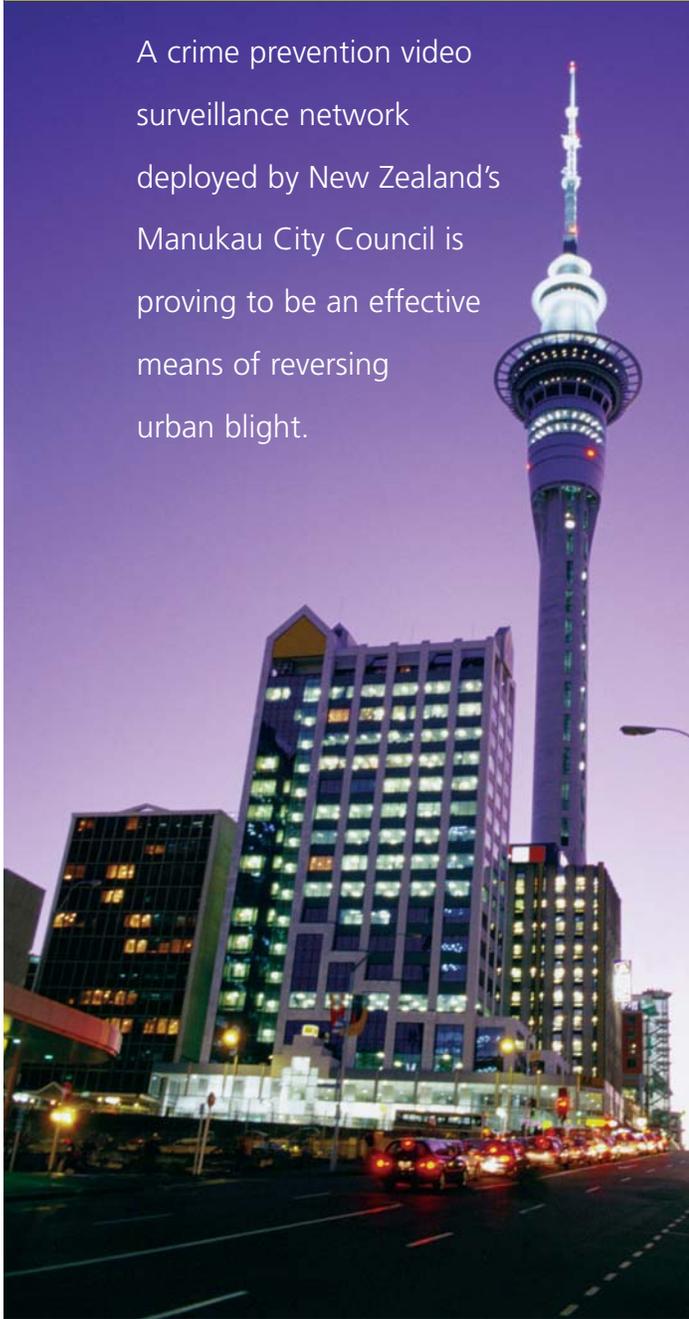


Urban Cure

New Zealand City Brings New Life to Troubled Neighbourhoods

A crime prevention video surveillance network deployed by New Zealand's Manukau City Council is proving to be an effective means of reversing urban blight.



CRIME rates have been slashed, drug dealing and other illicit activities have been curtailed, and real estate values are staging a comeback in four commercial areas subject to video surveillance. Located on New Zealand's North Island within greater Auckland, Manukau is the country's third largest city with a population of 320,000.

The municipal council piloted the video surveillance system in 2001 when traditional means of policing didn't seem to be deterring unwanted activity. The pilot was so successful that the crime prevention network was expanded in 2003 and 2004.

March Networks™ Certified Solution Provider Swiftlink Ltd. supplied and installed the systems using a variety of March Networks DVRs. It also provides the council with 24/7 live monitoring services.

24/7 monitoring

Manukau's DVRs are installed in private businesses or city-owned facilities and are linked back to Swiftlink's control centre by a mixture of networks, including a wireless LAN, a wireless VPN and frame relay, DSL and fiber optic cable connections.

Pan-tilt-zoom (PTZ) cameras in public spaces are controlled remotely by Swiftlink control centre personnel or pre-programmed as part of a guard duty tour.

Swiftlink monitoring personnel alert the police or other community services staff when an incident, such as a theft or altercation, is observed, enabling them to respond to the event almost immediately. They also provide the council with a daily log of events through a Web-based event reporting system.

"We copy still images and attach them to the log," says Swiftlink managing director Warren Kitchin. "It could be a picture of an individual, a graffiti tag, or something else of interest. From that, police and municipal officials can assess whether the visual evidence may be of use to them. If it is, they'll then make a request to view the entire clip."

Requested video clips are copied to a CD or DVD and viewed using the March Networks DVR Player, a free video playback utility.

To comply with New Zealand's Privacy Act, Manukau City Council entered into a memorandum of understanding with the New Zealand Police and Swiftlink to govern access to the video, explains Leeanne Di Bella, team leader for the Safer Manukau program.

"There are only a few police officers and municipal officials who have access to the video and there's a very strict process we have to go through to view it."

Reporting

Swiftlink monitoring personnel also use the event reporting

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system to quantify events for statistical purposes.

"It could be police visibility, incidents of drug or substance abuse, or the number of times we call out the fire brigade," says Kitchin. "We code everything and turn it into statistics so council and the police can determine if the environment is changing or improving. They can also identify trends and decide if other actions or services are required to address a situation."

In addition to reducing incidents of theft, vandalism and disruptive behavior, the system has helped to streamline prosecutions.

"Evidence from the CCTV system has significantly shortened court cases," notes Di Bella. "Instead of proceeding to a jury trial, which could take days and cost a considerable amount of money, an offender faced with video evidence will often plead guilty. That represents a huge saving in time and investigative resources."

Swiftlink Ltd.

Swiftlink Ltd. (www.swiftlink.co.nz), based in Auckland, New Zealand, focuses on the development, operation and support of technology solutions for the private, commercial and public sector markets. Established in 2000 and now a part of the Radius Group, the company operates four 24/7 security control centres and has 55 employees. To contact a sales representative, please call +64 9 414 4500 or email info@swiftlink.co.nz.

Liability protection

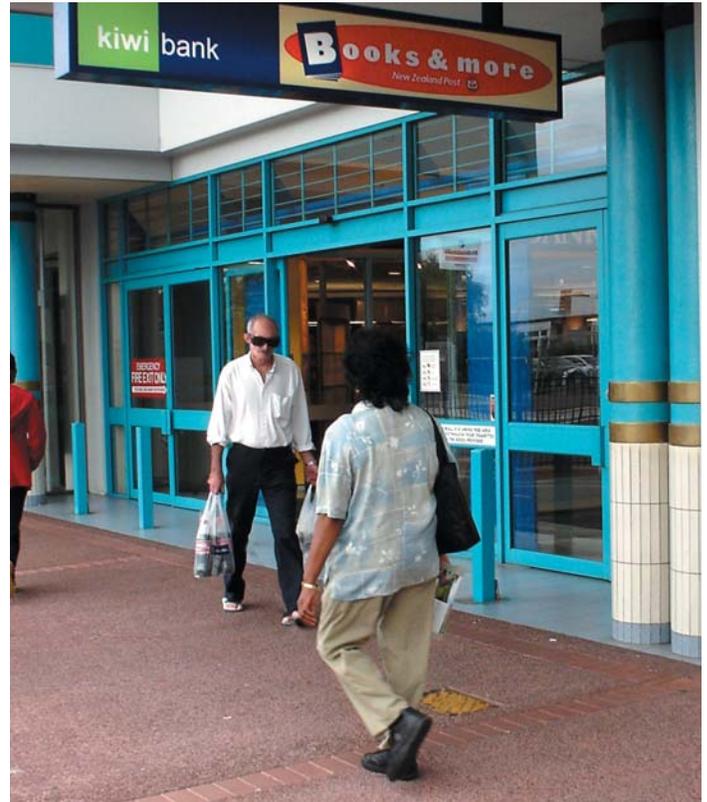
Video evidence has also proven useful in settling insurance claims.

"In one incident, a person claimed his vehicle caught on fire, but we were able to use the archived video to prove that he had torched it himself," says Kitchin. "It was an unfortunate situation. He ended up in hospital, the vehicle was destroyed, and he had no insurance claim."

The monitoring of public spaces by a third-party service like Swiftlink represents a departure from traditional practice in New Zealand, he adds.

"The tradition here has been to set up cameras and connect them back to police stations, but that hasn't worked very well," Kitchin notes. "Consistent resourcing tends to be a problem and without live monitoring there's little value achieved."

Di Bella expects the city will expand the March Networks DVR systems to other locations



Manukau City

Manukau City (www.manukau.govt.nz) is home to 320,000 people, making it New Zealand's third largest city. Located on the North Island within greater Auckland, the city covers an area of 562-square kilometers. (217-sq. m.).

in Manukau over time, but each candidate site is carefully considered to ensure that the municipality is getting value for the funds it invests. The city consults widely with merchants, community groups and police prior to any installation and then alerts the public to the planned monitoring through signage, leaflets and newspaper advertisements.

High quality

Swiftlink evaluated a number of DVR products in 2000, when Manukau first considered installing a CCTV system, recalls Kitchin.

"We felt that March Networks had the best technology then, and we still believe that today. We have had very few technical issues with the systems over

the years and we have always received excellent support from the company.

"The March Networks product family has continued to grow and advance," he adds, "and now provides us with a wide range of solutions for our clients in a variety of market sectors."

According to Di Bella, Manukau's crime prevention network has been widely accepted by police, merchants and residents as an effective way to combat crime.

"Based on the number of calls I receive from other councils asking us about our experience, it appears that CCTV surveillance of public spaces will become more and more common in New Zealand," she says. ✨