

# Access Control Smackdown

BY: CURT HARLER (CONTACT: 907.032.0321 CURT@HARLER.COM)  
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## InfoWatch

*Audio and video verification serves up a proactive approach against nuisance alarms and crime*



*Photo courtesy Stanley Convergent Security Solutions*

Two-way audio communications is coming on strong as part of effective and converged integrated access control systems.

Everyone is riding the IP video wave in security right now and central stations, commercial buildings and even private residences are no stranger to that. And when it comes to access control, many have taken the secure approach with video verification. But the move to video and audio verification as a unified solution is the next step in not only reducing false alarms and deterring crime, but in providing a complete value-added service.

"The primary value of audio and video verification is improved response by law enforcement plus higher apprehension rates," said Felix Gonzales, vice president, Strategic Initiatives and Business Development, Stanley Convergent Security Solutions, Naperville, Ill. "That adds up to a better deterrent to crime. Now, police are not responding to an alarm but to a crime in progress. When it comes to prioritizing police response, verification assures them there is a crime in progress."

Marshall Marinace, owner of Marshall Alarm Systems Inc., Yorktown, N.Y. and vice president of the Electronic Security Association (ESA), Irving, Texas, agreed that one of the many problems law enforcement agencies face is responding to excessive nuisance alarms.

"The police want to verify that something is happening," Marinace continued. "With audio and video verification, a central station operator can look at a remote site and see if dispatch is required."

Perhaps an even more obvious testament to audio and video verification is the growing number of vendors that offer such access control solutions or continue to roll them out.

STENTOFON security communication systems now can be linked with a wide range of Pelco video security camera solutions, including the Pelco Endura Video Surveillance System. This integration provides an interactive system that allows security personnel to both see and hear what's taking place in any situation.

"What STENTOFON does is provide the 'voice of security,'" explained Dan Rothrock, senior vice president, STENTOFON, Kansas City, Mo. "We have taken the power of the Pelco Endura system and linked it to STENTOFON." It provides its power bi-directionally into Endura.

Phil Atteberry, director of Managed Security Services, Siemens Industry Inc., Buffalo Grove, Ill., estimated that 25 to 50 percent of their customers use audio and video verification.

"We are seeing more interest since the growth of IP-especially in the audio sector," Atteberry said. He sees growth for the service both in central stations and command centers.

The audio portion of audio and video verification may be more difficult to circumvent in security applications. While the bad guys can videotape a keypad, even one where the number keys do not follow the standard configuration, it is far more difficult to duplicate a voice-recorded phrase. With high-quality audio verification, unstaffed entrances can still be secure.

### **The pluses add up**

In addition to municipal responders, audio and video verification saves time and money for private security firms as well.

"We are seeing a lot of folks who want the audio out of the building, whether it is taken to a central station or to a command center where a guard can monitor several buildings," said Andy Stadheim, president, Barix Technology, Oakdale, Minn.

In addition, the video offers a value-add service beyond alarm verification. Many clients find they can build additional operational efficiencies into the system.

"We see verification as an upgrade or enhancement to what already is in place," explained Gonzales. "Alarm verification is based on the sheer value of what the customer is trying to protect. This can range from protecting air conditioning units on rooftops to copper cable on towers." Stanley CSS provides both audio and video verification with its Sonitrol audio impact and wireless eVideo Alarm Verification, using Videofied(r) technology from RSI Video Technologies, White Bear

Lake, Minn. Gonzales encourages users to integrate as many of their services into one platform, including fire panels, door alarms, intrusion detection and access control.

## The 'legalities' of it all

THIS CONTENT CONTINUES ONTO THE NEXT PAGE...

1 | [2 \(/ARTICLE/10522962/ACCESS-CONTROL-SMACKDOWN?PAGE=2\)](#) NEXT PAGE » (/ARTICLE/10522962/ACCESS-CONTROL-SMACKDOWN?PAGE=2)

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