

COVER STORY

Safely Parked

Surveillance Solution Ensures Safety in Swiss Multi-storey Car Park



Lucerne is one of Switzerland's most beautiful cities. As well as the world-famous Kapellbrücke and the water tower, the Lucerne Culture and Congress Centre (KKL) attracts many visitors to the city. The Lucerne KKL, built by the Parisian architect Jean Nouvel, is famous for its concert hall with phenomenal acoustics and the impressive views of the lake and the old town from its two roof terraces. The centrally located multi-storey car parks at the train station and in the old town are the ideal starting points to discover all these highlights, as their extensive security concept provides 1.500 easily accessible and secure car parking spaces around the clock.

Independent Owners, a Strong Association and a Common Technology

The Tiefgarage Bahnhofplatz AG (TAG) operates four multi-storey car parks at three locations in Lucerne: P1 and P2, directly at the train station and P3 Frohburg (owned by SBB Immobilien), a multi-storey car park owned by the federal Swiss railway and the Altstadt car park in the old town, three kilometres away. The various owners of the individual car parks demand both lean structures and clearly defined relationships for their investment assets, while on the other hand they are aware of the benefits of joint management and a modern parking association. Because of this, security in Lucerne takes the form of a technological network which has grown gradually and although it includes existing structures, it is always state-of-the-art.

Yesterday There Were Cross-rails; Today There is Remote Access Via iPad

When management was taken over by TAG ten years ago, video surveillance was already in place in the areas of the pay desks and the barriers. However, only a small area of the multi-storey car parks was monitored by analog cameras, which were not networked and whose images were only partially archived digitally on tape. Over the course of time, the operators' demands grew. Poor quality images and unmonitored areas created a demand for more modern technol-

ogy. There were convincing arguments for an extended surveillance solution. On the one hand, the video system was to assist the operating staff and on the other hand was to have a preventative effect against vandalism. The resulting cost savings had to justify the use of the surveillance system.

Consultation with specialists from Comtronic Communications AG and John Lay Electronics AG convinced the management to upgrade the car parks with an intelligent video surveillance system. User-friendly operation of the system was a priority, and in addition the video data was to be simple to analyse and events were to be easily found. Furthermore, in order to provide evidence of incidents, the video system had to be equipped with an export function. A further requirement of the client was to enable control and monitoring of all car parks on-site as well as from a common central control point. Easy remote access to the system via Internet was a further requirement.

Open Video-Over-IP Solution Beats Analog Technology

The car park management obtained bids for the project from several companies. Jörg Kaufmann, manager and proprietor of Comtronic Communications AG produced concepts for various solutions: analog systems, as well as a Video-Over-IP version on the basis of Panasonic and Milestone



products. In spite of the somewhat higher purchase costs, it was decided to employ a future-orientated IP solution, due to the better quality images. The decisive factor for the selection of Comtronic and John Lay Electronics as partners was their great experience in the field of car park surveillance, their great flexibility and the comprehensive service package.

The existing know-how gives Comtronic and John Lay the necessary flexibility to cater for individual customer requirements – even in the implementation phase. Direct communication and short decision-making paths also favoured uncomplicated cooperation in the work. Because of this, it was possible to directly cater for the requirements of the main users during the implementation phase.

In the Car Park Control Centre: Milestone XProtect Professional

In the two multi-storey car parks P1 and P2 at the station, Comtronic installed twenty new Panasonic WV-NP502 IP cameras in addition to the analog cameras which were already installed. The analog cameras are integrated into the newly wired network via a WJ-GXE500 encoder, as is a WLAN camera, which provides information about any traffic queues from the station forecourt. The high quality Panasonic IP cameras provide clear video images even under very difficult lighting conditions. They require very little light and work reliably even in severe backlight conditions.

Security at the station car park P3 (Frohburg) is ensured by newly-installed vandal-proof IP fixed dome cameras (WV NW502) from Panasonic, which are linked via a glass fibre network to a locally installed server, which in turn communicates with the control centre via a VDSL link. The signals from the analog cameras in the old town car park are integrated via an encoder and a video server and are both saved on a local HP Dual Core server as well as being linked to the control centre.

The heart of the security system is the IP-based video surveillance in the security centre,



which is controlled by Milestone XProtect Professional. Milestone XProtect is installed both on the servers in the control centre as well as the linked servers and enables simple management and analysis of the data at a particular location.

Milestone XProtect impressed with display of high image quality and user-friendly operation, which enables users with little training in security systems to intuitively take the right steps, as well as with its reliability and open system. The ability to simply and centrally link three locations and the protection of investment due to widest choice of compatible components were important arguments for Milestone.

Administration with XProtect Corporate – a more comprehensive Milestone solution for distributed control – was also an option in the planning phase. The decision for XProtect Professional was made for the fact that in the future, completely independent operation of the car parks by the various users was preferred.

Thoroughly Positive Experiences

Now, no-one at TAG would like to do without the modern video surveillance system. The TAG management is very satisfied. „Operation is very simple and the system is extremely stable and runs without problems. The preventative effect of the video surveillance is a complete success. Last year, we observed considerably fewer vandalism

incidents in the buildings and the pay desks. In case of disputes, such as deliberate avoidance of parking charges or accidental damage, the quality of the images convinces all concerned, so that police involvement is hardly ever necessary. We also appreciate the convenient remote access to the system via Internet and our mobile end devices such as iPads and iPhones.

With its network-based video surveillance system from Panasonic and Milestone, TAG has a sound, modern solution in the heart of Lucerne, which guarantees long-term security and which can easily be extended if necessary.

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