

First it Was Email, Then it Was VoIP, and Now it's IP Video

Mark Berkovitch, Branch Manager of Best Tel, Discusses How the Internet Now Plays a Critical Role in Helping Companies Stay Protected

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— It's no secret that the Internet has dramatically changed the way we conduct business on a daily basis. From email to instant messaging to Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), the Internet has revolutionized the way we communicate and the trend continues today. The latest innovation spawned by the Internet that's rapidly gaining popularity is IP video. This phenomenal tool connects IP cameras to the Internet so we can view just about anything we want from any location around the world in real-time. As you might imagine IP video is having a tremendous impact on the video security surveillance industry. Companies want to protect their most important assets and IP-based video technology gives them the power to do that at the click of a button.

Historically, video surveillance was based on analog technology, closed circuit television (CCTV) and recorded on video tapes. Although it served the purpose of capturing what was going on, it didn't transmit live information. Therefore, it wasn't practical for monitoring facilities like warehouses, factories, offices, child daycare centers, schools, retail stores, and banks. With the Internet revolution and the increasing presence of Local Area Networks, technology took great strides in video surveillance in the 1990's. Analog camera tubes were replaced with Charged Coupled Devices (CCD) and digital cameras as they became more affordable. This combination meant that video surveillance could go live over the Internet and provide clearer, crisper images.

Here's how it works. A digital camera broadcasts the video images as a digitized signal over a LAN line where it's then transmitted to a server that manages all of the information. The software gives the company the ability to record, display or re-transmit the images anywhere in the world. Depending on the type of software installed, it may analyze data and select specific items to watch, making it a customizable security tool. True IP-based digital surveillance uses signal processing that sends packetized video streams over the LAN utilizing greater bandwidth and standard TCP/IP communication. It also provides greater data mining features and information retrieval. If security is an issue, full digital surveillance offers the added advantage of data encryption opportunities to protect against image tampering.

A complete IP-based technology is the best bang for your buck both monetarily and in terms of security. TCP/IP transmittal of surveillance makes sense for remote monitoring of multiple locations and for remote recording of data onto back-up servers and hard disks for long-term storage. Since most businesses already have a high-speed IP network, adding IP video simply leverages the same infrastructure to include video functionality. The only action required is to set the IP address of the network cameras and the system is up and ready for configuration. Traditional analog video systems require dedicated point-to-point cabling, which makes installation, expansion, and maintenance both cumbersome and expensive.

Implementation of an IP-based video system is easy if you partner with the right provider that understands your business needs. Through Best Tel, LLC's premier membership in Technology Assurance Group (TAG),

a national organization of independently owned telecommunications companies, the organization has partnered with MG Security Systems, a leader in the industry, to offer IP-based surveillance solutions to its customers.

Who can benefit from IP video surveillance systems? The real question is what company can't use this cutting edge technology. In the banking and finance sector, institutions can easily and effectively manage multiple locations. IP-based technology is ideal for trouble spots such as ATMs and drive up windows. Manufacturing and industrial companies can utilize the tool to manage quality, safety, and control. IP video is being used to focus on critical points of the production line to increase productivity and avoid problems. Small family owned stores to large retailers rely on this tool to reduce the potential for damage and theft as well as capture workplace injury and employee harassment. Daycare centers are utilizing the technology to ensure the safety of all children. These are just a couple of examples of how IP-based surveillance systems can increase an organization's profitability, reduce costs, and increase productivity.

Advances in IP-based technology is turning video surveillance into one of the most valuable loss prevention, safety, security and management tools available today. Companies utilize IP-based surveillance systems to monitor shoplifters and dishonest employees, compile recorded evidence against bogus accident claims, and monitor merchandising displays in stores that may be hundreds of miles away. Manufacturers, governments, hospitals and universities use IP video surveillance to identify visitors and employees, monitor hazardous work areas, thwart theft and ensure the

security of their premises and parking facilities – all done in real-time. IP video is the latest technology introduced to us the by the Internet and those companies incorporating it into their daily activities will have a greater chance of meeting their business objectives.

ABOUT BEST TEL, LLC

Best-Tel LLC's Portland office is a member of the Technology Assurance Group (TAG). Best-Tel has built a team of professional voice and data specialists dedicated to the highest levels of customer support. Best Tel's pattern of steady growth reflects their commitment to keeping pace with the constantly evolving

telecommunications technology arena, and the dramatic expansion of the Pacific Northwest's business market. With offices located along the I-5 Corridor in Portland, Eugene, Medford, and Seattle, Best Tel is uniquely positioned to respond quickly and effectively to a wide range of customer equipment and service requirements.