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## Access Control: Take Two

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BY MICHAEL FICKES

Following the Sept. 11 attacks, Bend, Ore., moved to upgrade security in city facilities. As a first step, officials bought a state-of-the-art access control system for the city's new police station. Completed in the middle of 2003, the police station would serve as a proving ground for the access control system, which the city hoped to roll out to other facilities such as the Public Works Department and City Hall.

The wide-ranging project got off to a slow start when the original system did not work as advertised for the police. The reporting feature refused to generate accurate reports on who came through which doors. Worse, the system would not support multiple users, one of the project's key specifications, in that police officials wanted individual units to control their own security levels and access privileges. Repeated calls to the system provider failed to solve the problems.



"We were having all kinds of reporting errors and failures," says Troy Price, an IT technician assigned to Bend's Public Safety Department.

The city's information technology group asked the system integrator to research software solutions that would preserve the city's substantial hardware investment as well as the plan to tie together all city facilities with one system. "Complete system replacement was not an option," says Jason Coburn, owner of Watchdog Security Inc., the Bend-based security technology integrator handling the project for the city. "The police department has 33 doors, and the cost to replace all the hardware would have been substantial."

According to Tim Beuschlein, a technical specialist with the city, access control hardware costs for the police station totaled about \$65,000 for main system control panels, door control panels, door strikes, magnetic locks and pushbutton exit devices. "We hoped to find a solution, but in the back of my mind I was afraid we would have to live with the problems," Beuschlein says.

But Coburn managed to solve the problem. His research turned up an open architecture access control system made by Imron Corp., Irvine, Calif.

"An open architecture system means that you can connect the software to any hardware out in the field," Beuschlein says. "They talk the same language. Open architecture enabled us to preserve our original hardware investment."

In short, the open architecture of the existing hardware and the new system, called IS2000, allowed both to work together even though the original design employed different access control software.

The system offers additional benefits. Designed to maintain numerous separate, confidential databases, it has enabled officials to extend access control capabilities to multiple users throughout various city departments.

The new system also includes badging, which Bend has used to create IDs for all

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484 city employees, maintaining their photos for ready access in the system's database.

Equally important, the open architecture will enable Bend to integrate access control with closed circuit television (CCTV). "That's our ultimate goal," Beuschlein says.

Bend began working on the CCTV-access control integration in mid-March. The plan calls for adding cameras inside and outside of the police station and connecting them to the alarm network monitored by the access control system. "If there is an event or alarm in the property room, we'll be able to pull up a camera view and create snapshots of what happened before and after the alarm," Beuschlein says. "We can see if a person is in the property room that shouldn't be. Same with outside of the police station — we'll be able to use one piece of software to view the door alarms and provide access to the cameras."

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