Searching for a Solution

Remote Panel Management Simplifies Security

Most of the 900 employees staffing the Georgia Department of Driver Services (DDS) offices never touch their security systems because DDS relies on their security-systems provider to not only install and maintain their access control system, but to also provide remote management. It's a strategy that allows DDS staff to better serve customers, and also provides additional revenue to their security provider.

"The Department of Driver Services has locations everywhere, and we maintain them all from here at our offices," explains Joe Nichols, president of Nichols Security in Covington, GA. "We manage their users, provide access codes and schedule their open and closing times."

Nichols says that many organizations the size of DDS would have some people on staff who are responsible for managing the security system. But the DDS decided that wasn't the approach they wanted to take.

User Data Instantly Changed

"If you are state or district security coordinator, you get phone calls all day from people with request for user codes or special access times. Even if it's only a few minutes each, when you are doing 10 or 15 of them a day that's a big chunk of time. Now they just send an e-mail to us and we plug in their changes. It takes seconds for

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> Joe Nichols, President
> Nichols Security

us, but it saves them hours of work so they can go and do other things. It is less work for them and they don't have to worry because they know their security is being taken care of."

Nichols is able to provide these services using DMP Remote Link™ panel-management software. It gives users the ability to maintain subscriber accounts, trap panels and change programming from a remote, Internet-connected computer. Remote Link works with all DMP panels.

"We have been with DMP for five years," Nichols recalls. "We started using Remote Link when we did work on commercial sites and schools. Then we started using it in the residential market. We can have a service tech at any of our three locations talk to any of the panels and solve most customer problems without even going out to the site."

Remote Panel Software Updates

One of the features provided by Remote Link that both Nichols and DDS appreciate is the ability to do remote software updates.

"Because we provide remote management, we can also watch our panels and update them over the network," Nichols says. "When we installed the new DMP Cancel/ Verify feature, we just set the updates to run overnight

and ... ZIP ... they were there the next morning. They didn't have to buy a new system, they didn't have to do anything. When the DDS gets an e-mail from us that says 'You now have this new feature,' or 'Now you can do this,' they think that's pretty neat."

Aside from making his customers very happy, Remote Link also makes life easier for Nichols. "It's just quicker and easier. If you have to schedule a guy and send him out every time you want to make a change, it's going to cost you a ton of money, especially with gas at $3 per gallon. With the remote management capability, we don't have to send a tech out to each of those locations to do updates."

The remote management is especially powerful when done via the Internet instead of over dial-up lines. "It's incredibly faster over the network," Nichols explains. "On old systems over dial-up, it took you nearly 10 minutes to upload the old panel and another 10 minutes to send it back down. If I've got someone updating panels at 10 customer locations, he could be sitting in front of a computer for two hours. Over the network, it's much faster. With Remote Link, we can set it up to trap panels automatically overnight. You are looking at little or no time on our side if you do it right."

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> *Nichols Security*

Trouble-Free Remote System Management
Making the transition to remote management has been trouble-free for the DDS, with no significant problems. "The installation really has gone easy," Nichols says, adding that 36 of 68 locations have been converted thus far. "For the first one, we had to explain how we would do it and that we needed a hole in the firewall. The IT guys will fight you a little bit because you are intruding on their turf on the network side, but we resolved all that."

Having an outside firm handle all of the routine security system management and maintenance means that the DDS doesn't have to train any of their employees to do it. With Remote Link, their systems are set up to turn on and off by themselves using schedules.

"Remote management is a great service that we can provide for our customers," Nichols explains. "They really don't touch the system. We maintain everything. If an organization has a security department, we can hand responsibility for the system off to one or two people. That works out fine. But if companies don't want to do that, like DDS, then we can offer them the service of also maintaining it."

Remote panel management is a winner for both Nichols and his customers. For Nichols, it saves travel time for his techs, and provides additional revenue for the remote management service. His customers appreciate that their systems are maintained with no-hassles and no worries, and they are always up to date.

"They just love it," he says.

About the Software
Remote Link™ is a powerful software application used by DMP dealers for remote programming of any DMP security, access control or fire system. Remote Link allows more than just downloading programs or changes to a security system. It also enables complete remote control of the system, as well as providing the dealer full system status and diagnostics.

System Link ™ provides full control over DMP security systems by end users. System users can use dial-up, network or internet connectivity for easy, instant system changes, system status and full system control for functions such as arm/disarm, lock or unlock doors, change user codes, profiles or schedules.

Remote Link and System Link users are required to login with a password, and can be assigned various levels of system control and access.

DDS does not endorse any vendor product