

What is meant by the term 'open platform IP video'?

Open Platform Gives Value-adding Integrations

Open architecture is one of the major criteria to consider when selecting an optimal IP video management system that will serve your needs both today and tomorrow.

First and foremost, we are talking about a system's ability to integrate with other systems.

- Ask if the management software in the solution has a Software Development Kit, or SDK, with good documentation. Within the SDK, you should have an API (Application Program Interface) that would support the most common programming languages. This ensures that your Systems Integrator can program integration between your IP video surveillance and any other system.
- There should be input and output support, which means you can measure the inputs in your software and react on those, trigger events and alerts; also that you can activate outputs. Examples would be triggers from fire doors being opened, gate barriers rising in a parking lot, lights going on in a storage area, intercoms, etc.
- There should also be event management in the solution, so you get lots of incident data coming in to the system that you set up to view, respond to, analyze, report on; to control your camera recording, speed up recording on events, send alerts, etc.

Typical customer questions/needs that these criteria fulfill:

Q: Is it possible to start the surveillance from an external system?

Q: Can I integrate with other security devices and business systems to increase the return on my investments?

Q: Can we make the surveillance video work with analytics systems?

Key Points to ensure:

- ◆ A well documented Software Development Kit (SDK) on Application Programming Interfaces (API) supporting the most common programming languages
- ◆ Input and Output (I/O) support
- ◆ Event Management
- ◆ Support for standard protocols

Milestone Systems promotes a Solutions Partner Program for promoting integrated systems. Over 100 partner companies around the world have developed integrated solutions based on the Milestone XProtect IP video software platform. These include access control, storage solutions, matrix functionality, retail and parking solutions, HVAC systems, analytics and biometrics.

Milestone also delivers integrated systems in our own product line: XProtect Transact links transaction data from cash registers in retail stores or ATMs with IP video for simultaneous searching, viewing, analysis and export. XProtect Retail integrates further with business data from ERP systems to allow searching and analysis by product item, location, or individual employee transaction activities. Milestone also offers a License Plate Recognition analytics solution, and many other analytics integrations have also been developed in our channel.

Open Platform Gives Freedom of Choice

Another type of openness to look for is the freedom of choice in which hardware devices you can use in your IP video surveillance solution. For the greatest flexibility, go for a solution with independence from any one hardware manufacturer – the more brands and models of hardware supported, the wider your choices.

You want to be able to get the latest and greatest technology as it becomes available, and some vendors will progress faster than others. Besides different lighting and other situational requirements that demand mixing various types of cameras (fixed, PTZ, megapixel, H.264, infra-red, thermal, with watermarking, etc.), you may also be well served with some lower-priced models in one location yet a high-priced, top-of-the-line camera in another.

Very often vendors will offer a broad line of products, but they are not all the best-of-breed. They may have six or seven categories with a number of them very good, but they do not offer the top quality in all of the categories. The ability to mix and match to get the best hardware means you can achieve optimal performance, whether it is in your cameras, software, access control, or whatever.

Your best insurance for the future is an open platform strategy when it comes to hardware selection capabilities. The moment you team up with a proprietary supplier, who says he can give you everything in a one-stop solution, the warning signals should go off in your mind. You would be closing the doors to your options.

Typical customer questions/challenges that this criteria fulfill:

Q: I'm tired of my supplier, but he is the only one supporting the equipment we have. I want some of the new capabilities on the market, but they are not making cameras with that yet!

Q: My preferred hardware brand only offers a subset of the required features.

Q: I have a mixed multi-vendor camera environment from legacy hardware, mergers, etc. How can I make best use of these, without losing those security investments, and build further in the future?

Key Points to remember:

- ◆ Hardware independence provides "Freedom of Choice".
- ◆ Vendors offering broad security product lines are not capable of supplying best-of-breed products within all categories.
- ◆ An open platform strategy is your best insurance for the future.

Founded in 1998, Milestone Systems is the leading global developer of open platform IP video management software, according to IMS Research five years in a row. XProtect™ gives users a powerful surveillance solution that is easy to manage, reliable and proven in 50,000 customer installations. With support for the industry's widest choice in network hardware and integration with other systems, XProtect provides best-of-breed solutions to "video enable" organizations - reducing costs, optimizing processes, protecting people and assets. With headquarters in Denmark and ten international offices, Milestone software is sold through authorized and certified partners in more than 100 countries. Learn more at www.milestonesys.com.
