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## Thinking Outside Police Forces for City Security

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By **Simon Cook**, [Genetec](#)

Most people automatically assume that law enforcement agencies are primarily responsible for the expansive number of CCTV cameras throughout our towns and cities. While city-wide surveillance has often fallen on the shoulders of councils and the police, it is estimated that 'perhaps only 1.2 to 1.7 percent' of the total number of cameras in the UK are owned and operated by public agencies. With an estimated total number of cameras ranging up to 5.9 million, it is apparent that private organisations are the main technology stakeholders, leveraging video surveillance to keep their businesses and surrounding communities safer.

All over the world, more and more private companies and other public agencies are joining forces and collaborating with law enforcement to deter crime and promote better city resiliency to natural disasters and terrorist attacks. To complement this, now more than ever, surveillance technology is being used to fulfil objectives far beyond security and safety alone. Local business communities, transportation authorities, public works departments and others are using surveillance technology investments to improve services which also benefit the community as a whole.

CCTV surveillance aside, these agencies are implementing other technologies including automatic number plate recognition (ANPR), access control, intercom, analytics and more to first protect their own business and interest, but then to help preserve the integrity and safety of the communities in which they operate. Here are three examples of how other city organisations, from private entities to public service groups, are using security technologies to complement law enforcement's efforts in keeping our cities safer and more vibrant.

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## **Mass Venues and Automatic Number Plate Recognition**

The National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham, UK, recently upgraded to a Genetec AutoVu Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system, installing AutoVu ANPR cameras at each of the 42 lanes coming into the exhibition centre.

From a purely business standpoint, the ANPR system facilitates a VIP parking service available to visitors. Exhibitor attendees can now go online and book their VIP parking in advance, using their vehicle number plate. Upon entering the parking lot, the AutoVu cameras scan the vehicle number plate, compare it to the pre-paid database, which then allows or denies entry.

Then there is a unique twist. Beyond traffic management, they are also using AutoVu to monitor shuttle bus frequency, and to be alerted when a "wanted" vehicle is identified. According to Paul Austin, Director at Vindex Systems, the integrator responsible for the full implementation, "The West Midlands Police receives all the number plate reads to their police control room and uses the system to check against hotlists for wanted criminals, stolen vehicles or for general investigations as part of a much wider ANPR network on the public roads and motorways."

While the ANPR system was installed for operational benefits and to streamline guests parking and other services, the local police department and its surrounding community have also been able to benefit from the investment.

## **Transportation Authorities and On-board Bus Surveillance**

An interesting trend that is occurring in other parts of the world is the addition of surveillance cameras on-board buses, trains and trams. While airports were once leading the way in moving to IP video surveillance, more mass transit agencies are taking the lead by implementing some of the most innovative applications for security and service. These on-board video surveillance systems are also assisting law enforcement in tracking suspects as they move through a city.

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, which serves 1.3 million passengers each weekday in the greater Boston, Massachusetts area of the United States, recently installed Genetec Omnicast video surveillance solution on 220 buses. As a service-oriented organisation, the MBTA wants to keep its passengers happy and part of that is ensuring a heightened sense of safety.

In case an emergency needs to be addressed on the bus, dispatch and transportation security officers can access the video to see what is happening. They use this technology to quickly diffuse the situation while keeping both passengers and responding officers safe at all times.

Forensic investigators can then later review video archives to investigate crimes or pull evidence for court litigations. Transportation authorities can also assist law enforcement with cases outside their jurisdiction, in events where a video camera on-board a bus captures events within its field-of-view.

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From a customer service perspective, the organisation can use video to review or substantiate claims of theft or violence in its terminals or on-board its fleet. No more he says, she says; there is proof to take just action and keep customers happy while also protecting the organisation from costly liability claims. Transit schedules or routes can also be closely monitored to improve services.

The MBTA has also leveraged the security technology to promote an interactive public advisory forum, displaying a message "See something? Say something.", alongside a phone number for the MBTA police. Passengers can also use an interactive app from their mobile device to anonymously and discretely report events, putting greater accountability in the public's hands.

### **Utilities Departments and Heightened Access Control**

Whether an electric, water or parks and recreations department, more intra-city organisations are implementing centralised access control to not only protect critical infrastructure but to also streamline access to various facilities for their employees, subcontractors and community events. There is no more need for management staff to be onsite to unlock doors when quick equipment repairs are needed, or when subcontractors need to get into building to handle various tasks.

IP access control provides quick accessibility to doors, allowing those with authority to unlock and lock doors, restrict access to certain users during specified times. Cards can be given to all employees and cardholder groups can be created, specifying access rights that relate only to their jobs and roles. In case a card is stolen or an employee is terminated, administrators can quickly deactivate a card and ensure that no one accesses a site without permission. This one feature has the ability to protect millions of people from the catastrophes that can stem from unauthorised access to critical sites such as main water treatment plants or electrical hubs.

Operationally, these city departments can also ensure community buildings are open to the public for specific events after normal business hours. With IP access control, door schedules can be pre-programmed and exceptions for those special events can be populated so that community members and event organisers can focus on the tasks or events at hand, and not the facilities themselves.

In case an incident occurs, the department in charge can also pull audit trails of who had access each building at specific times of the day. This helps corroborate evidence, especially when a unified security platform is implemented and video and access control information is innately synced during investigations. Organisations can export full incident reports and cases, quickly leading law enforcement to identify, capture and prosecute suspects.

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## Leveraging Public and Private Technology Investments to Improve City Safety

City councils and law enforcement agencies might be the ones assigned to keeping our cities as safe as possible, but more and more private and public agencies are doing their fair share to help. As businesses and public organisation implement technologies for their own security and operational interests, police departments are able to capitalise by accessing information when warranted and required. To see some of these technologies in action, visit the Genetec booth # F550 at IFSEC (16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> June London Excel) to experience the latest enhancements of [Security Center 5.3](#), the latest version of the unified security platform. [Sipelia](#), the SIP-enabled intercom module of Security Center, [AutoVu managed services](#) and [enterprise cloud services](#) will also be on display.



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