



Fight crime with digital video surveillance

By Richard Baggott
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Preliminary 2001 data indicate a 2% increase in the Nation's Crime Index from the previous year, reports the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). This is the first increase in nearly a decade.

Among violent crimes—including homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft—robbery showed the greatest increase at 3.9%. Furthermore, some of those robbers took direct aim at credit unions.

For example, some perpetrators, such as the three young suburban women dubbed the "Charlie's Angels" credit union bandits, allegedly robbed 11 credit unions and banks in the Los Angeles area over a four-month period. They believed credit unions were

easy targets.

In a similar case, a man suspected of being the eight-state "Credit Union Bandit" terrified credit union tellers and managers throughout the Midwest during an 18-month crime spree. As many as 20 of the 25 robberies or attempted robberies occurred at credit unions.

Credit unions need to take a proactive approach to prevent and combat robberies by using the latest video surveillance technology. New technology provides immediate access to photographs so the FBI can work with local law enforcement authorities to thoroughly investigate these incidents.

The time-consuming and labor-intensive task of viewing miles of archaic security surveillance videotape is now a thing of the past. Gone are the days when credit union employees were forced to spend hours scanning images of robberies and burglaries to be used as evidence to convict criminals. And all too often, once they located the particular images, the picture quality was so poor they couldn't clearly identify the perpetrators.

Advantages of using digital video technology include:

- The equipment offers credit unions much more flexibility in managing their security systems. Personnel can access the same

camera images from multiple remote locations via any personal computer within the credit union's intranet or Internet.

- The enhanced digital information stored on a multigigabyte hard drive far exceeds the quality of analog videotape, which begins to degrade after a few tapings. Consistent picture quality is maintained throughout countless recordings.

- An image can be located in a matter of seconds by entering a particular date and time of an incident. A member account number can also be used to retrieve camera images from a dubious or disputed transaction at an automated teller machine (ATM).

- It's easier and more convenient to store and retrieve digital information on a multigigabyte hard drive than it is to sort through bulky videotapes archived in a storage facility.

- Law enforcement officials stand a better chance of apprehending perpetrators when financial institutions catch their images with digital cameras rather than on analog videotape. The blurry images analog videotapes produce can hinder the identification process. In addition, getting ambiguous analog images to police officers in a timely fashion becomes a critical issue, whereas it's easy to electronically distribute high- and low-resolution

digital images among different credit unions and the proper authorities.

- When the president of a financial institution in Texas was trying to assess storm damage to his downtown facility, he discovered a completely unanticipated use for his remote-access digital video system. After local authorities denied him access to the site, he logged on to the digital server at a nearby headquarters and discovered a series of tornadoes had left his facility unscathed.

Diebold Inc., a North Canton, Ohio-based global leader of integrated self-service security solutions and systems, produces the AccuTrack™ digital, color video recorder, a state-of-the-art surveillance product that uses motion detection for around-the-clock monitoring. AccuTrack captures digitally signed images and transaction data in real-time and stores this information on a multigigabyte hard drive.

Using as many as 24 camera inputs and programmable camera sequencing, AccuTrack can monitor an entire financial facility, including ATMs, numerous teller lines, and new-account areas from one central location. To learn about Diebold security options from CUNA ATMsolutions, visit www.cuna.org and enter "SecuritySolutions" in the search box. n



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