

Embracing efficiencies

The idea that “knowledge is power” is hardly new. The phrase can be found in ancient texts written over a thousand years ago. But even in those times, the quest for knowledge began with the collection and examination of information.

Modern technology has given us the ability to collect more information than we ever thought possible, and the challenge now is figuring out how to translate it into usable knowledge. For companies and governments alike, data mining is the new gold mining.

This may not sound like anything that would be particularly relevant to security integrators, but as Robert Gaulden, project based business leader for Allegion™ explains, it will cause a dramatic shift in the way integrators, and the construction industry as a whole, conducts business.

“Integrators have been deploying systems that collect data for years, but no one really knew what to do with it,” he says. “But now we are moving to the technology necessary to mine that data, which will allow us to see trends and really have deeper insight into what is happening in our buildings with our systems. Which doors see the most use? Is there a secondary door that is receiving higher than expected traffic? Do we have the right systems and components in place to meet the security protocol and demand at those doors? This is the type of information that enables integrators to better serve their clients.”

But not only will this technology help integrators provide better solutions, it will also fundamentally change the way information is shared between integrators, architects, specification writers and project managers. By harnessing the tremendous capabilities of cloud-based computing, all key stakeholders will be able to share information in real-time, improving efficiency, reducing errors and ultimately lowering costs for their businesses and their clients.

Converting data into solutions

It's well known that to be effective, access control systems must also be convenient for building occupants. The best way to determine the efficacy of an existing system is to pull the data generated by the system and perform an audit.

“If a company has 500 employees and only 400 of them are badging in and out each day, clearly you have an issue with people either piggybacking or otherwise circumventing the system,” says Gaulden.

But the same data that allows you to see that problem can also be used to solve it. Traditionally integrators had only their own experience, knowledge and creativity to rely on when crafting a security solution. Applying artificial intelligence, or AI, to software programs will make recommendations for both systems and components much easier. By sifting through years of data generated by countless systems in a variety of buildings, these programs will quickly and accurately identify the most efficient way to design a security solution.

“If you understand the specific needs of the customer, then you can design better solutions going forward,” says Gaulden. “Let's say that you are designing a system for a hospital. Wouldn't you like to have the experience of having completed hundreds of hospitals? AI-enhanced programs could offer that. The program could reveal or suggest a more efficient way to lay out your design, apply the right technologies and help you customize your solution.”

Improving efficiency

Not only does AI have the power to help integrators improve their customer satisfaction, it can also improve their bottom line by preventing costly mistakes. Changes to state and local codes, as well as the speed at which new products are entering the market, make it difficult to stay current on what components are

required. As Gauden explains, AI could help fill those gaps in expertise.

“When you design a security system, AI-enhanced programs could review the thousands of specs that have been written in the past and suggest that because you are installing a wireless lock, don’t forget to include the gateways and where to place them for the best results. This allows you to not make mistakes, which is extremely useful if you are new to a specific technology.”

This not only reduces errors in design, it also improves efficiency. When you need an electrified exit device, the system will suggest all the specifications you need to know. This cuts down on the amount of time spent looking up components and SKUs. The system already knows what is normally used and provides that information automatically, so integrators don’t have to keep those details on hand.

Revolutionizing communication

But the most notable benefit this new technology provides to integrators is its ability to dramatically improve communication, and thus collaboration, between all the key stakeholders in a project.

The importance of communication is an idea that everyone involved in the construction process—architects, designers, owners, specifiers, installers—is quite familiar with, in theory. However, the realities of doing so frequently prove to be incredibly challenging.

This is due in large part to the fact that there hasn’t been an easy way for everyone to access the information, particularly for people on the design side of the project who may not be very familiar with hardware. The current process of creating, modifying and utilizing specifications has always been time-consuming and difficult, and as the pace of construction continues to accelerate, it’s increasingly likely to cause mistakes and oversights.

Fortunately, technology is being deployed today to streamline the entire construction process and make it more usable, efficient and accurate for everyone involved.

“By providing a single, centralized platform, everyone involved will be able to easily pull up the plans on a computer, click on a door and immediately see all the information associated with that particular door,” says Gauden. “And with the advent of cloud-based computing, you can collaborate and make changes in real time, eliminating the risk of someone using anything but the most current specifications.”

Conclusion

With the rapidly increasing pace of both technology and construction, access to such robust and effective programs can’t be deployed soon enough. But for those who might be concerned that it will eliminate the need for their expertise, Gauden points out that this is just another tool that can be used to improve efficiency and enhance expertise, not eliminate it.

“As an industry, we are just starting to appreciate the amount of data that can be collected,” he explains. “Whether it’s a wireless lock or a camera, those are sensors and they are collecting data. But it can be overwhelming to try and sift through all the data to determine what is noise, and what is useful. These types of tools could process that data and provide integrators an edge by improving their efficiency and customer satisfaction.”

As programs like BIM have already illustrated, technology is having a dramatic impact on the construction industry, and the adoption rate can be swift, leaving those who fail to adapt to the new model at a distinct disadvantage. It’s vital that integrators, and the industry as a whole, embrace technology in order to maximize their ability to provide their vital knowledge and expertise.

About Allegion

Allegion (NYSE: ALLE) is a global pioneer in safety and security, with leading brands like CISA®, Interflex®, LCN®, Schlage®, SimonsVoss® and Von Duprin®. Focusing on security around the door and adjacent areas, Allegion produces a range of solutions for homes, businesses, schools and other institutions. Allegion is a \$2 billion company, with products sold in almost 130 countries. For more, visit www.allegion.com.

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