

Norbain helps ASDA ensure warehouse security with new Access Control system



When ASDA, the UK's second largest retail chain, decided to install an access control system in their stores, they had some specific requirements. They wanted to use the Mifare Smartcards already carried by their staff, and the system needed to be flexible and simple to use. City Building and Engineering Services (CBES) were brought in to handle the job and spoke with Norbain about supplying the most suitable solution.

ASDA was founded in 1965 and became part of the Wal-Mart family in 1999. It currently has 300 stores throughout England, Scotland and Wales and employs 145,000 people who pride themselves on being the best and friendliest in the industry.

Previously, there was no Access Control system in place at their stores and the company wanted to ensure the security of its stock. This included restricting which staff could enter designated areas and monitoring the flow of traffic in and out of those areas. In order to maximise the chances of the new system being accepted, ASDA wanted to make the access token a card that was already carried by its staff. This was the Phillips Mifare card that records each employee's time and attendance, spending and so on.

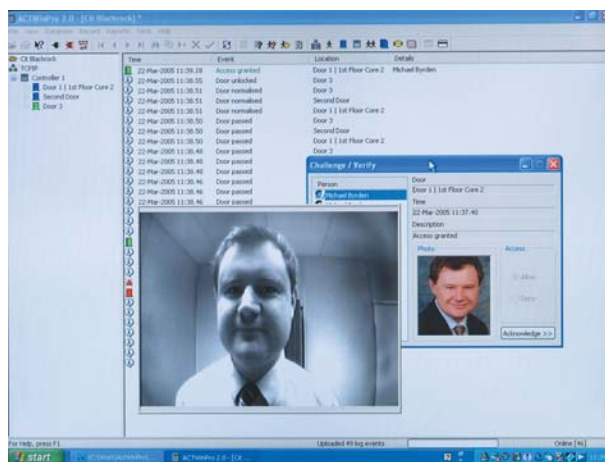
Although the principles of Access Control are simple, the large number of options for each of the component parts, the need to select the right components for the operating conditions and application, and the requirement for compatibility between components, presents a skill challenge to the system designer and specifier. CBES needed a solution provider they could rely on.

The decision to use Norbain to provide the solution was an easy one, according to Rob Cox, Head of Security Systems, CBES. "We already use Norbain for our CCTV requirements and have always been very impressed with their solutions and their technical back-up. We knew that they would have the project knowledge to provide a cost-effective and capable system based around ASDA's card technology".



Mr Cox approached Norbain’s Frank Sandham, Business Development Manager Access Control, to help find a suitable solution. Having studied the application, Norbain’s Access Control Development Team arrived at a solution based on ACT and the HID iClass reader.

The HID R10 iClass reader reads both iClass card data and the serial number of a Philips Mifare card. But there is an added complication. The Mifare Serial number is essentially hidden. That is, there is no physical mark on the card, but rather the serial number is embedded in the card chip. This means that the chosen system had to be capable of extracting the 32Bit serial number and inputting it into its software.



The ACTWinPro Lite software system makes this task possible, whilst also maintaining the various users, doors, groups etc. on the access control system and communicating this information to the physical controllers around the building. The application also collects the reported events that occur on the system and allows queries and reports to be run based on this information. “Norbain is very keen to ensure that their knowledge

of the market and its requirements is of the highest standard,” says Michael Byrden, Ireland and UK Sales Manager for Access Control Technology (ACT). “We always work very closely with them to ensure that they have the most appropriate solution for a particular application.”

The result is a system that utilises the ASDA staff Smartcard and combines ease-of-use, flexibility and powerful reporting features. “The Access Control Development team here at Norbain understood the issues associated with reading Mifare cards and so could offer them a solution which really works for them,” states Mr Sandham.

Once the system had been specified, CBES began the install. Of course, it wasn’t all plain sailing. Some of the internal doors to be fitted with locking devices required structural work to be performed. Fortunately City Projects had in-house engineers to fix the doors as well as a team of in-house electricians to fit the necessary power suppliers.

ASDA is very happy with the results. “We’re completely satisfied with the solution provided by Norbain” says Steve Storey, Technical Manager Security. “The system does exactly what we wanted it to do and our own people haven’t had any problems using it”.

To date, 34 stores have been fitted with the new access control system with more planned for 2006. The system Norbain supplied has fulfilled its security requirements, all at a very competitive price, thus allowing ASDA's customers to continue "Pocketing the difference".

About City Building and Engineering Services

CBES work closely as a partner with ASDA to meet their CCTV and other security requirements. They have an impressive track record in successful project delivery and in the past five years have delivered, safely on time and within budget, £252 million worth of projects across the UK. They have evolved from City Facilities Management which has, for eight years, been providing a comprehensive and wide range of construction and engineering services exclusively to ASDA throughout the UK.

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