

Video surveillance in gaming machine halls.

PG Enterprise AG puts its money on Axis cameras when ensuring strict compliance with regulations.



Organization:

PG Enterprise AG

Location:

Steiermark, Austria

Industry segment:

Casinos/Gaming

Application:

Safety and security

Axis partners:

Synology, DOTCOM
Informationstechnik
GmbH

Mission

The Austrian gaming machine operator PG Enterprise AG (PG) had to equip 16 sites with video surveillance that also served as media management within just a short span of time. In addition to the fast implementation, one of the main challenges was the difficult lighting conditions caused by the flickering gaming machines.

Solution

PG chose to use the Surveillance Station video management system by Synology with Axis cameras, which could be up and running within five months. Quick configuration of just a few minutes and simple operation were convincing factors for both management and the employees.

Despite adverse lighting conditions, the cameras capture optimal HD-quality images for self-verification so that PG can always document in detail their strict compliance with regulations. They also deliver high-quality overview images for the company's own security center.

Result

PG installed a total of 250 cameras at 16 sites in the Austrian state of Styria. On average, each site has 16 cameras in use. Overview cameras that stream directly to the site's security center were installed in each hall. In addition, each machine group (each made up of 3–6 gaming machines) is monitored separately in order to document changes to the machine for internal and regulatory supervision.

“Synology and Axis Communications worked great together and made it possible to meet the tight deadline. After more than a year, we are still thrilled with the overall solution. Our employees appreciate the uncomplicated, intuitive handling of the system and the high image quality and wealth of setting options mean that even the difficult lighting conditions in our casinos are no problem.”

Alexander Reithoffer of PR Enterprise AG.

Tight deadline

In 2015, the state government in Styria, Austria granted PG Enterprise AG (PG) a 12-year gaming license for 337 gaming machines with payouts. With this, PG was required to completely re-equip and reoutfit all 16 operating sites within just a few weeks. Because of this tight schedule, there was little room for delays. PG was therefore on the lookout for a solution that could be implemented in a short amount of time, guaranteed full compatibility, and did not cause any delays since this would not only jeopardize the opening date, but also the budgeted player returns. To meet the strict security requirements, PG needed surveillance, recording and analysis of gaming hall entry, gambling behaviors, cash handling, and maintenance activities. In addition to surveillance, the system should also function as a centralized media management system that synchronizes HD promotional videos and images. In connection with this, time and bandwidth control should ensure that media management (file synchronization) does not clash with opening hours or security tasks.

PG employees must periodically maintain and clean the gaming machines and update the officially-tested gaming machine software. Since every so-called manipulation of the machines by staff is subject to strict regulations regarding internal and regulatory supervision, PG must be able to document in detail and provide evidence of all changes. Video images are excellent for this self-verification. The challenges in relation to video surveillance were related to the prevailing lighting conditions. Since it is not permissible for it to be possible to peer into the halls from the outside, the windows are covered. The main source of light is soft ceiling lighting, while the machines continuously play animations in order to attract customers.

Zero failure rate

As a result, there is flickering light and the cameras have to work with continuously changing lighting conditions.

The brightness of the light also changes in rapid succession and does not remain constant. This increases the risk of overlighting.

For the solution, PG chose to couple Synology's Surveillance Station with Axis cameras in order to benefit from the Swedish market leader's flexibility and willingness to provide advice and guidance. The entire solution was achieved within five months. The system has remote access via the RTSP protocol as well as Synology's Surveillance Station. The Synology DDNS service allows for the direction of existing hostnames to the IP address of Synology NAS or the registration of a new host name, whether from Synology or another DDNS provider. PG also has smartphone access to the cameras and can use the DS Cam app to take snapshots or adjust the zoom and position of the camera. Synology delivered the storage solution and the video surveillance system. The system was stable and fast to roll out, with almost all functions available directly out of the box. This enabled PG to perform complete commissioning with a few simple steps. The good price-performance ratio without additional licensing costs for integrated packages was one of the deciding factors behind PG choosing the Synology/Axis system.

Overcoming challenging lighting conditions

Meanwhile, the cameras have been in operation for a year and are still delivering optimal HD-quality images despite the poor lighting conditions. In addition, PG was able to confirm the good quality with an extremely low failure rate, which is zero over a year with 24/7 operation. The cameras and the software can be operated intuitively by employees, and PG finds the entire system to be very user friendly. The system will even be expanded in the future. PG is currently rolling out a digital signage solution in the casinos and uses the Synology system as the backbone. Thanks to the smart data compression, the process requires little additional bandwidth and can be run in parallel.



“The rapid renovation of the gaming machine halls had two major challenges – lighting conditions that were poor in terms of camera usage, and the tight time factor. The Surveillance Station system simplified the search for and addition of Axis cameras in the network. This ability created greater flexibility and enabled easier installation. It was only through close cooperation that we were able to quickly and efficiently implement a solution that meets PG's high quality standards,” says Niklas Poll, Head of Eastern Europe & Network/Security at Synology.

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