

Edmonton Transit Service (ETS)

The City of Edmonton increases security to safeguard transit passengers



Industry

Trains and Transit

Location

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Products

Security Center, Omnicast

Partners

EIZO

Edmonton Transit Service centralizes video surveillance with Security Center Omnicast and EIZO monitors

Located in central Alberta, the City of Edmonton is the fifth largest city in Canada and home to more than a million people. To keep its citizens moving, the [Edmonton Transit Service \(ETS\)](#) offers multiple modes of transportation, including a fleet of buses, paratransit, and a Light Rail Transit (LRT) system that travels between 18 stations. On average, ETS provides service for more than 8 million rides per month.

Maintaining security for so many people across the entire city is a main focus for ETS. In 2008, they decided to update their security system by switching to an IP-based solution built around the [Security Center Omnicast™](#) video management system (VMS).

Centralized video management with Omnicast

Today, ETS has about 1,100 cameras connected to the Omnicast VMS, including several generations of analog cameras as well as cutting-edge AXIS devices. One of the main benefits of this centralized VMS is that security personnel in the ETS control room are now able to effectively manage every aspect of the city's public transit system.

Prior to making the switch, their analog system had a number of limitations. One limitation was that security personnel could only pull video feeds locally at a given station. This meant that

viewing footage from multiple points required performing the time-consuming tasks of burning, sending, and collecting DVDs. And, because each camera was cabled with a dedicated recorder, stations had to deploy extra equipment onsite.

With Omnicast, security personnel can now manage their video from the control room. According to Alan Baird, Senior Communications Engineer, Technical Services, ETS, "Going to a centralized solution means that we're able to pull up any camera we want at any time and record everything centrally."

Flexibility is key

When upgrading their security system, ETS was looking for a VMS that could expand to meet future challenges. As part of the Genetec Security Center platform, the Omnicast VMS has the flexibility and stability required to allow the ETS system to grow beyond its present capabilities and address security needs as they arise.

The open platform covers their current video needs and, at the same time, allows them to integrate other products. “Working with Genetec has made it very easy to bring other software and data points into our system. The fact that it’s a flexible platform that can work with many different security products is one of its best features,” said Baird.

One of their recent challenges was with the monitors they were using to display video feeds in the control room and public areas. Integrating new technology was the solution. As the equipment aged, failures began to occur, like monitors that displayed nothing but static. This was both an operational and an image problem for the city, especially with the public facing monitors.

Edmonton transit adds EIZO monitors to its security system

Starting in 2018, ETS introduced [EIZO IP decoding monitors](#) in a variety of locations to improve operations and to provide an extra level of security. The monitors are integrated directly into the Security Center platform through a plug-in that ETS developed with EIZO and Genetec. Because they’re on a direct feed from the VMS, the monitors can easily display cameras and, unlike traditional monitors, don’t require additional equipment behind them.

The IP monitor is a unique solution that takes streams directly from the network, whether they’re coming from the VMS, a camera, an encoder, or another device. ETS can pull these streams into the monitor and display up to 16 of them at one time. This provides them with a global view of a station, route, or specific area.

On the operational side, one of the key drivers for the switch to EIZO monitors was the ability to manage the equipment remotely. “With a lot of our legacy hardware, we didn’t even know if it was working unless we actually went out and saw it,” said Baird. Now, with the integrated monitors, security personnel see the status of the monitor when they log on to the system.



Increased awareness helps passengers feel safe

For passengers, installing the EIZO monitors has meant increased safety. Some ETS spaces, particularly stairwells, can have blind spots or dark corners. This can be unnerving. The solution was to place monitors in these locations to allow passengers to see what’s around the corner. “With the EIZO monitors, we’re able to put up cameras to add visibility to these areas and, at the same time, use those cameras to provide people with increased situational awareness,” said Baird.

Because ETS has integrated the monitors directly into their security system, they have also increased the security of the system itself. “From a cybersecurity perspective, the EIZO monitors don’t require another computer that we have to maintain and protect. Because everything is integrated into the monitor, we’ve reduced the number of attack surfaces in our system,” explained Baird.

The long-term benefits of a lasting partnership

Working together since 2018, ETS and Genetec have developed a strong partnership. This partnership has allowed the two organizations to create a physical security system that will continue to protect the people of Edmonton as it addresses the city’s needs now and into the future.

“In the future, we would like to put monitors in locations where we have access control to get into facilities, like at an opening gate or door. And, as we continue to develop this solution with Genetec, ETS would also like to have the ability to show alerts for loitering or line issues. Our collaboration with Genetec will enable us to continue to grow beyond our current capabilities,” concluded Baird.

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