

AN EYE FOR AN EYE

SPOTLIGHT ON TECHNOLOGY: UNLIKE ANALOGUE CAMERAS,

**COMPETITION:
WIN**



ARE you concerned about securing your business over the festive season? If so, enter the It's My Business /AXIS 207 Network Camera give-away. This nifty camera offers the best image quality in its class, providing excellent images even in low lighting conditions. It also provides the best bandwidth efficiency, thanks to its MPEG-4 implementation that includes motion estimation. Simultaneous MPEG-4 and Motion JPEG allow systems to be optimised for both image quality and bandwidth.

The AXIS 207 is ideal for securing small businesses, home offices and residences over a local area network or the Internet. The built-in microphone enables remote users to not only view, but also listen in on an area and increase the monitoring options.

To stand a chance of winning a set of two Axis 207 cameras SMS first the codeword "business41" followed by your name and postal address to 32545.

The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into regarding this competition. SMSs cost R1 each. Entries close on Friday, November 28. You may enter as many times as you wish.

The AXIS 207 comes at a recommended retail price of R2 850, including VAT.



Keeping one step ahead of the criminals is now only a click away, and many businesses are seeing the benefits, writes **Toby Shapshak**



SECURITY is never far from most South Africans' minds, and especially so in the case of small businesses, which arguably suffer the most when crime strikes.

When your business involves remote sites or warehouses, and you need stock control, then it's even more front of mind to keep out criminals and prevent "leakage".

Installing security cameras is a must in these circumstances, but then you need to be able to record the footage they capture and make it available for immediate or later viewing.

Luckily camera technology has come a long way and the Internet's primary means of transporting data, known as Internet Protocol (IP), has made previously expensive technologies cheaper and more user-friendly.

These newer so-called IP cameras can connect to a computer network like any PC and transmit the images they capture in much the same way as computers send data to each other over the Internet.

"What IP cameras have done," said Mervyn Low, a product manager at electronic security company Multivid, "is allow an electronic window to open for people — and not just in terms of being able to see, watch and record."

Business owners are also able to check if their staff are at the office, or if there are intrusions after hours.

This allows such technology to become as much a means of prevention as opposed to just a means of checking up, he said.

Indeed, said Jason McGregor, an account manager at Axis Communications, which supplies the cameras Multivid uses, it is more of a business tool.

"You can go on holiday and rest assured that your staff are still working, or coming to work, and not just from a security perspective." A problem, he said, is that "security has always been a grudge purchase. You have to show the value, not purely for security needs, but you have to show business needs."

Examples of this are fish-processing plants or butcheries where the business owner can't always be at the office or overseeing the factory. By installing cameras at "points of interest", they are able to see what's going on.



KEEPING AN EYE OUT: Roy Alves is country manager for Axis South Africa
Picture: LETTIE FERREIRA

cameras being IP is that they are available across any computer network, whether you're sitting in Beijing or Bangladesh", Mervyn said.

You don't need any proprietary or specialised equipment: you can plug them into any computer network.

Better still, Jason said, you can use any existing server to record the footage by installing the required software.

Another possibility is to host this footage recording facility at an Internet service provider (ISP), using a service known as STS.

"The beauty about STS is that there is no configuration needed on camera. You can plug it into the network and it finds its own way out and to the service provider," Jason said.

Business owners can then log onto the ISP servers and watch images from there.

This is an additional failsafe in case of a robbery where computers and servers might be stolen, with the footage of the criminals on them.

For instance, a business with five or six stores and one head office, like a chain of jewellery stores, can record high-res images on site, then transfer these images off site for added security.

The IP cameras also offer what's known as black-screen technology, where the cameras stay inactive until there is an alarm.

When they activate, they can transmit these images to an off-site control centre.

Jason cited an incident at a major chicken franchise business where policemen in the store were directed to the exact spots that the armed criminals were hiding, thus avoiding an ambush. "You can't do this really cool stuff on analogue systems," he said.

Small-business owners will be relieved to know that they can still use older analogue cameras in conjunction with the new IP cameras, which are generally cheaper, and ultimately convert to all-IP.

For more information, contact Multivid at www.multivid.co.za and Axis at www.axis.com

COMPETITION: WIN

A GREAT deal of our energy comes from the sun. Outdoor enthusiasts have embraced this fact by enhancing their gardens with solar lighting. The Micromark Yorkie Wall-Wash unit has 12 Superbright White LEDs, a superior stainless steel finish and emits light upwards and downwards. The two-pack Yorkie Spotlight is constructed from stainless steel and has six Superbright White LEDs per spotlight. It provides directional light to highlight a specific feature in the garden. Micromark solar panels have been tested under extreme conditions to deliver high-quality, reliable, weatherproof and low-maintenance products. For more information visit micromarksa.co.za



ENHANCE YOUR GARDEN AND DO YOUR BIT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT!

TO WIN an Axiz/Micromark Solar Powered Stainless Steel Yorkie Wall-Wash Light (worth R408) or a Micromark Solar Powered Stainless Steel Yorkie Spotlight Kit (worth R412), SMS first the codeword "business42" followed by your name and postal address to 32545. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into regarding this competition. SMSs cost R1 each. Entries close on Friday, November 28. You may enter as many times as you wish.

Better still, the Axis cameras have bidirectional audio, so not only can the business owner hear what's being said, but he or she can talk to their staff as well.

Mervyn extolled the virtue of

these new IP cameras and their benefit over traditional analogue cameras, which require a cable and recorder, "like you see on *CSI*, when you want footage".

But, the "beauty of these

TELL US: Have you invested in security, and has it helped your business? Write to editor@itsmybusiness.co.za



PROUDLY SPONSORED BY MWEB



'What IP cameras have done is allow an electronic window to open for people, and not just in terms of being able to see, watch and record'
— Mervyn Low, product manager at electronic security company Multivid

INTERNET PROTOCOL TECH IS AVAILABLE ON ANY NETWORK



ON THE ROAD AGAIN: Jo Botha's traffic engineering business is reliant on the technology offered by IP cameras

Picture: SYDNEY SESHIBEDI

CASE STUDY

Keeping your assets secure is a high priority for many business owners. **Toby Shapshak** speaks to Jo Botha, whose investment in a high-tech camera system is reaping rewards

IT'S PROBABLY safe to say Jo Botha couldn't have run his small business without the sophisticated camera system that he uses. The system proved so successful in its first installation that it has resulted in the possibility of more business opportunities. "It's opened up new doors," says Jo. "There's the possibility of eight more of these centres in Mozambique. That has never been done before."

Jo runs a business called TES Trust, which specialises in traffic monitoring, both electronic and manual. It deals, specifically, with over-load control and what's called Video Toll Auditing Systems.

One of its principal operations is monitoring these on the M4 between Pretoria and Mozambique.

TES, for traffic engineering services, employs 21 people full-time and approximately 30 part-time.

"We installed four Axis cameras at two Traffic Load Control Centres (TCC) in Maputo, Mozambique," says Jo. At each site, one camera is used to capture a side-view image of overloaded vehicles as they pass over what's called a High-Speed Wim Screener (HSWIM).

The other camera operates at a static scale, enabling the scale master to read number plates and match the image with the one received

from the HSWIM.

"The biggest challenge that we faced was to get a high-resolution, single-frame image instantaneously. We also needed a high frame-per-second rate to capture vehicles with less than a two-minute following distance in multiple lanes," says Jo. "Off site back-up is possible, and useful."

Jo says using the cameras has been helpful to TES's business.

"We use an Ethernet and fibre backbone, and being able to send a single frame and continuous video to a source made the whole methodology behind the TCC System possible."

Jo says the Axis cameras cost

about R14 000 each, while the only other competitor's cameras cost R22 000 each.

"Rands and cents count, and we wouldn't have made it," he says, if his company couldn't do it within the budget. "This is a new concept. We were looking for what the cameras can do."

Jo says although TES used older, analogue cameras, they could not satisfy the need for this particular application. The newer IP cameras can also work at night. "Due to the fact that the TCC stations have no street lights, we had to incorporate infrared lights.

The results have been amazing, and

matching can be done at night as well. If this was not possible we would have lost the use and effectiveness of the system at night."

The camera system has enabled effectiveness in over-load control to be improved drastically.

"It enables our client, TRAC, to monitor and audit events and occurrences."

Using this new technology has made it easier for TES to run its business.

"I believe it has opened new business opportunities, and with a basic 'African Solution', these systems can be rolled out and maintained with ease. Hopefully more will follow."

