



How did the IT Industry get involved?

by Douglas Grant

The year is 2006, you are sitting around with a group of colleagues prior to the Second Annual IT Security Trade Show. The discussion is centered on how and when the Security Industry lost their market in CCTV sales.

It would seem in hindsight, one could see the writing on the wall not too many years ago, tomorrow's video transmission and management was certain to be server based. The internet was supplying information from small never heard of companies, which were dedicated and motivated in producing server based software capable of managing CCTV systems, which included an added bonus of inexpensive reliable hard disk digital recording.

In retrospect, it was apparent the IT Industry was striking hard and fast at a potential billion dollar industry which was already well founded. These were the early days for software developers that were slowly forming a strategy that would revolutionize the way CCTV systems were to be designed and implemented. At first, smaller

systems of 3-4 cameras were added to network configurations using the first of the server based software. All of which had their bugs, which came hand in hand with beta versions of software. The public on a whole was used to software updates by this time and was quite content knowing things would be improved to their

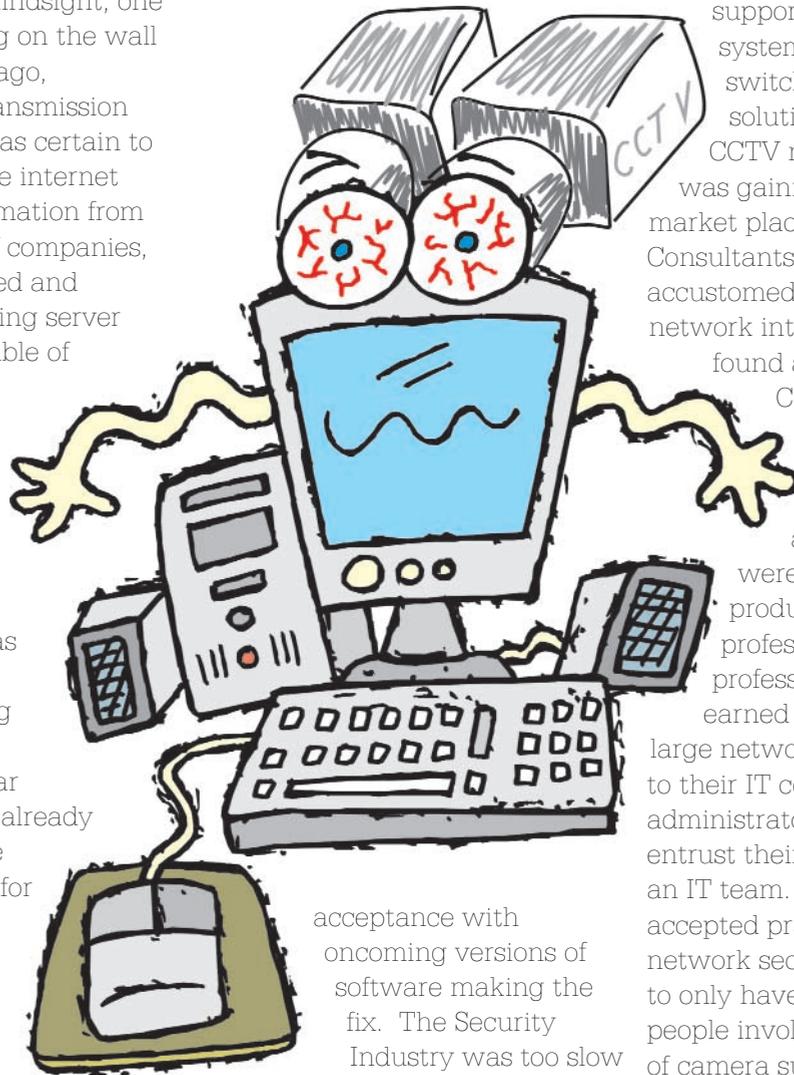
CCTV.

Behind the scene, network administrators worldwide had been actively installing high-speed media networks for data transfer. They unwittingly, soon determined the direction for the new age of CCTV. Within a very short period of time these software packages were

supporting larger camera systems, which made most switching hardware solutions redundant. This CCTV network integration was gaining acceptance in the market place worldwide. Consultants quickly became accustomed to the idea of network integration. There in,

found a software solution for CCTV integration using a media already in place. Designs for computer networks and CCTV systems were being successfully produced by certified IT professionals. The IT professionals had already earned the confidence of large network administrators due to their IT certifications. Network administrators would only ever entrust their computer network to an IT team. This globally accepted practice was a major network security driven decision, to only have these qualified people involved in any integration of camera surveillance within their computer networks.

The perception in the earlier years by many in the CCTV



acceptance with oncoming versions of software making the fix. The Security Industry was too slow in understanding the consequences of shying away from computer based solutions for

industry was that in order to fully implement a real-time video network, that would be capable of any sort of rival competition to existing hardware based closed circuit type system, certain fundamental criteria would have to firstly be met. One of these criteria would certainly have to include Category 5 cabling or better, a superior compression technique was also required along with possible additional IEEE 802 standards. All of which may not happen for years. Fiber optic solutions producing the desired bandwidth such as SONET, FDDI and ATM were too expensive to consider and few in the CCTV Industry understood the media very well.

Manufacturers of CCTV products were hesitant to incorporate this new technology or re-think their stand in the market and follow the IT direction of digital management. Many corporate decisions by leading CCTV companies were obviously made to the detriment of their future commerce; history clearly shows the new age embraced IT (information technology) solutions.

Regardless of who or what has control of any market place, change will result in a shift one way or another and force a required new way of thinking. This industry shift in technology will always be of interest to many of us simply because we all saw it coming, yet few took the appropriate action.

If we could turn back the clock for the sake of change, do you think the security industry as it was then would have assimilated into the IT Industry? We all know now that this course of action was mandatory and without it

individuals would be left behind at an intellectual level never before experience within the CCTV industry. As it turned out, not only was it to be embarrassing not being able to relate to the new technologies, but others outside the CCTV industry were able to grasp the concept of delivering video information using network technologies with little or no difficulty.

Many people began feeling expendable in a corporate sense, and desperate to be able to keep up with the pace of change occurring within the industry.



Industry icons that had made names for themselves through years of experience in the industry were no longer receiving the limelight or asked to write articles for their industries magazines. Instead we saw new "IT age" write-ups from people in their industry professing a cleverer, less expensive way of designing CCTV systems for modern day applications. New terms were suddenly thrown into the pot of CCTV design, formally used exclusively by IT people.

Many people in the Security game just could not get a handle on basic concepts such as: bandwidth, protocols, media

access, and the likes all encompassed within the framework of networking essentials. New faces were replacing old at a rapid rate, all of which were seen to be from the networking side of the fence.

The up side to this evolutionary process was a far more flexible CCTV system had evolved. This new method of managing video became widely accepted for most applications. Major brand named manufactures eventually came up with their own priority versions of software complimenting their system designs. Unfortunately, standards had been set by prior developers which were software generic by nature.

This is one very possible scenario I have shared with you. For those in the Security Industry who pride themselves in producing work to a high standard and are willing to keep up with changes in technology, you will be searching for a further education. Contact me to discuss possible ways of obtaining this education. A change is coming and you want to be part of it. My guess is you will not go wrong in doing so.

Remember, an education is never wasted.

Next issue: More about CCTV networking.

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