transitions to All-IP Video Surveillance Solution

Staying on top of a rapidly evolving technology like video surveillance can be challenging. Despite the fact that the latest technologies are more powerful, more efficient and more effective at addressing risks, the logistics of making a transition can be complex, decision-making can take time, and the required investment can be significant.

OWEVER, some banks and credit unions take pride in being early adopters and are able to move quickly to embrace change.

Such is the case with Centris Federal Credit Union, an Omaha, Nebraska-based financial institution with 11 branches serving Omaha and other communities across the state.

Centris was a March Networks customer long before the industry began transitioning from analog to IP and from NVRs to server-based platforms.

March Networks 4216 NVRs and analog cameras were acquired in 2006, but when a new head office building was acquired three years later, Michael Hoyer, Vice-President of Technical Services, and Facilities Manager Blake Grooters, decided to test the waters with a server-based March Networks Video Management Software (VMS) solution and third-party IP cameras.

Subsequent remodeling projects at several branches offered an opportunity to transition to an all-IP system there as well. This time, however, Centris opted for March Networks Command, the company's new web-based video management software, and March Networks IP cameras, which they preferred over the third-party cameras originally acquired for their head office. Cameras selected include the MegaPX MicroDome, the MegaPX WDR MiniDome and the MegaPX 720p MiniDome.

Going forward, "the plan is to phase out the NVRs over time, put everything on Command and go exclusively with March Networks IP cameras," said Hoyer.

Despite the different flavors of technology across Centris' footprint, investigators are able to access and review video from any camera in the system through a common user interface. This allows the credit union to transition to new technology over time, leverage prior investments in NVRs and analog cameras and not have to worry about the interoperability of different platforms.

Command eliminates the need to upgrade software on desktops throughout the credit union's branch network, streamlines administration of user privileges and camera settings, and minimizes hardware failures as NVRs are replaced by servers.

At the same time, IP cameras provide Centris with a "phenomenal improvement in picture quality," said Grooters.

Command is also facilitating the deployment of video surveillance at remote kiosks in grocery stores. Instead of installing a March Networks 3000 Series NVR or a server at the location, Centris simply connects an IP camera to the corporate network linking the kiosk to the head office.

Command's web-based access will also facilitate mobile access to video from tablets and smart phones using March Networks Cloud. In the event of an emergency, authorized Centris staff will be able to go into the system, select a camera and view live video even if they are on the road or in a meeting offsite.

"There are more and more tablets across the enterprise, so we're looking forward to taking advantage of mobile access," said Hoyer.

Over the years, evidence from the March Networks video surveillance solution has been used on numerous occasions to document a variety of incidents — from robberies to cases of internal fraud — with

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— Michael Hoyer Vice-President, Technical Services, Centris FCU





some clips even airing on local TV news broadcasts. For the most part, however, the system functions as a deterrent.

"The first thing anyone sees when they come in the front door of one of our branches is a welcome monitor with their picture on it," said Hoyer. "It lets them know right away that they are under surveillance, so if they're coming in with anything other than innocent intentions, they'll just turn around and walk right out. There have been several instances of this over the years."

A March Networks single channel encoder is used to convert digital video from an IP camera for display on the analog monitor.

Centris adheres to the same strategy to combat ATM fraud by mounting cameras in areas that are out of reach of a potential fraudster. The cameras record the customer's approach, "so he can't cover up the camera installed in the ATM."

Several tools are available to the credit union to make sure their video surveillance system is up and running. March Networks Enterprise Service Manager software is used to report on the health status of the NVRs, while the health checking capability of Command Enterprise reports on any performance issues affecting the IP cameras. Branch management at sites still equipped with NVRs log on to each recorder first thing every morning to make sure their analog cameras are working, and Centris' IT department uses a network monitoring system that alerts staff to server and other issues.

"We have three large monitors in our technology services area that display alerts, color codes them and sends out text messages to whoever is on call, so we're pretty well covered," said Grooters.

Centris relies on Diebold Incorporated's Omaha office for support and expertise.

"It's a team approach," noted Diebold Senior Sales Representative Lindsay Michalski. "Between Customer Service Engineer John Watts, April Douglas, our Customer Service manager, Robert Chapin, our Business Solutions Manager and James Pralle, March Networks' Channel Sales Manager for the Midwest Region, we make sure that Centris is taken care of."

Centris recently took advantage of an alarm monitoring service that allows Diebold's 24/7 monitoring center to access Centris' March Networks video surveillance system for alarm verification.

"It's a great service to have because if something happens in the middle of the night at a branch, we can go in and have a look around," said Michalski. "If it's a false alarm, we don't have to wake anybody up or bother the police.

"I give a lot of credit to Michael Hoyer and Blake Grooters for embracing innovation and the technological changes that we have seen in the video surveillance industry. Their March Networks system is state-of-the-art and a model that other financial institutions can certainly emulate."



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