

REMOTE VIDEO RESPONSE – CHANGING THE FACE OF REMOTE VIDEO MONITORING

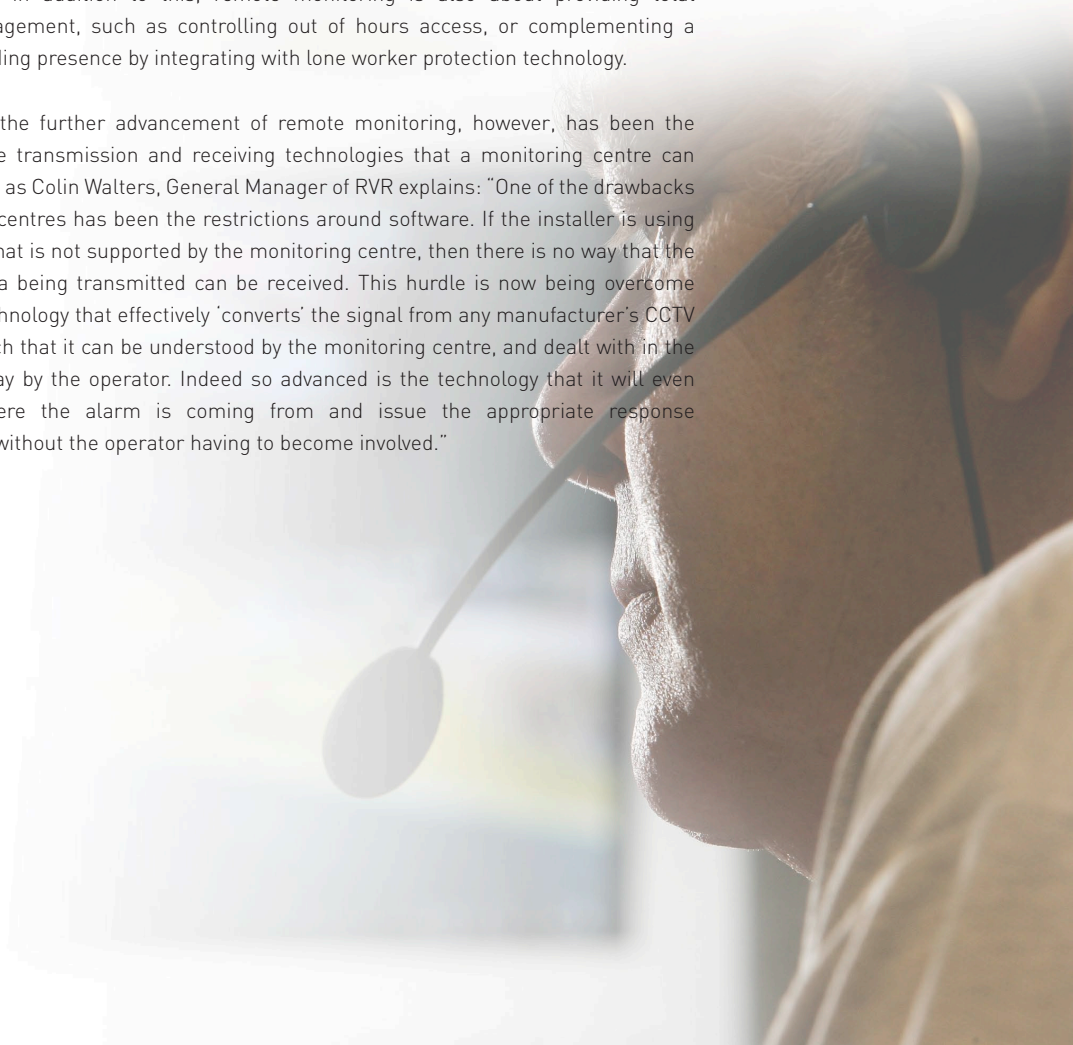
Remote Video Response (RVR), based in Gloucester, is a leader in remote video surveillance, monitoring more than 1000 systems nationwide and responding to over three million incidents every year. Their quest for innovation has resulted in a new development that harnesses the potential of all major CCTV manufacturers, including Vista, to deliver a new service that will change the face of the industry for good.

A remote chance of detection

Remote monitoring enables a site to be monitored remotely by a central station staffed by professionally trained operators. Should an alarm be triggered, CCTV images from the cameras are sent to a remote monitoring centre where an operator is able to provide the appropriate response, be it to contact a keyholder, the police, or send an audio message to the site to warn intruders that they are being monitored.

The service delivers a range of significant advantages. For example, it is very effective in situations where it would be impractical (and too costly) to have full time staff or where current staff need help to more effectively monitor the system and respond to any incidents. But in addition to this, remote monitoring is also about providing total facilities management, such as controlling out of hours access, or complementing a manned-guarding presence by integrating with lone worker protection technology.

Holding back the further advancement of remote monitoring, however, has been the diversity of the transmission and receiving technologies that a monitoring centre can accommodate, as Colin Walters, General Manager of RVR explains: "One of the drawbacks of monitoring centres has been the restrictions around software. If the installer is using a technology that is not supported by the monitoring centre, then there is no way that the images or data being transmitted can be received. This hurdle is now being overcome with a new technology that effectively 'converts' the signal from any manufacturer's CCTV equipment such that it can be understood by the monitoring centre, and dealt with in the appropriate way by the operator. Indeed so advanced is the technology that it will even recognise where the alarm is coming from and issue the appropriate response automatically without the operator having to become involved."



A face-lift for the industry

The new technology being deployed by RVR follows extensive research of their client-base and discussions with its development partner, ESSA Technology. The new platform is designed around the requirements of the latest IP transmission technology whilst still retaining compatibility with legacy ISDN and PSTN systems. The system needed to support all the major manufacturers' software, as well as 'niche' technology providers. Additionally, no matter where the information came from or what technology was used, a common user interface was required in order to standardise all the information viewed by the operators.

By popular demand...

One of the many systems being supported is Vista SmartTel, which provides fast transmission of high quality colour or monochrome images. "During the research we carried out it quickly became clear that Vista is very popular with installers and end-users alike," says Mr Walters. "It can be tailored to small installations where a straightforward, simple solution is required, right through to much larger installations where there is far more complexity involved. It was obvious, therefore, that it needed to be one of the key technologies that we supported."

In order to ensure that the software was integrated successfully, Gavin Dimmick, Director of ESSA Technology, worked closely with the Vista team. "They are a very professional unit and immediately understood what we were trying to achieve," he says. "Thanks to their support and expertise we have been able to integrate the software into the system with very little trouble."

Mr Walters predicts that the use of Vista kit will contribute a significant percentage of the technologies coming into the monitoring centre. "We're looking at a 15% connection base in the next year for Vista alone which is a significant percentage to hold considering the size of the market," he says.



A true Chameleon

RVR's new command and control system hosts a number of different technologies using a common user interface. Named Chameleon to symbolise its ability adapt to just about any situation, the new servers remove previous restrictions on the number of receivers RVR can handle, thereby increasing the opportunities for growth.

The specially developed software effectively means that the system is able to imitate different manufacturer's PC-based receiver software, converting the digital video and audio streams into conventional analogue forms where required. This allows the remote IP equipment to be handled in exactly the same way as a conventional system, hence maintaining a common approach.

"As well as providing operators with a common user interface, we can present standardised reports to all of our customers," says Mr Walters. "This ensures that the information is laid out in the same, logical way, no matter the system it originally came from."

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