HID

Melbourne Cricket Ground

TECHNOLOGY/PRODUCTS
V1000 Network Controller

REASONS FOR CHOOSING HID GLOBAL
1. Overall operational functionality of VertX
2. Support of open architecture
3. Ability to download all interim events
4. Reliability of HID products and its people

"If you look at the capacity of the VertX system versus its physical size, VertX installations are always going to be more compact than their competitors and that means less time consuming expansion, less additional power supplies and fewer enclosures. For an installer, that counts."

*- Dean Monaghan
CEO of Integrators Australia
and installer of the VertX solution*

The Melbourne Cricket Ground, known to fans as simply 'The G', is Australia's largest and most iconic sporting venue. With a history dating back to 1853, upwards of 100,000 fans as well as thousands of catering and hospitality staff, hundreds of security officers, police, medical teams, and media crews, as well as sports teams and match officials, flood the site.

The Problem
After a site survey, it was found that the existing access control system not only needed to be replaced, but taking the new public threat levels into account, access control needed to be significantly expanded to protect equipment and infrastructure across the site.

In addition, a management solution was required that could weave the existing surveillance gear together with the new access control system, as well as other electronic security and building management solutions. Whatever solution was implemented, it also had to be scalable and completely future-proof.

MCG facilities manager Andy Frances quickly realized the key to the MCG's electronic security future would be an open architecture networked solution. A key challenge for Frances was that MCG's electronic security and building management systems were incompatible with each other and the multiple layers of cabling infrastructure that sprawled across the site were a complete unknown.

Frances also knew that he would need a powerful graphical user interface that incorporated mapping, which meant all the hardware employed across the site had to be built for a networked environment.

A Networked Path to Success
According to Frances, integrating the entire system in a networked environment was a crucial factor. Frances explains that in terms of what he wanted to achieve at The G, the main goals were to upgrade the access control system, including door controllers and door hardware, and to look at software management programs for controlling access control, CCTV and alarms.

"Given the current state of technology, the first thing we had to look at was the security infrastructure," Frances states. "I saw the key to the site was going to be a future-proof network infrastructure supporting video surveillance, access control and alarm monitoring, integrated by a powerful software management solution.

"That overall management solution was important because for our critical infrastructure areas, we wanted a system that would allow us to know if a door was forced open, and to have some auditing capability," says Frances.

The MCG's VertX Solution

All parts of the new system have been selected on the basis of their ability to support open architecture. The network components include off-the-shelf hardware and firmware installed in IT rooms and supported by the IT department. This part of the system includes switchers and the recording solution.

The access control side is the major part of the new installation at the MCG, with Genetec Security Center's Synergis module supporting VertX IP access control solution, a powerful modular solution designed to carry access control solutions into an IP environment.

According to Frances, as the decision solidified and VertX came to the fore, a catastrophic failure of the existing access control system took over the decision-making process.

"While we were calmly assessing the product, we had a failure of the access control system we couldn't recover from," Frances explains. "Fortunately we had already talked to HID about the VertX IP access control solution", says Frances. "What we liked about VertX was the fact that along with its excellent functionality, HID Global would provide the specifications of that product to any software manufacturer. This satisfied our IT team because it was non-proprietary".

The MCG's need for open architecture and the proprietary nature of virtually all other access control systems meant HID Global's VertX solution built on HID's OPIN application programming interface was the perfect solution for this application. OPIN enables HID Global's Edge access control devices to operate seamlessly with any management software and in almost any conceivable configuration. The perfect compatibility of VertX meant that it was the first component of the new access control solution selected, which is uncommon. The operational functionality of VertX was also an important part of the decision making process.

"When looking at HID Global's VertX, there are some key elements that are important. If the system goes offline, it has a cache and when the network is available, VertX downloads all interim events - that was an important thing for us," Frances says. "While we wanted a fully networked system, we didn't want to lose any data if the network was offline. We also wanted to retain functionality - we wanted to have the doors operate as they normally would under all circumstances."

Most importantly, VertX's OPIN architecture allowed the use of non-proprietary management software – this was a major issue for MCG. VertX's hybrid nature meant virtually the entire site's existing RS-485 cable could be retained. This saved an enormous amount of money, given the challenges of re-cabling a site so large and heavily constructed.

No account of the MCG's access control solution is complete without recognition of the power and capability of HID Global's V1000 Network Controller. This robust and highly intelligent Linux-based unit is really the hero of HID's VertX solution. With its RISC processing the V1000 pulls system smarts all the way down to remote network closets giving multiple benefits.

The V1000 reduces the number of dedicated ports the access control system needs and buffers events when the network is down. And the V1000 can receive and action commands from third party control software and is also able to activate a digital dialler or GSM modem in the event of longer network failure.

The Right Decision

Frances has no doubt that he has made the right decision going with a fully networked solution at the MCG. "I think the networked model works very well and there's no question this is the way most security managers on large sites should be heading," Frances says. "Working with HID Global has been very good for most the same reasons – they understood where we were at and what we wanted. HID Global is able to come to the party very quickly with a system designed with this sort of solution in mind. I can pick up the phone and speak to them and get things resolved".

"The way things are now I can call up the integrator and discuss changes and improvements and talk about ways to keep things within budget. If there's a location where a low cost camera works well and I can save money for other things, then I can buy that. If Bosch releases a new high end camera for external environments then I can buy a hundred of those. And it's the same with access control readers, or if Genetec releases a new version of a module, I can upgrade to it and know I have the best possible system at any given moment," Frances states.

Integrators Australia installed the HID Global VertX access control solution at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. It is managed across the site's network by Genetec's Security Center software that includes a Synergis access control module and Omnicast video surveillance module.

HID®