

A Unanimous Choice



DVR Gets Nod from Security and IT at Fifth Third Bank

Fifth Third Bank needed a networked DVR system capable of operating effectively in all of its business environments. With more than 1,000 retail banking centers, two security operations centers, corporate offices in Cincinnati, Ohio, and numerous cash vaults, wire rooms and data centers located across the U.S., finding the best system to meet the bank's requirements was going to be a challenge.

NE of the 15 largest financial services companies in the U.S., with \$98.3 billion in assets, Fifth Third Bank currently has a mixture of digital and analog-based CCTV surveillance and monitoring systems in place. Its goal was to standardize on a single, best-in-class DVR line to replace those older products – improving efficiencies and lowering operating and maintenance costs in the process.

According to Mike Neugebauer, Fifth Third's assistant vice president of corporate safety and security, it had been about three years since the bank had researched DVRs. The technology had advanced significantly during that period and Neugebauer's team was ready to take another look at the new systems available. Neugebauer was also determined to involve his IT colleagues in the decision-making process.

"Security in today's age can't function without the support of your IT group. If you look at all the security products out there, everything is being driven toward the network. So a large part of our criteria was finding a DVR system that was going to support our needs in physical security and also function well in our IT environment."

Testing

To meet that dual purpose, Neugebauer set up a two-phased evaluation process. First his team compared 12 competitive DVR systems, examining capabilities such as video storage and retrieval, camera support, ease of installation, serviceability, warranties, track records in the field, and a list of other performance and design criteria.

They then sent the top two systems to their IT group for an entirely different round of testing.

"IT really put the systems through their paces," Neugebauer says. "The information security group looked at them, the networking architecture group tested them – even the guys who build our PCs internally for us. In the end, every discipline we have in the IT world had an opportunity to look them over.



"The interesting part was, we didn't tell IT which system we wanted. We reserved our opinion until they were done testing with the hope that they would approve the one we, as security professionals, felt was going to be best for us."

When all the evaluations were complete, the two groups got together to reveal their final selection. The decision was unanimous. The March Networks™ DVR system was the clear winner.

"The other unit that made the final cut had older technology we felt might quickly become outdated," says Neugebauer. "The March Networks systems are truly the next generation of digital video." Physical Security Manager Victor Mahon (standing) and DVR Administrator Jason Bauer in a Fifth Third Bank security monitoring station

Mike Neugebauer, Assistant Vice President, Corporate Safety and Security





Rollout

Fifth Third Bank has already started deploying March Networks 4000 Series DVRs and expects to have 250 units installed by the end of 2004. Neugebauer says that once his team is satisfied those systems are performing well in the field, they anticipate an aggressive retrofit of CCTV systems throughout 2005.

He adds that IT will also be reviewing a proposal to integrate the systems with transaction data from the bank's 1,800 Automated Teller Machines (ATMs). Part of March Networks' powerful Enterprise Management Suite of software, the optional Banking Assistant synchronizes video with transaction data records to create an easily accessible, secure database for use in bank investigations.

The advanced capabilities of the Enterprise Management Suite, which will enable Fifth Third to manage and upgrade any number of networked DVRs from its security monitoring station, heavily influenced the selection of the March Networks system, Neugebauer notes.

"The enterprise management software gave us a tool to constantly check the health of the units. And that's a huge advantage in a retail banking environment. When we were using analog or even some of the other digital units, we had to depend on the banking center staff to constantly check their camera views, recording settings and

so on, to ensure that the units were

working properly.

"With the March Networks enterprise management software, we can now tell if even a single camera goes down because the system will alert us to that."

Remote upgrades

The ability to send updates to the DVRs remotely is also a considerable benefit, he says.

"Typically when we've had to upgrade units, we would lose our historical video. With the March Networks systems, we can put an upgrade out from the main office on a time schedule that's convenient for us so that it doesn't interfere with day-to-day operations. The upgrade doesn't consume the pipeline. It ensures that the tellers and loans staff – the people who are making money for the bank – have the network available to them for everyday business."

The Enterprise Management Suite is popular with IT as well, says Victor Mahon, physical security manager with the bank's corporate safety and security team. The management software enables IT to set the DVRs to share a pool of IP addresses (DHCP) rather than assigning a static IP address to each. When a DVR comes online and obtains a new IP address, it automatically communicates that information to the software's service manager so its location on the network is always known. This saves IT staff time and is more cost-effective for the bank, Mahon explains.

A final factor in the decision to move forward with March Networks, adds Neugebauer, was its impressive manufacturing processes.

"Some of the manufacturers we engaged were reluctant to show us their manufacturing facilities. With March Networks, it was a showpiece. They are very proud of the quality control processes in place. And if you're not proud of your unit and your manufacturing facility, why would we trust you?" **

Fifth Third Bank

Fifth Third Bancorp (www.53.com) is a diversified financial services company headquartered in Cincinnati, Ohio. With approximately \$98.3 billion in assets, it is among the 15 largest bank holding companies in the United States and among the 10 largest in market capitalization. Fifth Third's 19,000 employees provide banking, investment and electronic payment processing services to 5.7 million customers through 17 affiliates in Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, West Virginia, Tennessee and Florida. The company's common stock is traded through the NASDAQ National Market System under the symbol "FITB."