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## Security, IT converge at Axis

BY LEON ENGELBRECHT , ITWEB SENIOR WRITER

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[ Denmark | ITWeb, 11 October 2007 ] - The convergence of IT and physical security, such as cameras and access control, has opened new avenues for business intelligence (BI), says Axis Communications.

Various speakers at its annual media event in Copenhagen, Denmark, this week, emphasised the ability of digital CCTV cameras to teach business more about their clients, workforce and environment.

Axis president and CEO Ray Mauritsson says the "general trend is towards a growing acceptance of surveillance". He notes the company recently installed 10 000 power-over-Ethernet cameras on busses, in the city of Stockholm, Sweden, a move welcomed by commuters, drivers and their trade union as a positive step towards safer working conditions.

"Installations and projects are also getting bigger," he says. Even five years ago, a project involving 100 cameras was a "big deal", but now there are several under way, involving up to 10 000.

Axis executive VP Anders Laurin adds that camera technology is becoming smarter. This applies to the hardware side, where more intelligence is being built into cameras, as well as on the software side, where Axis partners with companies such as IBM, Genetec, Milestone and Checkpoint.

**Retail applications**

Although developed to improve site security and fight retail shrinkage, Axis' products – and those of some of its competitors – are increasingly being used to support BI and marketing analysis, says David Gorman, president and CEO of David Gorman & Associates.

He says video captured as digital information is easily accessible and allows systems to monitor events in a reliable manner.

"In addition to sending real-time alerts on potential thefts or suspicious behaviour, the system can also monitor client traffic patterns round a store, measure pause times at various displays and generally assist with marketing and merchandising."

Axis strategic channels director Jumbi Edulbehram says: "Retailers are conservative, but keen on technology if it saves them money or improves profits." Using digital security technology to support BI does both, he notes. "The technology validates store planograms [shelf plans] and gives accurate client counts."

It also allows retailers to correlate sales with planograms, determine sales/client ratios, as well as conduct end-cap analysis and make a sound business case for shelf rentals.

Edulbehram says the convergence between security and IT also allows for better customer service in that it alerts management to client patterns and queuing, which should influence staff allocation and the opening of additional points-of-sale at busy times.

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