

# CDW

## Security innovation from the inside out



### Name

CDW

### Industries

Corporate Campuses

### Location

Vernon Hills, IL, USA

### Products

Security Center, Operations Center, ClearID



## From partner to power user: How CDW scaled global security using the Genetec unified platform

CDW is a leading multi-brand provider of information technology solutions to business, government, education, and healthcare customers in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. Headquartered in Vernon Hills, Illinois, CDW operates over 50 sites globally, including three distribution centers. When it came time to modernize their own physical security operations, CDW's internal Global Security team drew upon firsthand experience. They chose to standardize on Genetec™ Security Center—leveraging the same integration expertise they use to support clients.

### The challenge of disparate systems

CDW's Global Security team sought to streamline its complex, multi-faceted security landscape of legacy technologies and disparate systems. The organization had multiple access control, video, and alarm systems that didn't optimally integrate with each other. This was further compounded by the acquisition of several companies with their own independent security platforms. The result was an inconsistent environment, overlapping credentials, and time-consuming manual processes.

"We had a wide range of systems that we were attempting to bring together, with different data sets and card holders. It wasn't very efficient or scalable," said Global Security Manager Adam Smith. "When the systems aren't scaling and evolving with your business, it can become a real problem."

Smith knew these disparate systems made day-to-day workflows more time-intensive and complicated. Simple tasks, like verifying a visitor or investigating an incident, often

required navigating different platforms, creating delays. The lack of standardization created operational bottlenecks, impacted response times, and increased the risk of errors. Some data couldn't be easily shared between systems, which introduced gaps and inconsistencies.

### Improving safety, security, and operational efficiency

CDW has the in-house expertise to assess the technology critically, and Genetec came out on top. "We looked at many solutions on the market," Smith said. "Because this was such a large project and a true global upgrade, we worked very closely with CDW's PreSales team to design new global standards, pick the systems that were the best fit for our needs, scale our rollout, and develop a comprehensive plan. What made Genetec stand out was its unified architecture, scalability, and ease of use for both operators in the field and system administrators managing the infrastructure."

The platform's open architecture, robust data reporting, and ability to consolidate identity and access management in one interface were other key differentiators. CDW was confident Genetec solutions could meet their needs and scale as their goals changed.

The transition from several systems to a fully unified solution took approximately 18 months. The CDW team began with a pilot site and expanded to over 50 global sites and three major distribution centers. CDW leveraged its customer-facing physical security professional services team for expertise in design, onboarding, and configuration.

“As we stood up new sites, our professional services team worked with us every step of the way. Their partnership and expertise not only made the process easy, but they ensured that we were set up for success, with additional training on the system and a clear plan to maintain our systems moving forward,” said Smith.

The new unified platform replaced nine previous systems, dramatically improving response time, data integrity, automation, and operator efficiency. Day-to-day tasks like intercom response went from minutes to seconds, and evidence collection that once took days is now completed in half an hour or less. Automation also streamlined other tasks, such as badge provisioning and visitor verification.

The rollout wasn't just an internal success. Being able to implement and test Genetec solutions internally has also helped CDW speak from direct experience with customers and build additional momentum for deeper conversations.

“We can now say, ‘We use Genetec in our systems, and here's how we use it,’” said George Howard, Physical Security Team Lead. “Our delivery team is building out different global use cases for safety and security, as well as operations, that we're able to share with our customers.”

### Streamlining access management

“By unifying our systems, we simplified and improved our approach to access control and access management. Previously, we needed to sync information across multiple systems, which presented some challenges,” noted Smith.

Unifying access management with Genetec ClearID™ has made it easier to manage user access by granting or revoking permissions based on roles or schedules. With ClearID, CDW was also able to decentralize decisions about access permissions. Now, the individuals who control certain spaces are empowered to provide permissions to those who should have access rights.

“An operator at our security operations center (SOC) wouldn't necessarily know who is allowed access to each space,” says Smith. “Now, access can be assigned by local managers, or the process is automated based on credentials. We have rules-based provisioning for access control. We rarely have to set anyone's access level anymore. It's been both a dramatic time-saver and an enhanced experience.”

### Video analytics and automation improve operations

Using video analytics and automation, CDW can also monitor and respond more effectively to incidents and alarms. Previously, when the GSOC team wanted to get details about an incident, they had to pull information from multiple systems, and some of the data exports could take up to 30 minutes. Now, the team can pull the necessary data almost immediately to make appropriate decisions faster.



Beyond security, CDW is using data-driven insights and video analytics to optimize staffing, support distribution center operations, and make better business decisions. For example, they use people-counting analytics to check that all staff have left the building before shutting distribution centers down at night or to determine when to scale up or down the level of security staff based on occupancy levels.

CDW has also been able to add advanced video analytics, such as slip-and-fall and object detection via third-party plugins that integrate with their security system. If the software detects an anomaly, it will trigger an alert to security personnel and other responses, including adjustments to the threat level.

### Tools to improve collaboration

As part of their move to more efficient operations, CDW also implemented Genetec Operations Center, a work management solution built to support collaboration, communication, and task management in security teams. Within Operations Center, specific processes and workflows can be standardized so that responses are consistent, tracked, and communicated with all team members.

For example, if a temperature sensor alarm detects a high temperature in a CDW data center, a notice is automatically sent to those who need to respond. The information is also pushed to Operations Center, where standard operating procedures (SOPs) can be found. Those who are responding know the exact steps to take. Teams can see the progress along the way and know when the incident is resolved.

“With automation, a notice goes out immediately to the correct people. Teams don't have to spend time chasing down emails to make sure they have the correct contact to notify,” says Smith. “On top of that, the synchronization with Operations Center helps them work through a step-by-step process. A workflow tells them what to do and keeps a log of the process. If we later get asked about a response, we can easily pull that log in Operations Center and show the steps taken. It has significantly improved our efficiency.”

## Continued operational and safety gains

Looking ahead, CDW is focused on optimizing its use of Genetec solutions. “Our key focus is, how can we best keep our people safe? And when issues do arise, how can we best respond?” Smith said.

The GSOC team is working toward full integration with facilities, IT support, and business continuity workflows. They aim to capture clean, centralized metrics that enable smarter decision-making and more proactive risk management. At the same time, CDW plans to expand video analytics, improve automation, and pilot new third-party integrations.

“The move to making Genetec our global standard transformed the partnership in ways that can’t even be measured,” Howard said. “We’re very appreciative to have this level of partnership. It’s been a game-changer for us.”

“When we first started this process, we were working tirelessly to cover our immediate responsibilities,” added Smith. “We’re now working smarter and more efficiently. We’ve been able to scale, improve response, and take on more responsibilities without an additional workload.”



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