

EUROPE'S FIRST EVER BIOMETRIC SECURITY SOLUTION INSTALLED IN SELF-STORAGE FACILITY

Storage King is leading the self-storage industry by installing the first ever biometric security system in Europe at its Tyseley branch in Birmingham. The system uses the latest technology to tackle the common issues of unauthorized pin transfer and tailgating, whilst keeping customers and their goods safe and secure at all times.

Storage King is the fastest growing operator in the UK where it currently has 16 facilities. A global company, it also has 150 facilities in Australia and New Zealand.

Gary Wheway, Business Development Manager from Storage King Tyseley, Birmingham, wanted to challenge the norm within the self storage industry and review the way security is approached. "The main purpose of a security system is to ensure the security of customers and their goods whilst also being simple to use," he explains. "It also needs to make monitoring staff-friendly. As this just wasn't the case in other facilities, I wanted to make a fresh start and implement the changes here."

Having previously worked with installers Xcel Fire & Security, Mr Wheway invited them to tender for the project. "I was very impressed with their work and had great confidence in their ability to tackle what I knew would be a complicated project," he says. Once bought on-board, Xcel consulted with equipment suppliers Norbain to decide what steps to take. "We wouldn't work with anyone other than Norbain," says Neil Fearn, Managing Director of Xcel Fire & Security. "Their knowledge of the industry and the equipment available is second to none, and their returns policy removes any headaches that could arise due to faulty equipment."

Industry issues

Two major problems endemic throughout the industry are unauthorized pin transfer and vehicle tailgating through entry gates. This potentially puts other customers and their goods at risk and Mr Wheway wanted a system that would effectively stamp this out. A fully integrated biometric Access Control and CCTV system offered the perfect solution.

Norbain suggested a number of technologies and suppliers that would be suitable for the project. After evaluation, Xcel chose TDSi for the Access Control elements. Following extensive meetings between the four companies, a solution was devised that would address all of Storage King Tyseley's requirements. "Norbain has played a major part in this project,"



says Mr Fearn. "The size of the organisation means that they can really get things moving and offer the support where it's needed the most."

Fingerprint recognition had never been used in the industry and was a big gamble for Mr Wheway. "The investors had to be reassured that it was wise to move away from the more traditional forms of security. Anything new is always a risk, but I felt sure that the solution we'd devised was the best way forward and would bring with it advantages previously unavailable to the group."

A biometric solution

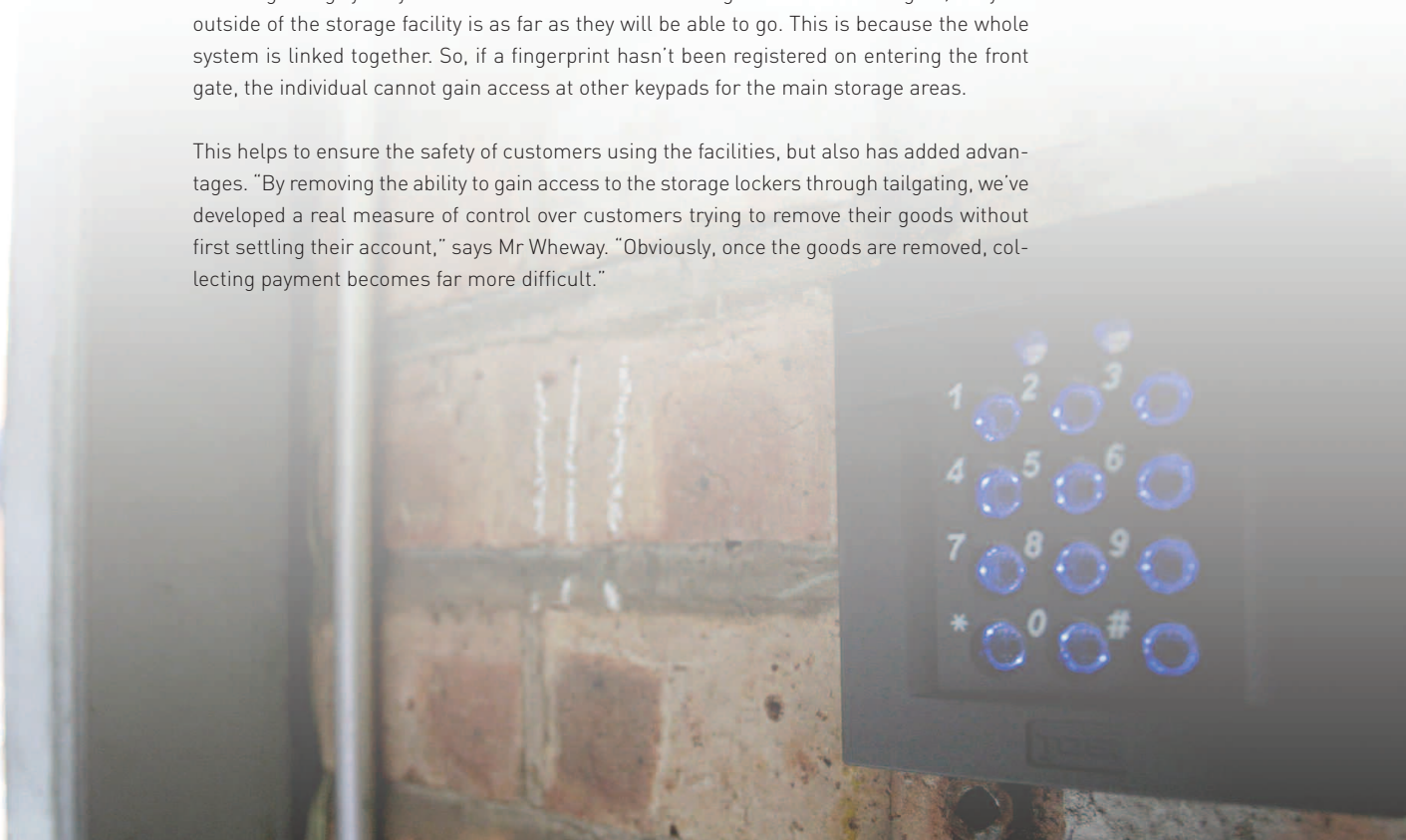
When a customer decides to register with Storage King Tyseley, all their details are entered onto the computer which, in turn, communicates with the entire security network. They are then given a virtual tour of the Tyseley facility via the touch screen monitor with specially designed TDSi software and site graphics. Their fingerprints are then entered onto the system using a Bioscript reader which transfers the information onto the Access Control system consisting of 11 TDSi door controllers, three vandal resistant proximity key pads and four internal keypads. Two Videx video entry systems complete the package.

So, how does a customer go about entering the facilities? Firstly at the gate, they must use a fob to open the vandal resistant, weatherproof box that holds the fingerprint scanner. Here they must enter their unique pin code and then scan their fingerprint. Once authorisation is granted, the gate will open and the car can enter the yard. "The protective housing is something of a work of art in itself," says Mr Fearn. "Custom designed for the job, it even has a fan heater to prevent the equipment getting too cold in the winter!"

Tailgating tackled

One problem that all self-storage facilities have battled with is the issue of tailgating. This is where a vehicle enters the gates immediately behind an authorised vehicle. By doing this, they can enter the premises without having to gain authorisation. The Access Control system at Storage King Tyseley can now handle this issue. Although cars can still tailgate, the yard outside of the storage facility is as far as they will be able to go. This is because the whole system is linked together. So, if a fingerprint hasn't been registered on entering the front gate, the individual cannot gain access at other keypads for the main storage areas.

This helps to ensure the safety of customers using the facilities, but also has added advantages. "By removing the ability to gain access to the storage lockers through tailgating, we've developed a real measure of control over customers trying to remove their goods without first settling their account," says Mr Wheway. "Obviously, once the goods are removed, collecting payment becomes far more difficult."



Further keypads allow for access into different parts of the facility and there are contacts on all the individual unit doors. Should a door be opened that doesn't correspond with a pin and fingerprint registered at the front gate, an alarm will show on the touch screen in reception or in the remote control room where the system is monitored out of hours.

Intelligent exiting

A pin code is also required for the customer to leave the premises. As well as providing an additional security measure, this allows Storage King Tyseley to know exactly how many people are on site at any one time. Once the system registers the last person leaving the premises, it will automatically engage the Optex Redwall PIR detectors which secure the perimeter.

"The whole system is also compliant with health and safety laws," says Mr Wheway. "If there is a power failure, the battery back-up automatically kicks in and keeps the system operational."

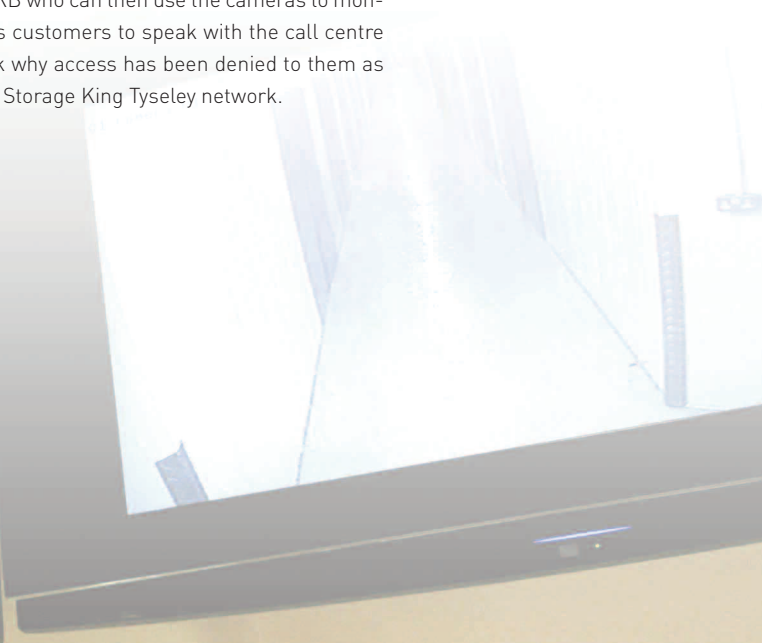
All information collected by the system can be used for reporting purposes and analysed to see, on average, how long people are in the facilities for, when the busiest times are, how often the alarm is triggered and so on. This is securely backed up on a daily basis by the Storage King Tyseley management team.

Not just Access Control

Vista CCTV cameras have been installed to compliment the Access Control system and allow for visual checks of the facility to be recorded and stored. Six colour/mono cameras and 11 vandal resistant domes monitor the exterior of the facilities, while two fixed domes keep an eye on the individual storage lockers. All the cameras are linked to two Vista SmartTel units and two Vista Columbus 16 way DVRs. "The Columbus DVRs also interface with the TDSi software, allowing us to record events from the Access Control system," explains Mr Fearn. "We've been using Vista equipment for years now and it's never let us down," he continues. "The 5 year warranty is also a massive bonus for us and instils confidence in the end-user."

Remote monitoring

Out of hours, GRB in the West Midlands is responsible for all remote monitoring for the site. If anyone is denied entry, an alarm is flagged at GRB who can then use the cameras to monitor the situation. A phone next to the gate allows customers to speak with the call centre should there be a problem. The centre can check why access has been denied to them as they have restricted access to information on the Storage King Tyseley network.



Xcel can also dial in to check that the system is all running smoothly. Should zones need to be modified, or image quality checked, they can dial in and immediately assess and, if necessary, modify the settings. "This is a great feature," says Mr Fearn. "It gives us immediate control of the site and makes maintaining the system far simpler and quicker."

Leader of the pack

The Access Control system at the Tyseley branch has cost around £30,000 including full support and free upgrades. Mr Whewey believes it will easily pay for itself in the first year. He's looking at this not only in terms of better security and the cost reductions that will bring, but also in terms of the increased number of customers attracted. "The system gives us the 'wow' factor and is very impressive for customers looking to use the facility," he says. "The extra security is a big selling point and makes people willing to pay a little more for the service."

Storage King Tyseley looks to be setting new standards of excellence in the industry. "We've always seen ourselves as leaders and I think this system confirms this belief," says Mr Whewey. "I've no doubt the technology will now be considered by the self-storage industry across the UK and Europe."

About Xcel Fire & Security

Xcel Fire and Security offers the solutions its customers need to protect their building and business assets, from the smallest shop to the largest industrial sites. Its experts will help customers assess their security risks and work with them to develop a solution, tailored to meet their needs, no matter how straightforward or complex the project. From the original consultation to the installation and ongoing maintenance of the system, the customer will receive the highest standards of support.

The company believes that it is important to invest in the latest and most proven technology and is constantly testing upgrades on individual systems, to provide its customers with an efficient and effective system.

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