What Every IT Integrator Ought To Know About Video Storage

Don't overlook the following tips, tricks, and trends that can affect your success rate in the surveillance business.

By Mike Dixon, national sales manager, video solutions, Panasonic

What is the most significant trend in video storage that integrators should be aware of? Why?

Video storage has evolved in a number of directions, offering users a multitude of choices. While the HDD (hard disk drive) continues to be the gold standard used by most manufacturers, the storage capacity and speed of HDD products have significantly increased. In addition to the centralized storage provided by HDDs, many IP cameras provide additional storage at the edge via an SD card in the camera. The newest emerging option for IP network storage is the cloud, also known as SaaS (storage as a service), whereby video storage is provided as a service over the Internet by companies using massive data centers around the world that provide unlimited capacity and 24/7 access.

What challenges will integrators new to video surveillance face when implementing video storage solutions? How can they overcome these challenges?

For integrators offering cloud storage, a challenge will be to assess the costs of traditional storage (HDD, SD) technologies versus the costs of next-generation cloud services. As more security professionals embrace the cloud, they will need to become well-educated on the cost/benefit balance cloud services provide.

Network savvy integrators will be reading this article. How difficult will it be for them to become technically capable to sell video storage solutions? Where can they go for help?

We are living in the midst of a computer/network revolution, and the transition will be quite easy for integrators who are familiar with today's computer and network technologies. Many publications and associations offer written, online, and instructor-led courses to enable integrators to become more educated on these technologies.

For IT integrators not overly familiar with DVR/NVR technologies, what are some of the most common misperceptions about today's solutions?

Among the more challenging aspects of DVR/NVR technologies are the capabilities of the software and graphical user interfaces (GUIs). The software, or VMS (video manage-ment system), offers very powerful applications with many advanced features that can be seen as a challenge to operate. However, today's typical advanced software VMS solutions are designed with intuitive GUIs and also have "quick start" tools to enable basic setup configurations.

MIKE DIXON

Panasonic
ideas for life

Mike Dixon is the national sales manager, video solutions, for Panasonic, a provider of consumer electronics and technology products for home and business.

Talk ROI. If price is a concern for the end customer, what capabilities should integrators be pointing out that can help create ROI?

Sufficient storage is an essential element of system functionality. Adequate storage enables the video system to record at a designated frame rate (e.g., 30 frames per second [fps]) and to store video for a required time period (e.g., 30 days). The ROI comes in when you consider that lack of adequate storage can undermine the functionality, and with it, the value of the entire system. One way to maximize the efficiency and ROI of a system is to minimize storage needs by utilizing H.264 recording. Other approaches to minimizing storage include using motion-triggered recording, especially at night or during off-hours, and recording at a slower frame rate (such as 5 fps). Cameras that provide VIQS (variable image quality on specified areas) can also help to minimize storage needs. VIQS enables non-critical parts of a video frame (such as the sky) to be recorded at a lower resolution to create smaller video files. Using these approaches, as the application needs allow, can keep storage costs at a minimum and further improve overall system ROI.

How does the cloud fit into video storage and management? Should this be something integrators are paying attention to? What is the timeframe?

Cloud-based services will open up new customers for IP video systems, in addition to providing a new, lower-cost option to investing in additional storage equipment for current customers. Many new customers will be smaller businesses that are less able to invest in a large on-site network infrastructure. Security concerns about storing video off-site may give some security customers pause, but attractive economics will likely drive many of them to use cloud-based storage. As security concerns abate, the next several years will likely see a noticeable shift to the cloud. ●