PHYSICAL SECURITY AND THE CLOUD

Looking at the increase of Cloud Technologies to support Physical Security and the increased involvement in the IT department to facilitate such changes. Using studies from a report by HID and a whitepaper published by Axis to support our findings and demonstrate what Pointer can do to integrate these systems in a secure and efficient way.

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What are Cloud Technologies and How can Physical Security Benefit from them?

Cloud computing has revolutionised the way companies use data and consume applications, allowing them to improve business agility in terms of scale and flexibility without the need for large investments in IT infrastructure. Geographical constraints associated with remote workers and branch offices are overcome by a network requirement of a basic internet connection to access cloud-based services.

'Secure Cloud-Based Services 24/7'

A whitepaper produced by Axis Communications entitled 'Secure Cloud-Based Services 24/7' looks at how integrating cloud technologies with physical security such as video recording can benefit the user. They state that cloud hosted video, 'allows easy remote monitoring, access and storage, while increasing alarm operation efficiency with remote verification and reset of false alarms.' (Axis Guardian, 2019)

The benefits of using cloud technologies continue with the increased use of mobile and web applications so that customers can, 'watch live or recorded video on mobile devices and computers,' with the ability to, 'quickly find recorded events with timeline visualisation.' In addition to this, hosted video,' provides the possibility to improve retail business operations through additional services such as staff distribution, remote handling of daily deliveries, cash protection, integration of point of sales (PoS) systems, and visitor verification.' Cloud services offer more than just the capabilities for video storage and streaming, physical security measures such as Access Control and Intruder Alarms can all benefit from sourcing some of their components from the cloud.

'A Look Inside the Rising Role of IT in Physical Access Control'

With the rise in the use of cloud technologies with Physical security, there is a need for a different set of expertise and knowledge to manage this integration smoothly.

HID, a leading manufacturer in Access Control Systems, has produced a report detailing a study that looks at how the world of IT and Physical Security increasingly integrate with each other and how this is affecting the future of IT and Physical Security. During the study they found that, '55% of respondents reported IT as primarily responsible or having shared responsibility for access control within their organization.' (HID, 2019). Along with this, 'Of the respondents who answered that IT is not yet involved in physical access control, 36% reported that IT will play a role within the next year to five years.'

Not only is this leading to a need for stronger relationships between departments within an organisation, it also shows the need for a change in skill set as technology is evolving. This is true for not only your organization but also for the company you choose to integrate your security system.

Physical Security to Cloud Integration

The trends identified by HID and Axis are showing a transition where Physical Security and Cloud Technologies are blending together. Therefore, there is a changing culture and a need for different types of expertise to effectively install and maintain these modern systems.

The integration process must be carried out by qualified and experienced professionals such as Pointer in order to ensure that the system is not compromised in any way. Installing Physical Security is no longer the sole responsibility of the security department and involves communications across several departments. We have invested heavily in the training and development of our team to make sure that they are equipped to manage these types of projects.

When undertaking projects, we take a three-pronged approach to ensure that our systems are installed properly to the highest standard.

Security of Devices

We choose our partners carefully, only working with companies such as Axis and HID, who can prove and document exactly how and where their products are made. We check out their Accreditations to make sure they meet our requirements in terms of quality and we often personally test the equipment ourselves before bringing it onsite for installation and integration.

Security of Deployment

Another area of vulnerability is the installation of your security system. If your system is installed incorrectly this can leave your entire system wide open to cyber criminals. We use our own engineers, most of whom have been with us since our apprenticeship programme, to ensure that the installers are knowledgeable and skilled enough to do the job properly. We are constantly holding in house training sessions with various partners to stay up to date with any new equipment that is released.

Security of Network Connectivity

The final stage of closing your security system off from external threats is to connect these components together and examine potential for external threats. We use encrypted data in transit. This means that all your data is encrypted as it moves around the network from camera to recorders. If we ever need remote access to your system to deal with any issues, we always use VPN technologies. This way we can use one-time access codes that are destroyed as soon as the work is completed so that the details can never be used again. Naturally we change all default settings on your physical security elements so that cyber criminals cannot work their way into your system through network vulnerabilities.

Protecting your security system does not stop there, Cyber security is an ever-changing environment which is why we maintain your system on a regular basis, keeping it up to date and making sure we deliver the most secure system to put your mind at ease

Conclusion

The future of Cloud technologies and security provides massive opportunities and capabilities for your security system. The flexibility that cloud offers is like nothing seen before and an asset to any business. Employees have increased mobility and can work from anywhere rather than being confined to the office and the security of a business can also be managed off site. Whether it be from an external monitoring centre, or straight to your personal mobile device in real time.

By using a professional and qualified company such as Pointer Ltd to advise you on how to do this correctly, you can ensure that you get the best advice about what will work best for your needs and not just a 'one size fits all' type of solution. Pointer are experts in their field with over 45 years' experience and we have team members that are more than qualified to deliver systems that are modern and protected against cyber threats.

If you would like more information on how cloud services could enhance your security system, then please get in contact at https://www.pointer.co.uk/contact-us/

Bibliography

Axis Guardian. (2019). *Secure cloud-based services 24/7.*

HID. (2019). *A Look Inside the Rising Role of IT in Physical Access Control.*