

YOUR CURRENT SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM IS THROWING AWAY YOUR MONEY

Turn your VMS into a Data Collection Device and have it work for you.

Millions of video surveillance cameras around the world are losing money. Whether analog or digital, these cameras are recording video (and oftentimes audio and metadata) that encompasses more information than can possibly be seen or understood at the time of the recording. On average, these systems delete information after 30 days of collection and begin over again with the next 30 days.

During a 30-day period within one closed system (i.e. a large drug store) valuable information is captured but rarely analyzed for its potential worth. This information can prove inherent in business intelligence. For example, video surveillance can be reviewed for customer patterns, such as how long the customer lingers in one area, or what other products they are making comparisons to. There are an untold number of additional bits of information that can make a business smarter and create revenue by studying this data.

For users of video surveillance systems as well as installers of these operating systems, a critical piece of the pie is missing. While we recognize these cameras collect video data, thinking of them as only cameras ignores a big part of the picture. Think of your cameras as more than just cameras. Think of your cameras as Data Collection Devices (DCD), and with each passing second they collect data that can be used by the business owner as well as by third parties who wish to take that data and analyze it to the benefit of not only themselves, but the end-user.

As an example, 30 cameras during a 24-hour period, throughout 30 days, will record 21,600 hours of video. While this appears to be a staggering amount of video surveillance footage, imagine if you could expand this collection to an entire year in one location. Now there are 259,200 hours of stored video, and within those documented hours are tidbits of information that could be of tremendous value to a wide range of potential users. It is not hard to imagine the uses of this data for the business owner; what may be more

difficult, however, is to wrap one's mind around how it can benefit individuals outside the end user's business. If video was collected and analyzed from a single location of a major drugstore in Dallas, for example, the collected data could be significant to every single company that sells product through that store. (While this hypothetical store may have no inclination to use the data, a company that sold through that store could, and would have the potential to increase sales through data analysis and perhaps change the way products were placed). Assuming that same drugstore had cameras facing a busy intersection in front of its store, they could analyze traffic patterns as well as their busiest times of the day and maximize employee hours. The potential is truly limitless.

Data collection through video surveillance is an emerging source of revenue which is being destroyed by its users each and every year because its potential and value is simply unrecognized. Collected data is a valuable asset and belongs solely to the business owner. By evaluating and analyzing content, companies can generate revenue, which clearly affects the bottom line. Rather than destroy collected data after 30 days, businesses should learn to evaluate that information and determine how it can be a revenue generator.

A video monitoring system, and the hardware that goes with it, is an expensive investment. The storage component of this expense is determined by the amount of data that is to be stored. The longer you want to store data (inclusive of account quality and framerate), the more the storage expense will grow. This is the reason systems are still thought of as a "VMS" and not a "DCD" (Data Collection Device) with video, audio and metadata as the collected end product. Take your local supermarket for example. As much as it would love to store data for 3 years to match the state's slip and fall statute, the cost is simply prohibitive. To add to that problem, finding space for the hardware and maintaining the system simply makes it more difficult to reach that lofty goal, so the majority do not even try. The use of the "cloud" is expensive and added to that is the cost of bandwidth needed to deliver video streams to that cloud.

Recognize that your current video surveillance system can deliver value and accrue real revenue. Stop thinking of it as just an expense. Empower each camera on your system to become a data collection device with potential to deliver massive returns. This can be achieved while simplifying the installation of the system, decreasing the amount of equipment needed, and dramatically reducing the need to spend capital expense on hardware. Instead, a minimum capital expense can be undertaken, and the entire system can be run as an operational expense with a monthly cost. Data collected can be stored forever, and the end user can participate in revenues derived from the rental of the data to approved third parties. Even if a system is currently in place and local storage is in operation, all of the above can be accomplished with nothing more than a simple add-on to the system.

As an owner of a video surveillance camera, this is your data, plain and simple, and it is an asset that is yours to use. You own it. You should see a return which is no different than having a retail consultant suggest new items for the “impulse-buy” rack and seeing those products sell faster and at higher revenues. Millions of businesses are allowing money to be thrown away at the end of a retention period. This can be prevented with very little expense and without upsetting a current operating system.

Cloud storage is clearly a part of this positive solution, but such storage has a reputation for being too expensive. Of course, many cloud services want to be the entire front end by taking your camera at 30 fps and 2MP and storing it for you. With this, the cost to store 7 days is somewhat high and the idea of providing 30 days, to say nothing of 3 years, is insurmountable for the average business owner. This does not show any creativity! Why store at 30 FPS and 2MP for 30 days when you can reduce both of these dramatically to save on storage costs within the cloud? Why not focus on high resolution for 7 days and then decrease both after those 7 days?

As an industry we have been taught, and almost wholly brainwashed, to think that storage has to be expensive. We have been told the cloud doesn't work for long-term IP cameras, or large quantities of IP

cameras. We have been trained to see that we collect video from the system and, if we don't need it to review something that occurred during the retention period, we toss that video (much like the idea of motion detection, which was created to save on storage) and start over. While this is old school thinking and may have served us well at one point, new technologies and new systems have evolved which allow us to store data for as long as we wish, and to use that data to create real value for the end user and partners.

You have a data collection system- don't you think it should be making you money?