

Vista & Kronos provide security solutions for the Sheppey Prisons Cluster

The Challenge

Within the Sheppey Cluster of prisons the implementation of a Vista solution at two of the establishments, HMP Elmley and Stanford Hill, was required. Both prisons needed to maximise their CCTV coverage, ensuring that 'dead spot' areas were avoided. As the establishments have a strong focus on prisoner welfare and an obligation to ensure the safety of inmates, it was important to them that a system could be offered that met their requirements so they can go above and beyond their duty of care. One of the key issues that the prisons faced was that the areas covered by analogue cameras provided lower quality images than required.

The Ministry of Justice and the National Offender Management Service have specifications that must be met or, ideally, exceeded. In order to meet the prison's duty of care cameras must cover all areas. Having worked for the prisons before, Kronos Threat Management was capable of meeting these requirements and, by offering better prices than their competition, was chosen to cover the projects for both prisons. Craig Vincent of Kronos advocated the use of Vista products due to his familiarity with them, even saying that "Over recent years our relationship with Vista is more a partnership than customer and client." He also stated that "As a company we have used Vista products for a number of years and have found them to be reliable, durable and feature rich supported by fast delivery times and excellent technical services"

The Solution

Due to Kronos previously proving they could offer an excellent solution tailored to the demands of an environment such as a prison they became a trusted consultant and installer to the Sheppey Cluster. As a result they valued Kronos' expertise and followed their recommendations for the implementation of the qulu system. Following a decision to go ahead with the project the prisons were upgraded from the lower quality analogue cameras to an IP system which allowed for much better clarity when reviewing footage. In HMP Elmley's case, this required the installation of a new system for various areas, and all equipment and hardware had to be installed. A total of 128 cameras were installed, including Vista's VK2 3MP static cameras and Red Vision PTZ cameras. qulu SR1 servers and switches were installed alongside the cameras, and Kronos also installed network cables in order to input their own network. This new network included fibre optic links and structured cabling which created infrastructure challenges such as digging channels for cables while ensuring minimum disruption to the prison schedule in the process.

At Stanford Hill some hardware was kept but the existing system of analogue CCTV was adapted to IP using Axis Q74 encoders, with signalling via an AMG wireless solution. Kronos installed 3 Red Vision X-series PTZ cameras as well as wind down tower poles. The installation of qulu made it easy to bring together each component into a system that works effectively. Each product was chosen based on its reliability, and both the speed of access and ease of use offered by qulu meant it was the best choice of

Video Management Software. Craig from Kronos commented “The system now in place is IP with signalling via wireless which works very well producing the required results. We are pleased on how well this worked and pulled together.”

Although every project has its challenges Craig Vincent worked closely with Vista to ensure solutions were put in place as quickly as possible. One of the main hurdles in this particular project was the restrictions against internet access which made the loading of camera licences and updates a lot more difficult. Vista and Kronos worked together to overcome challenges such as these, and in this instance made an agreement that Vista will in future carry out pre-configuration off-site to reduce the need for on-site licence updates.

The Outcome

Although the working environment caused challenges for Kronos who had to work around the prisoners and their structured regime they were able to put in place a flexible plan to work in the available areas that would not disrupt the day-to-day running of the prison. Despite the challenging circumstances and requirement to ensure minimum disruption to the prison regime Kronos were experienced with working in these environments and so were able to install in a limited and carefully structured time frame and complete the project on time.

Vista provided efficient technical support for both projects and the benefits of using Vista in both systems was outlined prior to the installation during meetings with the Vista Business Development Manager, Alex. Craig from Kronos also mentioned that “Alex also did a prison visit to ensure he understood the environment the system was going to be installed in” which allowed him to offer the best solution possible to meet the prisons’ requirements. Vista also provided a call off order which helped meet the project deadline. Vista’s support alongside Kronos’ expertise in the environment meant that the project was also completed on budget. Craig from Kronos stated “The project was all positive and a success and we have bid on phase two.”

About the installer

Kronos Threat Management is a Kent-based security company specialising in CCTV and threat assessments and solutions. They start each project with a threat analysis detailing the needs of their client whose protection is their number one priority. In particular they pride themselves on being at the cutting edge of the CCTV industry but take on board all security concerns to make sure each client’s specific needs are managed effectively. By liaising with the client and understanding their business, Kronos provides a comprehensive service regardless of the threats or budgets.