

BIT improves security and customer satisfaction with Axis IP cameras.

IP cameras and license plate recognition enhance customer satisfaction with data center.



Organization:

BIT

Location:

Ede, Netherlands

Industry segment:

Banking and finance

Application:

Data center security,
license plate recognition

Mission

BIT wanted to automate the security procedure of its data centers.

Solution

At the access gates of the BIT grounds, four Axis cameras have been installed which are able to read the license plates of the cars at the gate. The other cameras are installed in a more elevated position and can be controlled based on pre-sets. The cameras are part of a solution used by BIT staff and a select number of customers. The system checks whether the client has been registered on the portal and whether a car with the same license plate has already entered the grounds. When a client drives up to the access gate, a camera zooms in so the BIT employee can see who is in the car. A picture is taken of the customer with an Axis camera. The camera system is completely integrated into BIT's central IT system.

Result

The BIT security system is completely automated. The human element has been completely removed from the equation. There are no hurdles to overcome before gaining access. In future, customers will not even need to push a button or maneuver their car close to a card reader. BIT customers can rely on a safe data center, partly due to the visibility of the cameras. The camera system proactively sends notifications if a camera is inactive or tampered with. Due to AXIS Camera Station, recordings that are no longer allowed to be saved are now removed automatically. The video footage is high quality and easy to control with software. BIT can access the required information easily and integrate it into their system.



BIT, internet service provider for the business market, has been using Axis cameras to ensure the security of its data centers for the past ten years. The company decided to facilitate customer access to their hosted hardware. The security procedure was completely automated. To this end, BIT integrated license plate recognition software, using the AXIS Q1765-LE as a basis. In addition, the solution could be integrated into the central BIT IT system because of the flexibility offered by AXIS Camera Station. Customers can now enjoy the experience of barrier-free access, from registration and verification up to authentication.

BIT supplies services in the field of co-location, internet connections, managed hosting and outsourcing. This Ede-based company achieves excellent performance in all these areas and is growing fast. In order to be able to provide optimal service to their customers, its data center capacity needed to be increased. To that end, the existing location was expanded. Extra cameras were needed for the security of the new building. But BIT was also exploring other applications. The company wanted to start using license plate recognition based on IP cameras. That approach made it possible for BIT to improve user-friendly, independent access to the data center. In addition, a more efficient security procedure would let the company's employees sleep significantly better.

Disturbed night's rest

Teun Vink, Security Manager at BIT: "When we started at this location ten years ago, we immediately wanted to provide independent access to the data center. Before that time, employees had to accompany customers on their visits to the data center. Particularly at night, that meant considerable costs. In addition, the sleep of BIT employees was disturbed to such an extent that they were still affected at work the next day. That's why, when we started construction ten years ago, we already used a significant number of IP cameras from the outset. We saw that as an essential component of independent access. We have installed more cameras with each expansion of the data center since then. And a short while ago, a new step was taken by introducing cameras together with license plate recognition. This significantly simplified entering and leaving the grounds for both us and our customers.

Flexibility required

Martijn Toutenhoofd, software developer at BIT, explains which requirements the cameras needed to meet: "The cameras needed to be able to integrate with our own back-office application. This is one of the benefits of the Axis cameras, as they have well-documented APIs. In addition, we've started using software for license plate recognition which integrates easily with our central IT system. We want to be able to implement all customer data changes in one go. The flexibility that was required for this is something we were unable to find in any complete solution. Then we zoomed in on IP cameras as a guiding principle. We looked at several options and Axis was right at the top of our shortlist. Their IP cameras eventually proved to be the most logical choice, as their quality was already familiar to us and BIT had accumulated significant experience with their solutions. AXIS Camera Station software also proved to be a big plus. The Axis camera management application is easy to integrate. We only had to invest some effort in the configuration of the back-end: the license plate recognition itself and its integration into our own system.

Proper IT facilities

The camera solution supplied an important contribution to the main objective: improving the BIT security level, while boosting customer convenience and ease of control. Eight new cameras were added to the fifty cameras that were already installed at this location. Including the camera management application. Vink: "In every little detail, you can tell that Axis is an IT company. Their cameras have been digital from the get-go, a proper IT solution. We are able to control each camera individually. We can access streams in various ways and we can easily pick out images. Even though these are high quality, it is the Axis software that truly makes the big difference to us. The interfacing is so excellent that it takes no effort to address it with your own software-based solutions. We have nothing to worry about with regard to management and control. However, we gain the most benefit from the individual approach. You can assign each Axis camera a very specific function. Those 'eyes' can see everything."





Advanced integration

BIT has used the options offered by cameras and applications to optimal effect. "When the intercom at the access gate is used, pre-sets on cameras are triggered. For instance, the dome camera can turn and zoom in on the customer's car. Then the gate will be opened for that customer. The IP camera is part of the internal network. By pressing the asterisk key, the BIT employee receives a web request to switch to a pre-set position. By integrating this with telephone services, the customer care department is able to use it effortlessly. Another camera solution is installed at the solid vault doors of the data centers. After making an iris scan, an instant snap-shot is made of the user. This photo is stored separately, so we do not need to access the camera software immediately. We can see what happened at that time in an instant. It is only one of the AXIS Camera Station triggers that we could apply immediately," says Toutenhoofd.

Sophisticated features in the system

However, the most advanced solution still remains the license plate recognition software. Its integration into BIT's central IT system went flawlessly. "We built a portal. Clients log into that and submit how long they estimated they'll be present. The switch-on security is handled by our own monitoring system. The rest is up to the customer, who can report to the gate at the indicated time. That used to be a 'beeper or pass at the post'. But opening a gate automatically based on a few numbers and letters is not the preferred standard of security. A license plate can be copied or modified. We were wondering whether we could make this process easier, without reducing the level of security. The camera system, in particular the license plate recognition, also provided a solution. The cameras focused on the license plate work in conjunction with the cameras that keep an eye on what is happening on and around the grounds. Sophisticated features in the system keep records on whether the car is on the grounds or outside. In the last case, someone else with the same license plate is unable to get on the grounds," Vink assures.

Completely automated

The complete camera security solution has been running for a select number of clients for six months now, and BIT is ready for the next step in implementation. "Our customers expect us to work with an excellent system. The method you use to check the operation of all the cameras is essential in that. The same also applies to the Personal Data Protection Act. We are not allowed to save recordings beyond a certain time limit. Due to AXIS Camera Station, they are now removed automatically. The software is configured in a jiffy. The camera system also proactively sends notifications if a camera is inactive or tampered with. We can see everything in our own workflow. It is magnificent to see hardware and software join together that seamlessly. Our security system is now completely automated. The human element has been completely removed from the equation, in spite of about one thousand users. The quality of the video footage is high and the IP cameras are easy to control with software. All required information is integrated directly into our own system. Hardly any management needed, and we really have nothing to worry about. Since our customers have been so satisfied with the solution, we have decided to extend this solution to all of our customers in the future. They can rely on a safe data center, partly due to the visibility of the cameras. There are no hurdles to overcome before gaining access. No one needs to push a button or maneuver their car close to a card reader. The convenience we provide our own employees because of the pre-sets is also a huge benefit. We are getting maximum gain out of this investment," Vink concludes.

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Teun Vink, Security Manager at BIT.



About Axis Communications

Axis offers intelligent security solutions that enable a smarter, safer world. As the market leader in network video, Axis is driving the industry by continually launching innovative network products based on an open platform - delivering high value to customers through a global partner network. Axis has long-term relationships with partners and provides them with knowledge and ground-breaking network products in existing and new markets.

Axis has more than 2,100 dedicated employees in more than 50 countries around the world, supported by a global network of over 80,000 partners. Founded in 1984, Axis is a Sweden-based company listed on NASDAQ Stockholm under the ticker AXIS.

For more information about Axis, please visit our website www.axis.com.