CCTV in the Vegas of Asia - Macau

It is a project of superlatives: the Las Vegas Sands Casino in Macau is the biggest of its kind, at least in Asia. And it is the first casino in Asia to be built in the style of the well-known pleasure palaces of Las Vegas – with hotel, leisure complex, countless restaurants and bars and everything in spectacular architecture. And yet another superlative: the site is secured by the biggest DVR in the world: the CCTV monitoring system with decentralised recording supplied by Dallmeier electronic was selected for its high data security and accessibility as well as its ability to deliver maximum cost efficiency.

The fully digital system concept includes a CCTV system with more than 1,100 cameras (693 fixed and 422 domes) for monitoring the extensive casino, restaurant and hotel areas with 500 slot machines and 300 gaming tables. The picture data are recorded redundantly on two hard disks. A second hard disk functions as an emergency track with seven day recording alongside the standard hard disk. The current day's data are therefore always available if the standard hard disk were to fail. As second security feature is the storage of the operating system on a separate Flash ROM chip so that it runs independently from the hard disks. If they both fail then the DIS-1 is still able to deliver video pictures by streaming them to the security workstations.

But even so, enough was not enough. Soon after the official opening in May 2004 there were new additions – and the mega-project became a giga-project.

GIT SICHERHEIT + MANAGEMENT talked with Erwin Ullmann, Director of Dallmeier International Ltd. Hong Kong at Dallmeier electronic.

Sadly, this was the last interview of Erwin Ullmann, who passed away on 4 June 2006, after a tough battle with cancer. He was only 35, and loved by all that knew him. He was a contributor to the "CCTV focus" magazine too and a good friend and colleague to the Editor. We'll miss you Erwin.

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the archiving of recordings. We added a special software module to the system so that, for example, pictures were then easier to find. Another example is the connection of the monitoring system to the cashier systems. This now means that data from the relevant cashier – transaction number, date, time and product code – are saved with the video recording so that each cashier action is registered and reproducible.

GIT: What did the expansion consist of?

Erwin Ullmann: There are a total of 620 gaming tables – black jack, roulette etc as well as 1,000 slot machines. The flexibility of the security system here proved very advantageous. It could be easily expanded, now to a total of 1,820 DIS-1 encoders, 100 decoders, 1,170 fixed cameras and 650 PTZ cameras. In the monitoring centre there are now more than 22 workstations, each consisting of a surveillance PC with an average of three monitors. Beside this there is a central monitor wall where camera pictures can be switched for all to see as and when necessary.

GIT: But the opening of the Las Vegas Sands was in mid 2004. How was it then that it was only a year later that the system had to be expanded?

Erwin Ullmann: They pretty soon realised that the restaurant provision was too large for the demand. They were not as popular as expected. Apparently Asians are keener on gambling than on fine food which is less important to them. So consequently a portion of the restaurant footage was converted into additional casino area. In particular the Chinese buffet was much reduced in size to make way for gaming tables and machines. And because of this the casino might even have become the biggest in the world.

GIT: Is the project the first casino which you have equipped?

Erwin Ullmann: We have been extremely successful in the casino industry in Australia for a number of years. We had experience with large casinos there. And it was because of this that we became involved in Macau. The Las Vegas Sands is currently our biggest reference project in this field. In order to boost future success in the casino business, we will be concentrating more on full service and developing customised developments. At Dallmeier electronic we have now created a special casino project team consisting of six recognized specialists with international experience. This is how we have built up considerable know-how on this specialist field.

GIT: Mr. Ullmann, thank you very much for this conversation

GIT: Mr. Ullmann, the former Portuguese enclave of Macau has been booming for the last few years. Now investors are falling over each other in the area. What was triggered this?

Erwin Ullmann: The boom really began with the building of the Las Vegas Sands whose security we looked after. It only became possible after the local Macau government dissolved the 40 year-long gambling monopoly in 2002 and awarded two other licences. This opened the door for the big investors from the USA and they began to allow Macau to become a kind of Las Vegas of the orient. The Cotai Strip in Macau is already taking shape as other casinos are being built. In the next few years they will change the face of Macau considerably.

GIT: Your company has installed the security framework for the project, and we reported on it in the July edition of GIT 2005. What has been the client's experience with it?

Erwin Ullmann: The feedback has been totally positive right from the start. This is probably because we worked very closely together with the client on site and tailor-made the solution from the outset. Our closeness mean that particular things were added and a variety of particular desires could be met.

GIT: Could you give us a couple of examples?

Erwin Ullmann: Various functions were introduced which proved necessary when the system came into operation. For example a back-up manager to simplify