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Press Cutting

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ACCESS & IDENTITY MANAGEMENT

HANDBOOK 2011

INTEGRATED ACCESS AND IDENTITY MANAGEMENT

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CARBON FOOTPRINT

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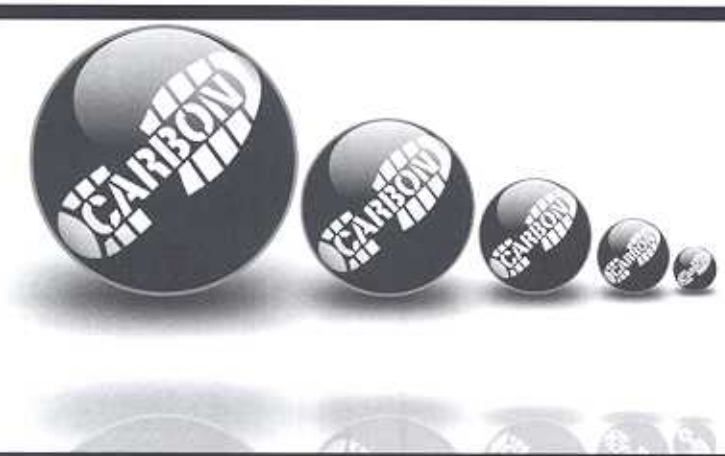

Energy-efficient access solutions are the way forward.

There is a common perception that the security industry is fairly recession-proof. The theory goes that when there is an economic downturn, crime increases and therefore the need for security increases. The recent recession has quickly dispelled this assumption. The banks stopped lending money and consequently businesses seemed to make a clear vote with their cheque books. Security is nice to have, but not necessarily a must-have and in hard times can be perceived as a grudge purchase.

When it really comes down to it, when businesses only have a very limited amount of capital, they often decide to hold on to their money or at best downscale their security spend. This manifested itself in the fact that many projects were cancelled in order to conserve working capital and those that had already commenced were starting to demand additional requirements that could be used to justify expenditure.

Terms like "eco-friendly", "lower carbon footprint" and "energy efficient" were creeping into the project parlance. In preparation for the recession carrying on well beyond predicted dates, many businesses have laid out austerity measures that included green policies. So how can the security industry respond?

Greening access control

At Security Technologies Group, we have embraced these new requirements, and see the challenge as an opportunity to find new value propositions for our customers. It is a new direction for the access control industry, and it comes at a time when access control, CCTV and intruder systems are being integrated to form larger holistic solutions. Accordingly, the next obvious step would seem to be to introduce features more akin to building controls, where energy saving is a key value proposition.

Already we are seeing simple devices like PIRs used to switch off lights and power down resources in unused rooms. We are seeing Power over Ethernet (PoE) being introduced by many of the top access control manufacturers. In general, we are seeing access control systems embracing an opportunity to use energy efficient technologies. In Africa we have even seen remote access stations being run off solar power and battery power.

We applaud the inventiveness of the access control industry, and we have been working with our suppliers to develop a suite of technology enhancements to help the access control industry embrace this new requirement. In conjunction with our major supplier (Farpointe Data Inc.), we have developed a suite of energy efficient features and have incorporated these into their proximity technology – fleaPower.

Farpointe, having made readers and cards since the 1980s, recognise that every proximity reader sold is powered on 24/7, for the lifetime of the access control system. According to Frost and Sullivan, the average lifetime of an access control system is between 12 and 15 years. Even in the busiest of buildings, the usage of the readers only amounts to one or two hours out of 24. Therefore, for 22 hours a day every day, each reader in the building is sat burning energy while doing nothing.

The secret is to effectively put the non-essential parts of the reader to sleep when not needed. As a card or token (known as a credential) is presented, the various sub circuits are activated, they do their job, and then they go back to sleep.

This got us thinking that such design advantages could easily be used by the access control manufacturers in their controller design. There is no need for much of the door controller to be active until it is actually required. So we added the final part of the fleaPower suite, a method of sending a signal to wake up the door controller. Access control manufacturer's can put their door controller hardware to sleep until needed, further reducing energy consumption.

One additional step

An additional security feature integrates a high-security handshake, or code, between card, tag and reader, to prevent credential duplication and ensure that your readers will only collect data from your system's coded credentials.

Proximity readers are constantly emitting an RF field looking for a card to be presented. Any card with the chip and coil will be read, and the data is transmitted to the access system. There is no discrimination between genuine authorised cards and non-authorised cards presented to the readers. Data will be read and transmitted to the door controller and it is the door controller that does the discrimination.

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When the revolution comes, first against the wall will be . . .

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