

THE CHALLENGE



Before

West Midlands Police

Invested in a state-of-the-art digital CCTV system to significantly improve the quality of city centre surveillance in Birmingham.



After

THE SOLUTION

Dedicated Micros' high-end BX2 digital video recorders have been rack-mounted in the newly refurbished, temperature controlled communications room at Steelhouse Lane Police station, located next to the city centre HQ of West Midlands Police.

High quality digital images are recorded from the many fixed and Pan/Tilt/Zoom cameras operating across Birmingham's busy city centre. While the BX2s control the local site cameras, a Synectics matrix uses a dedicated Fibre Optics cable across BT's Network to control the remote City Centre Cameras.

The upgrade, which saw the force's central control room rebuilt from scratch, coincided with heightened levels of anti-terrorist security across Britain. Given the importance of continuous coverage, EDS built a temporary system and re-located the entire control room to provide interim coverage. Working round the clock to get the new control room up and running within days, without losing any recording or control of the system.



CONTROL ROOM

Mark Darlaston, Managing Director of EDS, takes up the story: "The previous analogue system had been creating the usual tape management and image quality problems so the upgrade to digital was an obvious choice. However, city centre schemes generally require a lot of storage capacity so images can be referred to and scrutinised a long time after the event. In this case, West Midlands Police wanted to keep high quality images from all cameras for up to 90 days."



One unit has a live video feed for real time recording of any camera, which the operator can bring up on a spot monitor, allowing the police to record major incidents in real time at the push of a button, while viewing live pictures on a massive 50" plasma screen in the incident room.

As all the units are linked via a PC network, any of the three operators can control system functionality simultaneously via any of the three remote keyboards or across the network. While one operator adjusts camera position to get a better view, another can be replaying images from the

same camera from seconds ago, all recorded digitally with high quality image reproduction.

The station is delighted with the results achieved with the new system to date. Colin Holder, Technical Support Operations Manager for West Midlands Police commented: "The installation at Steelhouse Lane really is a flagship site for UK city centre surveillance. With the old system, we had to wait for hours to review incidents from tape. Now we can review images from seconds ago - which is proving to be tremendously powerful in the fight against crime. As the picture rate is so much better than our original time-lapse video, where critical details were often missed, the new system is also producing excellent evidence for the courts. And the internal system storage is massive, so we can be sure we are keeping months of critical evidence to hand."



"We were proud to be able to demonstrate the system's impressive capability to the Prime Minister, Tony Blair recently, when he visited the control room recently, he was extremely impressed with the system's performance."

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