

At Philadelphia International Airport, reverse engineering, upgrades, and customizations improve performance and protect investment in legacy systems

In the complex and fast-changing world of airport security, building an effective access control system requires far more than just the installation of the latest and greatest system. It frequently calls for customizations and the blending of legacy devices with new software.

The rapidly growing Philadelphia International Airport has undertaken the ongoing task of integrating its legacy systems to function with a recently upgraded Pro-Watch™ headend. Pro-Watch is an integrated access and badging control security management system manufactured by NexWatch, a Honeywell Company and leader in high-end access control systems.

Smoothing the transition is Surveillant Professional Services, the consulting services arm of NexWatch. Surveillant works closely with Airports in order to provide solutions to unique requirements that challenge Airports on a daily basis. The combination of world-class software and experienced consulting professionals has led to a long list of distinguished and satisfied clients. This is a unique service that is not a standard provision in today's marketplace.

The Pro-Watch Security Management System operates in the Microsoft Windows Server environment and uses SQL as the database engine to provide powerful information management and network communications capabilities. The flexibility and strength of the application make it appealing to security departments that span all verticals. Pro-Watch was originally developed for Airports, making it a seamless fit with the goals that our Nation's airports are trying to meet in today's challenging environment – Airports like Philadelphia International Airport.

"We have been very successful at reverse-engineering other hardware that is out in the field," says Shaun Burns, Director of Business Development for Surveillant. "This process allows our

headend to speak to competitor hardware by identifying their protocols and processes. So rather than having to rip everything out and replace it with our hardware, they can replace it on the timetable of their choosing."

In large systems it's an approach that can result in millions of dollars in potential cost savings. At Philadelphia Airport, the installation of the new access control system was a major part of its phased security upgrade.

"We did the Phase II security upgrade in which we went from an old UNIX computer system and limited access control and limited alarm monitoring (to a Windows solution)," says Harold Flamenbaum, Manager of Special Systems with Kellogg Brown & Root, the Germantown, Md.-based consulting firm that has spearheaded

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the airport security project. "The goal was to have an integrated access control alarm monitoring and CCTV interface for the airport security group as well as the police and other outside agencies."

Readers were installed on doors in five terminals in a newly constructed 13-gate international terminal, and in a 38-gate regional terminal. A large military-size badge provides both visual identification and variable access levels to different areas of the facility.

One of the prime objectives of the upgrade was to create a central monitoring station that could provide coverage of the entire airport. In addition, data from the system could be channeled to other agencies responsible for airport security, such as the Philadelphia Police Department.

In addition to the recent upgrade of PHL's system, Surveillant has also

provided ongoing enhancements and modifications for the Airport. "They've always had unique requirements that they needed fulfilled - either their own or those imposed by the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration)," Burns says. "The flexibility provided by Surveillant has allowed the Airport to increase its ROI by having the ability to keep their current system while adding to it, as opposed to having to start over."

Among the custom applications provided by the consulting company is a Transpass card that allows employees to purchase discounted mass transit tickets at a kiosk in the airport. Tracking these purchases by employees avoids the wholesale purchase of tickets for resale. A second customization includes a vehicle gate controller that gives authorized employees access to airport parking lots.

"We have so many end-users that are hemmed into a particular company's product lines because no other products can speak to their hardware," Burns says. "They may be faced with the prospect that there's no economical way to get off that platform. Through reverse engineering on our end, we're able to provide them with another solution that's far more cost-effective." Surveillant has provided similar custom solutions to some of the nation's largest airports, including Chicago's O'Hare & Midway, Boston's Logan, Salt Lake City and others. From its Reston, Virginia, software development center, Surveillant engineers develop the industry standard Pro-Watch™ product lines. These devices provide users with an end-to-end, scalable solution capable of meeting the needs of both small and large organizations.

For more information on Philadelphia airport, visit www.surveillant.net.

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