

Case Study

Bell Centre

Home of Montreal Canadiens hockey team makes move to IP video surveillance with Genetec Omnicast



Bell Centre upgrades to Genetec IP video surveillance to secure multiple sites and protect VIP hockey players, entertainers and visitors

Business challenge

Built in 1996 in the downtown core of Montreal, Quebec, Canada, the Bell Centre is home to the legendary Montreal Canadiens hockey team, commonly referred to by its loyal fans as the Habs. The arena is consistently ranked among the busiest in the world, and usually generates the highest attendance of any arena in Canada. On game day, the stadium accommodates over 21,000 visitors while concerts often sell-out a stage-friendly seating capacity of 15,000.

With a consistently large volume of patrons visiting the arena for various events, security is a vital component of the successful operations at the Bell Centre. However, after 20 years, the existing analog video surveillance, which had always been reliable, was nearing end-of-life. Failed components were no longer being supported by the vendor, and the arena was ready to transition the system to IP.

With a significant number of existing analog cameras, the Bell Centre security team needed a solution that would allow them to minimize upfront investments and migrate to a fully IP-based system over time. They also wanted to be able to freely grow their new security system, without limitations such as adding cameras, integrating other systems, or bringing in remote sites under one central command center.

After considering many proposals, the Bell Centre decided to move ahead with the Omnicast IP video surveillance system from Genetec Inc. (Genetec), as suggested by Marcomm Systems Group Inc., a service-oriented integrator with a focus on custom solutions. Omnicast is part of Security Center, the unified security platform which includes video surveillance, access control, automatic license plate recognition (ALPR), and other systems in one intuitive solution.

Kicking-off a move to IP with Security Center

Today, all analog cameras have been encoded to IP and some new IP cameras were added to the inside and outside of the sports stadium. Using the Federation feature, the Bell Centre was able to extend monitoring capabilities to remote facilities such as the Montreal Canadiens' training rink in Brossard, Quebec, Canada, and a warehouse in another part of Montreal which is managed by the same ownership group.

Summary

Client name: Bell Centre

Organization size: Approximately 200 full-time employees and up to 1000 part-time employees

Products: Security Center, Omnicast

Industry: Stadium and Open Spaces

Location: Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Partners: Marcomm Systems Group Inc., Avaya, Axis Communications, Samsung, Stentofon

The Genetec™ SV-32 and SV-16 network security appliances were used in each of these locations, acting as small stand-alone video surveillance systems federated into the central command post at the Bell Centre.

“With Genetec, we are able to achieve fully centralized control of our sites. Our group owns numerous locations around Montreal, so the objective is to eventually have all of them connected back to our head-end system. This will help us reduce operational costs by allowing our guards to monitor incoming alarms from our various sites, instead of paying another service provider to do that job,” explains Patrick Cyrenne, Electronic Technician at the Bell Centre.

User-friendly platform makes day-to-day tasks easier

One of the most beneficial aspects of the new IP video surveillance system for Bell Centre is its ease of use. For operators, transitioning from analog technology to the IP system has been seamless. Guards can easily monitor the interior and exterior grounds using a USB-connected video surveillance control board with a joystick and keypad. On match day, when on-foot guards call in an incident to security, operators are able to quickly call up live camera views to monitor the situation as it unfolds.

“Everyone here finds the video system very easy to use, and that was one of the biggest selling points for our team,” explains Cyrenne. “For me, configuring cameras and system settings is much easier with Security Center. I have also been able to set up

operator tasks for different viewing options. When an operator comes in for their shift, they just need to launch a task and everything they need is readily available.”

Investigations have also been simplified for the security team. Cyrenne continues, “Our investigators really love the new system because it saves them so much time. Before Omnicast, we had 13 digital video recorders (DVRs), so the investigator had to physically locate the right DVR and search through hours of footage to find the incident. Today, everything is centralized which allows them to retrieve the video within seconds and from their own office.”

The openness of the Security Center platform has also facilitated an integration between the video surveillance and an existing STENTOFON intercom system. The system will automatically prompt video from nearby cameras, and allows for two-way audio communications so operators can visually validate and speak with delivery personnel or visitors to the arena.

Security Center becomes foundation for more growth

As the Bell Centre continues to evolve the new security platform, many plans are on the horizon. Upgrading to the Synergis access control system of Security Center, providing local police with secure remote system access, and bringing other system input alarms into a customized head-end are a few items in discussion with Marcomm Systems Group Inc.

“The flexibility and scalability of the system has been a huge benefit to our team. We are no longer stuck with the limitations of outdated technology. Instead, Genetec and Marcomm Systems Group Inc. have given us a foundation that we can build on, and a system that ultimately makes our team more effective and our entertainment complex and arena safer,” concludes Cyrenne.

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Infrastructure at a Glance

Security Center is currently managing a significant number of cameras inside and outside the Bell Centre. Some new Samsung IP cameras were added and AXIS P7216 encoders were used to convert all analog cameras to IP. The AXIS T8310 video surveillance control board offers joystick and keyboard navigation. Genetec SV-16 and SV-32 network security appliances have been implemented at two remote sites, and the Federation feature has facilitated centralized monitoring and management of all systems. The entire network has been built by the Bell Centre using Avaya solutions.