

Axis' network cameras enable Bonhams' auctions to be viewed live over the Internet.

Quru 'LiveBid' incorporating Axis network cameras allows registered users to see auction lots in real time from anywhere in the world.



Organization:
Bonhams

Location:
UK, worldwide

Industry segment:
Retail

Application:
Remote viewing,
broadcasting

Axis partners:
Azlan, Quru

Mission

Bonhams is a privately owned British auction house and one of the world's oldest and largest auctioneers of fine art and antiques. It had been working with Quru, to develop a bespoke Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) application allowing it to handle the entire auction process.

Building on this, a 'LiveBid' application was launched last year that allowed real-time bids to be made from anywhere in the world via the Internet. However, even though the system was successful, it was audio-only and it was clear that Bonhams was keen to add video so that bidders could not only hear the auctioneer but actually see them. It would bring a whole new dimension to the auction experience and give Bonhams a clear competitive edge.

Solution

Following a proof of concept trial over a six-month period, the application was re-launched with live footage captured and streamed using AXIS P5534 Network Cameras.

Result

Thanks to Axis network cameras incorporating Quru's 'LiveBid' application, interested parties can not only hear the auction online and bid on lots from anywhere in the world, but also see the auctioneer, enhancing the whole auction experience for those not able to attend the auction rooms. It has resulted in a system that is being rolled-out to other Bonhams' auction houses across the globe.

"Video has made improvements to our business that we could not have conceived before the trial. Historically, surveillance cameras and CCTV were something that we saw purely as a security measure and not a tool we could use to really improve the way we run our business."

Matthew Girling, CEO Europe, Bonhams.

Viewed live over the Internet

Bonhams is a privately owned British auction house and one of the world's oldest and largest auctioneers of fine art and antiques. The Bonhams name is recognised worldwide throughout all sectors of the fine art, antiques and the collectors market, with several of its departments established as world leaders within their specialist category.

Quru, a leading opening standards, services and solutions provider, has been a partner of Bonhams for the last few years, working as its outsourced global IT department, responsible for its helpdesk, servers desktops and support. During this time, it has developed a totally bespoke ERP application to manage the entire auction process; from the lot being brought in for valuation, to the auction, to the item being taken away by the new owner. Bonhams wanted to add an interactive application that would allow people to bid for lots in real-time, from anywhere in the world. Robin Porter, Business Development Manager, Quru said: "We have worked with Bonhams to streamline its IT and the bespoke application has revolutionised the way it can manage its business. Taking this a step further, we developed an interactive application that would allow registered users to bid live on auction lots from anywhere in the world."

Launched as an audio-only application, LiveBid allowed registered users to access auctions and place bids in real-time. As good as this application was, Bonhams wanted to go one step further and introduce video so that people could see the auctioneer as well as hear the dialogue and bid in real-time. Robin continued: "We developed the video application and started the pilot at Bonhams' New Bond Street HQ. The trial coincided with a renovation of the building so the solution could be installed during this time. The building now has three additional sales rooms."

The initial proof of concept was trialled for six months before it was rolled out, and uses AXIS P5534 Network Cameras specified and provided after close collaboration between Axis and Axis partner, Azlan, a leading value-

added distributor of networking, communications, mid-range enterprise server, storage and software solutions in Europe. Matthew Girling, CEO Europe, Bonhams said: "We want to make the auction process accessible to those parties that cannot make it. Auctions shouldn't be exclusive to those that can attend, and telephone bids require an intermediary – the bidder relies on whoever is on the end of the phone to represent them."

"We were really impressed with the audio version of Live-Bid and feedback from clients was extremely complimentary. When the suggestion of adding a live video feed was put forward it made perfect sense. The proof of concept was a success, and the additional dimension that video brings to the auction process is extremely valuable and helps set us apart from our competition. Video has made improvements to our business that we could not have conceived before the trial. Historically, surveillance cameras and CCTV were something that we saw purely as a security measure and not a tool we could use to really improve the way we run our business."

AXIS P5534 PTZ Dome Network Camera offers HDTV-quality video and 18x zoom for indoor surveillance applications. With an IP51-rated protection against dust it is ideal for use in demanding environments including warehouses and shops, so was the perfect model for Bonhams' auction rooms. Day/night functionality also ensures high image quality in low light conditions. All cameras provided the benefits of remote access via the internet and excellent HDTV-quality images, both of which are much more complicated to achieve with legacy analogue CCTV systems. In addition, Quru specified three AXIS P1347-E outdoor cameras. These have been installed to take time-lapse footage of the renovations to Bonhams' headquarters. This unique footage shows each stage of the works over the 18 months it took to complete them. AXIS P1347-E Network Camera is a top-of-the-line, 5-megapixel outdoor-ready network camera with HDTV 1080p performance, precise iris control for optimal image clarity and H.264 compression. Its use was perfect for Bonhams as it is particularly suited for outdoor surveillance use and any application that requires coverage of a large area or extremely high image detail.



Bonhams

