



Vista Graphica™ puts Thames Valley security teams in the picture

Thames Valley University is one of the largest educational institutes in Europe. Use of Vista CCTV equipment, including the new Vista Graphica™ interface, is greatly simplifying the monitoring of an extensive new camera network spread across eight sites.

London-based ICTS is implementing a three-year programme to upgrade the university's CCTV system in addition to its wider duties providing security cover, consultancy and management across all the sites. Most of the previous CCTV system was more than 10 years old and image quality was poor by today's standards. "The university desperately needed to upgrade and extend its old analogue systems," says TVU's Director of Facilities Richard Berrall. "The systems were no longer working efficiently or effectively. We would hand over the tapes to the police, but they were of no value."

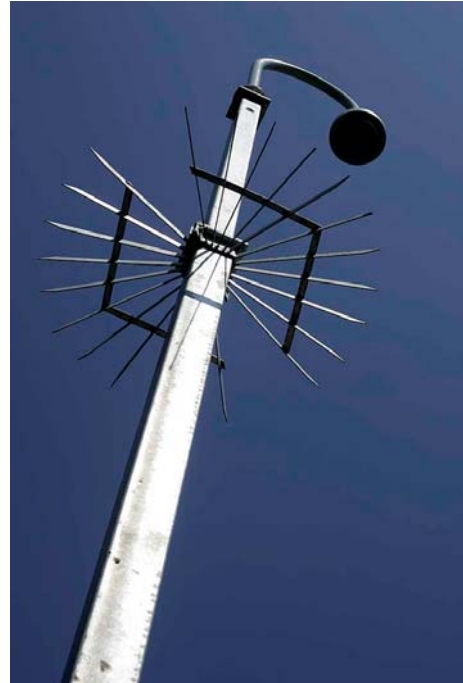
Graphical representation

The new recording system came equipped both with Vista's well-regarded Wavereader™ software and with the latest development, the Vista Graphica™ graphical user interface. "It is fantastic – it has so many possibilities," he says.

Thames Valley University is one of the first places to adopt Vista Graphica™ The interface makes use of site and floor plans to give clear graphical representation of every camera's location. "Vista Graphica™ enables an officer who is new to the site – such as someone providing sickness cover – to have immediate knowledge of the layout," says David Lowery. Simply clicking on a camera's icon brings up its view and the next image can be cued up while following someone's movements. "You can follow someone's progress even without having a detailed knowledge of the site," he says. This functionality can be used either live or when playing back a recording.

Each building's cameras are connected into a Vista Columbus Triplex™ digital video recorder (DVR), with the size and capacity depending on the site. In turn, the recorders are linked into a server. Selected PCs also run Vista Graphica™ enabling remote monitoring of the live and recorded images and control of all aspects of the system.

Registering all the cameras onto the system has been proving equally easy, David Lowery finds. The overall site map and floor plans are added in the form of JPEG images. Once the building is fully networked, camera icons can simply be dragged into position on the selected floor. The entire process takes just a few minutes. He has plans for a second generation of floor plans which will be pre-shaded to show the viewing arc of each camera. This would be particularly useful in court, he believes, making it even easier for the officer to demonstrate that it was the same person in two different shots.



“The new system is producing better evidence for us and gives better surveillance of our sites,” says Richard Berrall. “The work has gone extremely well and we are very happy both with the products and the way they have been installed.” Flexibility was a particular priority as major changes are planned for several of the sites under an extensive refurbishment and development programme. “Over the coming months and years this system will be able to adapt,” he predicts.

About ICTS

ICTS – International Consultants on Targeted Security - has its origins in aviation security and integrated services including manned guarding. ICTS has been providing security management services for Thames Valley for some nine years and staff members are closely integrated into the university’s facilities management team. The company has always provided consultancy services for its clients whenever they want to upgrade their CCTV, including designing the system, providing a technical specification and supervising installation. However it is only in the last year that ICTS has extended its operations into carrying out the installation itself and this is its largest such project to date.