

Casinos always look safe - don't they? Well that's because they really need to be. The threat of criminal activity is as high as the stakes at the card tables. It is in these environments that intelligent and high definition video surveillance can play a pivotal role in ensuring the thrill and enjoyment of the gaming experience prevails uninterrupted.

Increasing volumes of people and money on site significantly increases risk of incident, and this should be proactively managed by security personnel, aided by technology.

As the saying goes, "the devil is in the detail", and therefore "casino security needs advanced cameras that will capture the minute details of a card, a ticket, the number of chips thrown on a table, or under one's hand," explains Roy Alves, country manager of Axis South Africa.

High definition cameras mean better crime deterrents and better crowd control, especially where large throngs of people are prevalent. Video surveillance can keep watch for suspicious activity and disruptions, for example monitoring suspicious players.

There is always the threat of gamblers looking to beat the system through methods of cheating and hustling. Strategically placed cameras provide clear views of gaming tables, allowing the security department to closely monitor individual players. HD surveillance cameras can deter crime by putting fear into the minds of thieves, and also aid authorities in identifying criminals during investigations.

Employee theft is another major concern that can be prevented with the appropriate video surveillance.

An IP based surveillance system also means the added benefit of remote monitoring for casino security. In essence, IP surveillance technology enables the security department to monitor footage and operate cameras from remote locations. Why does this matter?

"Well, if you're in the middle of a major armed crime heist in a casino you really don't want to have to wait until the criminals have left to access your surveillance systems to get the necessary identification needed for police and other authorities to do their work well," explains Alves.

In many cases, the legacy analogue cameras of casinos have become a hindrance in working with local law enforcement. The resolution of images captured is of insufficient quality to be admissible in court. In addition to poor quality footage, if the images have been recorded on VCR tape they may have worn out over time, creating further difficulties.

For security teams who have to repeatedly review video over several days or weeks during an investigation, quality and long-term archival properties are imperative.

"In looking to modernise their security systems, many local casinos are starting to consider open IP-based solutions that provide secure, evidentiary-quality video recordings, operate at 30 frames per second, and would be easy to implement and expand without major expense or disruption of gaming activity," adds Alves.

"Axis network cameras produce excellent quality, resolution and clarity. Axis network cameras also support of Power-over-Ethernet, which allowed the casinos to save installation costs by using a single cable to power the cameras as well as transmit the video over the network.

"And Axis network cameras support both MJPEG and H.264 advanced compression at a full 30fps, allowing casinos to affordably maintain 14 days of archival storage, or in some case many more days," concludes Alves.

AXIS M3014 is a 1 megapixel ultra-compact fixed PoE network dome with an innovative and unique camera design. It is specifically developed for recessed mounting in drop ceilings, creating an unmatched discreet solution for network video surveillance, using progressive scan technology. The camera offers multiple streams that can be individually optimised in H.264 as well as Motion JPEG. The H.264 compression enables optimisation for bandwidth and storage efficiency by significantly reducing the bit rate.

AXIS Q6034-E pan tilt and zoom dome camera that offers a rich viewing experience. The HDTV 720p complies with the SMPTE 296M standard regarding a 1280x720 pixel resolution, full frame rate, HDTV color fidelity and a 16:9 format.

The day and night AXIS Q6034 supports multiple H.264 and Motion JPEG video streams. H.264 greatly optimises bandwidth and storage use, without compromising image quality.

The camera also has a fast and precise pan/tilt response at 450° per second. It can tilt 20° above the horizon, enabling better views, especially over uneven terrain. With Active Gatekeeper, the camera can automatically move to a preset position upon motion detection in a pre-defined area, and track

the detected object.

The camera also has Support for High Power over Ethernet (High PoE), which simplifies installation as only one cable is required for power.