

Digital Security for Bus and Rail

OC Transpo Pilots Ruggedized DVR

Peter Arnold has spent more than 25 years addressing the unique challenges of providing security in a mobile environment. Head of security for OC Transpo, the public transit body for Canada's capital region, Arnold and his 42-person team are responsible for making Ottawa's bus system as secure as possible for more than 300,000 daily passengers, as well as hundreds of operators.



His mandate extends beyond the buses to include all transit system sites, such as bus stations and the city's "park and ride" parking lots, where commuters drive in from outlying areas and leave their vehicles to ride the public transit. And just recently, Arnold's team also assumed security responsibilities for the city's new rail system, dubbed the "O" train.

Ensuring security for these different environments – mobile buses and trains, busy stations and large parking lots – requires

both human resources and technology, according to Arnold. Transit enforcement officers are out patrolling and working with the public to improve safety 24/7. And Arnold is always looking for technology solutions that can enhance riders' personal safety and improve asset security in all parts of the transit system.

Manageable, Rugged

"Compared to the community at large, we have very few serious incidents on the transitway," Arnold says. "We're mainly

dealing with vandalism and disturbances — especially during peak periods after school and in the evenings.

"What we look for in our technology solutions are systems that are manageable and vandal-proof. Equipment needs to be rugged because it's going to be subjected to water, salt, dust and dirt on a regular basis."

Arnold's colleague Glen Mullins agrees. Project manager for business applications manage-

ment in OC Transpo's Information Technology division, Mullins has worked closely with Arnold in the past few months on a combined evaluation of several digital video recorder (DVR) solutions. Arnold's main criteria is finding a system that will help his team work more efficiently, while Mullins is looking for a robust solution with the right combination of features and functionality. They are currently piloting three different systems, including a ruggedized, networked DVR solution from March Networks.

The March Networks™ 4120 DVR, designed specifically for transportation security installations, meets stringent BRB/RIA, EN and IP65 standards for temperature, shock and vibration, electromagnetic compatibility, water and dust ingress. Its ability to withstand extreme operating conditions makes it ideal for use in rail, bus, and public safety vehicles, as well as in severe industrial settings.

Digital Advantages

OC Transpo already has an installed CCTV (closed circuit television) video surveillance system — a fact it promotes prominently at bus and rail stations and on its vehicles to serve as a visible deterrent to would-be law-breakers. The analog solution works well, says Mullins, but a digital system can offer even further benefits.

"I think the functionality is such that a DVR solution is the way to go. There's an immediate advantage with digital storage versus tape storage. We don't run into the problems of tapes being destroyed, or wearing out, that type of thing."

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Peter Arnold
Head of Transit Security,
City of Ottawa

Mullins adds that networking capabilities are also key.

"Networking can save you manpower. Any one of us would be able to call up footage from our communications center using broadband wireless or a wireline connection."

Finally, Mullins and Arnold are testing the quality of service

OC Transpo is likely to receive after the pilot process is complete. With existing radio communications, emergency phone calls, and camera and alarm monitoring all coming through one central communications center, OC Transpo wants to ensure that any integration glitches can be addressed and resolved quickly with the help of the solution provider.



OC Transpo Facts

Annual ridership	80.1 million
Average weekly ridership	302,000
Number of buses in active fleet	878
Number of bus stops	5,500
Average bus travel in one year	35,420 miles (57,000 km)
Annual web site visits	1.02 million

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Project Manager, Business Applications
Management, IT Services
City of Ottawa

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