

Chester Zoo rationalises, networks and centralises its security operations.

Axis Internet-of-Things solution offers improvements to security, animal welfare, visitor safety and online marketing.



Organization:

Chester Zoo

Location:

Chester, UK

Industry segment:

Commercial

Application:

Safety and security,
anti-theft surveillance

Axis partner:

NW Systems Group,
Milestone Systems

Mission

Chester Zoo wanted to upgrade its security provision across its expanding site. An ageing CCTV estate needed to be improved and coverage extended. All cameras needed to be networked to enable centralised control and management in a new control room. This new system needed to support the zoo's professionalised security team - helping them to spot and act on security threats more rapidly and proportionately. The new system also needed to support more comprehensive perimeter security, as well as visitor and staff health and safety monitoring.

Solution

The completion of the two-year project saw the installation and networking of 300 Axis network cameras, combined with several Axis network horn speakers. The new IP camera system transmits video to the zoo's new IP-based centralised control room supported by Milestone XProtect® video management software. Axis partner NW Systems completed installation, configuration and integration work for this entire project.

Result

The comprehensive IP camera system has been instrumental in the day-to-day running of the zoo. The IP camera system has helped Chester Zoo to rationalise, network and centralise its security operations, underpinning a professionalisation of the zoo's security team so that the zoo now meets the highest international standards for securing crowded places. The versatility of Axis' cameras helps to provide high quality video images to meet zoo keepers' specific operational and research needs, as well as helping the zoo's security team to spot and act on security threats faster than before, tightening perimeter security, optimising retail operations and preventing losses at the zoo's many shops and eateries.

“Chester Zoo now has a video security platform which is highly reliable, expandable and future-proof. We know that whatever our requirement in terms of security intelligence, video analytics and integration, it’s now possible with our new IP video system. Speed and appropriateness of response to threats is now assured.”

Nigel Peers, Security Manager, Chester Zoo.

Axis cameras suited to any situation

After discussions with the zoo’s then head of security Nigel Peers, it was discovered that many of the existing 177 legacy CCTV cameras were generating poor images. Axis partner NW Systems replaced approximately 60 faulty CCTV cameras with new Axis network cameras. All remaining CCTV cameras were then brought onto the network using AXIS M7016 and AXIS M7014 Video Encoders.

New Axis cameras were installed within some animal enclosures, to support keepers’ animal welfare and research work. Axis cameras were selected for their versatility and robustness, meaning that they could be deployed inside as well as outside enclosures – even in low light conditions due to Axis Lightfinder technology. Special attention was paid to camouflaging camera housings to make them blend in.

NW Systems also placed several 5-megapixel AXIS P1357-E Network Cameras to cover the large doors which provide access from the elephant house to the zoo’s large external enclosure. This enables the keeper that is operating the door control system to view the areas around the large doors remotely and provide warnings to keepers in the vicinity before opening them. In this way, health and safety risks to staff or animals have been minimised.

NW Systems also deployed more than 30 Axis cameras including AXIS P3225-LVE Network Cameras, across the new, £40M ‘The Islands’ site – a network of six different Southeast Asia islands complete with bridges between each, unique flora and fauna habitats, animals – even offering a boat trip threading between each island.

Zoo-wide, 160 new Axis network cameras were installed, providing coverage of an expanded Jubilee Quarter entrance and main car park, The Islands, the elephant enclosure and right across the core zoo. In their efforts to improve coverage of the entrance and main car park, NW Systems installed several AXIS Q6000-E PTZ Dome Network Cameras, alongside AXIS C3003-E Network Horn Speakers, clamped onto existing lighting masts throughout the car park.

The cameras are used to monitor the area effectively, while the loud speakers enable live and recorded transmission of audio messages to arriving visitors; guiding them towards the entrance, and deterring any potential wrong-doing.

Nigel Peers, Security Manager, Chester Zoo, summarised, “Chester Zoo now has a video security platform which is highly reliable, expandable and future-proof. We know that whatever our requirement in terms of security intelligence, video analytics and integration, it’s now possible with our new IP video system. Speed and appropriateness of response to threats is now assured.”

Nick Platt-Higgins, UK Key Account Manager, Axis Communications, highlighted the progression made with the installation of Axis equipment: “The original system consisted of 130 analogue cameras, they were mostly used for animal welfare and visitor safety. The new system, of 300 Axis cameras, ensures this fantastic tourist attraction has the very latest, state-of-the-art safety provision and is built to last.”

The whole project has moved at the zoo’s pace, while accommodating the discreet security requirements associated with the largest and most complex construction project Chester Zoo has ever undertaken in its 85-year history – The Islands. Axis cameras have been able to improve the security capabilities of the zoo during this period of upheaval, without disrupting its ability to carry on operating, and accommodating increasing numbers of visitors.

Frank Crouwel, Managing Director of NW Systems, added, “I’m very proud that we’ve been able to work with Chester Zoo every step of their journey to upgrade and harden their physical security provision; while also creating a camera system which supports many other operational requirements from visitor and staff health and safety, to animal welfare and behavioural research, as well as retail management and loss prevention.”

