



From the iWatch control room in Dublin, operators can monitor sites in Ireland, the UK and the rest of Europe.

iWatch expands operational territories

The National Digital Park in Citywest, Dublin, is home to one of Europe's leading remote monitoring stations, iWatch. This purpose built facility provides around the clock, remote CCTV surveillance and intruder alarm monitoring for security and site management purposes. Initially operating in Dublin, iWatch is now securing businesses and services throughout Ireland, the UK and Europe. The company has grown rapidly as a result of successfully addressing complex security needs for its customers and is soon to open a new North American facility in Toronto, Canada.

We met with Tim O'Shea, Managing Director and owner of iWatch, to understand why remote monitoring is becoming so popular within the security industry.

"Networked CCTV technology enables a central, remote monitoring station to provide comprehensive surveillance to single and multiple sites almost anywhere in the world," he says. "This CCTV technology was too expensive until recently. Video analytics software, also a new development, is used to highlight site incidents or alarms as they happen. This means our highly skilled and experienced operators focus only on critical site incidents, increasing their response speed and effectiveness".

The iWatch layered response ranges from asking an intruder to leave a site, via speaker, to requesting a Garda or fire service call out to a visually verified crime or serious incident. Site incidents that might have previously resulted in false alarms, such as a flapping hoarding on a construction site or a swinging gate or door, are dealt with by rapid response patrol teams based locally to the site, not the station.

"Our customers are confident that all incidents are monitored and followed up correctly and the Garda are only called out to genuine incidents. This usually has the added benefit of lowering site insurance premiums," says Tim.

The iWatch Citywest facility ensures continuity of service by using two separate broadband network providers (BS5979 best practice). Further backup is ensured using a 3G or GPRS dedicated CCTV wireless networks, in line with the BS8418 code of practice. In the event of a power failure, all essential equipment is powered through our 10KVA uninterruptible power supply (UPS) whilst our 30KVA generator will automatically replace the public power supply. CCTV video is recorded at each site with iWatch duplicating recordings of critical events at their own separate facility.

Tim explains, "This policy supports a dispersed approach to CCTV use and operation, where

critical information is stored in more than one location, entirely possible with the network systems we use. All site operational procedures are ISO 9002 certified and we have a duplicated monitoring facility at a second Dublin location, a service unique to iWatch. This ensures continual operation through the most severe of circumstances and makes iWatch suitable for even mission critical applications.

"Our new station in Toronto operates as a stand-alone monitoring centre and will eventually replace our Dublin back up facility. Expanding into the Canadian market is a logical step for us. Canada is amongst very few of the industrialised nations expecting growth in their economy during 2009 and beyond. iWatch will be there to take advantage of this growth".

Accurate reporting is an important part of monitoring station operation and its requirements are defined in BS8418 and IS228:1997. "iWatch e-mails comprehensive incident reports to customers each morning, detailing any overnight alarm activations, recording all operator actions and the eventual incident outcome, complete with audit trail."

Tim adds, "The purpose of BS 8418 : Installation and remote monitoring of detector activated CCTV systems code of practice is that, for each



Experienced operators focus on critical site incidents, minimising their response time and maximising their effectiveness



The iGuard tower can be collapsed and towed by a car



iWatch can protect isolated or dangerous sites with the portable iGuard CCTV tower

application, the monitoring station, the CCTV equipment manufacturer and the security installation company all work together with the express purpose of reducing false alarms and unnecessary Garda call out. Not only does iWatch comply with BS8418 in its operation, but its incident reports can also be used to highlight weak site security procedures at a site. We offer new customers a special service whereby we make recommendations to improve site security on the third party installations we manage – improving the service they receive.”


iWatch also offers access control; property management; lone worker solutions; key holding; data hosting; personal attack assistance; camera patrols; remote building entry and exit; remote barrier control; remote security system set-up and comprehensive video evidence of critical site incidents.

“The broadband network based security that we use at iWatch is incorrectly perceived by some security installers to be beyond their installation capability,” explains Tim. “To address this, iWatch offers a complete security solution where all aspects of a fully monitored and operational remote CCTV system are provided. This solution includes the DVR Transmitter, broadband connection, pre-configured router, secondary GPRS connection and 24/7 monitoring with optional incident response. This end to end solution, as we call it, has saved customers significant amounts of time and money and created security systems that are both efficient and effective. Many of our installer customers are now able to offer remote monitoring as part of their own service package and receive recurring revenue as a result.”

And Tim adds, “Protecting isolated, unmanned or even dangerous sites with no broadband communication links is another service we have introduced recently. We offer a trailer mounted CCTV tower, iGuard, which is simply towed into position, set up within 30 minutes, and monitored by iWatch, 24/7. Developments in wireless, mobile phone based, 3G technology, have

made this a viable solution in the last 18 months. At the end of its use, the iGuard is towed away. Due to the temporary nature of most isolated sites, we offer this service on a rental basis. We also offer outright purchase, if preferred. We are finding iGuard is used extensively in empty properties and construction sites, temporary public sites such as music events and festivals, fly tipping hot spots, recycling areas and at Garda incidents, where 24/7, immediate surveillance is needed.”

iWatch is an Irish success story. It secures businesses in Ireland, the UK, Europe and soon North America. The levels of success that the company has enjoyed over the past couple of years in the UK in particular has exceeded the companies expectations and has seen iWatch move to a position of prominence in the ever-expanding UK market. The company has continued to set industry standards by dramatically reducing false alarms and setting unprecedented training levels for its operators. Its secondary backup systems and duplicated monitoring facility lead the industry, making its services applicable at the highest level of security operation. The ability to visually verify genuine site incidents, before requesting a response, has also gained wide Garda and police support. Customers have benefitted from using iWatch, saving time and money through crime prevention and efficient site management. They also have peace of mind knowing they are kept abreast of all site security issues, but only needing to become actively involved in extreme cases.

The future of iWatch is secure. As the company expands its services to new territories, Ireland can be proud of being home to such a forward looking and innovative service provider. 

Commercial feature

