PSIM'S POTENTIAL:
SUPERIOR SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

The possibilities offered by a new platform that integrates disparate building and security systems into a common management system – namely PSIM – are revealed by LUKE PERCY-DOVE, principal consultant at Matryx Consulting.

Luke Percy-Dove.

If you are like most facilities managers, you will need to control access to certain areas of your building and monitor who is coming and going. This will mean that you have an electronic access control system installed and probably a CCTV system to complement it.

Security has been managed this way for many years and not a lot has changed over time. Sure, we have moved to Internet protocol (IP) and embraced technology to some degree, but security has remained one of those things that is often only deployed because we have to have it. It doesn't necessarily add to the client's experience or provide a return on investment for property managers.

But, that is now changing, thanks to new applications for building systems integration and CCTV management that can add value and provide a return on security investment.

PHYSICAL SECURITY INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Most commercial buildings have independent control systems for HVAC, lighting, evacuation, personal address, lifts, the building management system (BMS), fire and security. Each system will have its own dedicated controllers, data servers and workstations where events are logged and reports generated.

Unless real planning has gone into the initial procurement, they are probably also from different vendors, meaning there is little if any integration between systems.
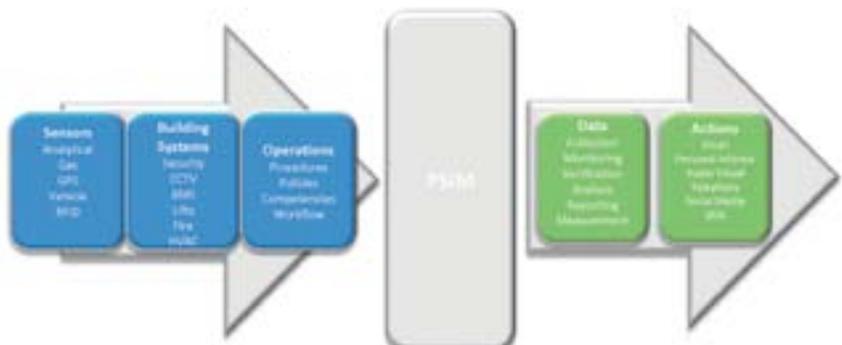
A new software application can provide a means of linking these disparate building control systems without throwing out what you have and starting again.

Physical security information management (PSIM) is a generic industry term in much the same way as BMS is used in the controls industry. As the name suggests, it is an application that has evolved from the security industry where these applications are used to integrate a variety of systems and sensors into a centralised command and control system.

PSIM is now emerging as an application that can bring its unique benefits to the commercial property sector. In the commercial space, PSIM is used to build relationships between building control systems and events in ways that have not previously been possible.

For example, a typical building alarm event might involve the activation of a high temperature sensor. In this

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instance, let's say the event is caused by a key piece of control equipment being switched off when a contractor was granted access to a service riser.

This one event is likely to generate three different alarms – a riser alarm, a power fail alarm and the high temperature alarm. These alarm events, while linked, will seem unrelated as they appear in the event logs within their respective control systems. The critical event is the high-temperature alarm, which is investigated as a high priority and attended to by maintenance staff.

Using PSIM, a natural relationship is created between these events, so that alerts can be generated as soon as it becomes clear that something that should not have happened has happened. As events escalate, so can the actions of the PSIM, with alerts to key personnel, public broadcast and even social media updates part of pre-programmable responses. Instead of three unrelated events, PSIM knows that the events are one and the same, so a response can be managed in a far more logical and efficient manner.

PSIM can also incorporate standard operating procedures, policies and competencies (client specific) to form rules around alarm events and aid in the enforcement of a building's risk management strategy. PSIM brings greater operational control and situational awareness to building management. These applications also provide opportunities for operational savings, as building control can be simplified, monitoring and reporting streamlined and activities measured.

The opportunities for large commercial, retail and multi-site operations are extensive and will become more apparent as PSIM evolves from being a security application and finds its feet in the commercial property sector. **FM**

The generic industry term 'physical security information management' (PSIM) refers to applications used to integrate a variety of systems and sensors into a centralised command and control system.