

HOMELAND SECURITY

Management of Diversity

Optimizing Inner Security Using Field-Tested Total Video and Surveillance Technology

The product palette of surveillance technology is as varied as all its suppliers. Networking their components together is therefore often difficult, so the realization of technically feasible applications often fails due to the lack of a unified approach. The long-established German company Telefunken Racoms in Ulm wants to change this and is looking, amongst others, at systems that that were originally developed for military purposes. Matthias Erler of GIT SECURITY spoke about these with Dipl. Ing. Ulrich Skubsch, a Management Consultant and recognized authority in the industry for over 30 years. He is currently advising Telefunken Racoms on the subject of Homeland Security.

GIT SECURITY: Mr. Skubsch, would you please explain to us first of all what the technology introduced by Telefunken Racoms is all about?

U. Skubsch: I must go back to basics to do that. I've been intensively involved for many years with video surveillance technology and have come to realize that a unified approach is often missing in this sector. There are companies that offer superb cameras but who do not have the ability to process, distribute or network the image data - they're missing a good, functional management system. On the other hand, presenting an open interface is often a big problem for providers of management systems, so the integration of cameras and other technologies is not possible just like that.

But there is definitely a trend to offer solutions from one source?

U. Skubsch: That's true. A very few globally active and often market-leading companies offer 'one-stop-shopping'. Very often, however, it quickly becomes obvious that a customer-specific solution has to be developed and certainly cannot be delivered off the shelf. Video technology is on the other hand still a niche technology in many cases that makes it difficult for the specific needs of users to be satisfied by one single supplier. Simultaneously there is a lack of specialists who are capable of digging out exactly what's required from all that's available in the

market. Prime contractor solutions do not always lead to the desired results.

How does the product range of Telefunken Racoms look here?

U. Skubsch: Thanks to its contacts to a shareholder from Israel, Telefunken Racoms is capable of transferring relevant military technology to civil usage. The company is therefore able to provide field-proven products that I could see for the first time during a technical information trip in summer 2008. I saw a management system with really universal, open interfaces that are capable of integrating the most different systems, including video and diverse sensor technology as well as communications systems. The current migration of military technology that has only recently begun in some countries is already complete here and civil usage is already possible.

Can you give us some examples of the capabilities of this technology?

U. Skubsch: In my past career the tactical use of video technology was always limited, for example by poor visibility and weather. In Israel I was shown that one can see the details of a ship 8 km away perfectly through fog and heavy rain, also at night, and even identify the ship. I have not yet seen a comparable system anywhere. Another example is an unmanned vehicle at the Ben Gurion airport. It checks the fence at a variable speed and immediately reports any damage, by day and night. Alongside the unique sensor features that serve man so well here, the system functions only because the data of all other vehicles involved and all the other technologies are brought together in one management system. This can also incorporate existing or older technologies and thereby integrate previously installed equipment. The Telefunken Racoms product portfolio includes the most varied unmanned sensor carriers on land, in the air and on water. In my view that builds a complete system for the first time that can be sensibly and efficiently utilized by government administrations, security organizations and industrial enterprises.

How could that look?

U. Skubsch: Let's take the example of a town in which an important football match is taking



place. A large number of the most different people travel to the town for such an event. A small cadre of uniformed officers are paid for by the tax payer to police such operations that rarely correspond to the ideal image of a job with the police force. This is all about the required support technology. Those technologies mentioned before can of course be employed individually and separately by different operators, for example at the railway station, at the bus terminal and other important points. And it doesn't matter if all the control rooms are equipped today with totally disparate systems from different suppliers. Telefunken Racoms makes a solution available that not only links these infrastructures together but also makes it possible for a leading control room to be connected, regardless of location and at any time. The operation commanders can be at the railway station today and, with a click, at the airport tomorrow for example. Something like this has already been implemented in Zürich.

Is the European market ready for this technology?

U. Skubsch: The market has been ready for this technology for a long time and now a company is offering a field-proven management system for the first time that really is capable of networking the most varied systems exactly as required. In some countries, and in contrast to others, there is the problem that the current generation of digital radio still does not permit the transmission of video images of a bank robber to a patrol car. According to the information available to me, this is not even a focus of the systems that have been chosen, such as Tetra and Tetrapol. Here it would be sensible to achieve a really international, uniform standard according to the state of the technology. The management system offered by Telefunken Racoms is capable of that - i.e., a digital BOS network can be simply integrated and, for example, expanded with video transmission capability. An important aspect is the fact that the technologies described here produce qualified jobs. These are not for low-paid watchmen, but in control rooms that are filled with decision makers and engineers.

Are the products already available?

U. Skubsch: All the products are available after the necessary customer adaptation and do not have to be developed first. Market introduction in Germany is through Telefunken Racoms, whose 80 employees have started to build up relevant contacts and product specialists.

Many thanks for the conversation

Mr. Skubsch.

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