

# INTEGRATED PHYSICAL SECURITY PRODUCT OF THE YEAR AWARD

By John Riccio, Associate Publisher

Welcome to our first annual 2005 Integrated Physical Security Product of the Year award. Many of our readers are probably curious as to why we started our first product award with a physical security system. You may not know this, but I have a deeply rooted background in the physical security industry. As I have watched this industry progress over the past few years, I have been impressed with the handful of vendors who have taken the leap from traditional physical security to a more IT security network centric approach.

As physical security technology evolves and our associated responsibilities cross over into the computer-based network environment, most veteran access control professionals find themselves longing for smarter integrated systems that can help them accomplish more security and monitoring duties, with less effort.

Yes, we all need to have access control, alarm management and video security systems, but is it possible that these three separate functions can live together on one common platform, functioning seamlessly as one application, integrated into a centralized desktop environment over the network? Is it safe to say that our next step would be centralizing these components into a system that is accessible to management from anywhere in the world over the Internet?

For some, having these three physical security components on the same desktop is enough. For these security types, being able to switch back and forth between programs will surely save a few cycles during the busy workday.

Others, who are more seasoned in the art of integrated physical security systems, know that interfacing is not good enough in regards to managing an enterprise operation. For these types, running a modern-day security operations and monitoring center

without the functionality that integrated systems provide is almost unimaginable. As far as our product testers were concerned, they question the sanity of further physical security spending without the capabilities to integrate these products into a common platform.

Ask ten security professionals what an integrated system means to them and you may get ten different answers. Fortunately for all of them, we found that integrated security systems have matured a great deal over the past few years and continue to evolve rapidly. User interfaces have improved greatly along with reporting tools and alert visualization components, which have become slick via the use of map-based drag and drop capabilities.

Our biggest surprise has come from the latest API technology used by a couple of these systems. This technology has advanced significantly over the past few years and with its open infrastructure, is the center of the integration platform utilized by the best-of-breed integrated systems. The strength and applicability of this API truly became the turning point for a few of our chosen competitors.

We use the term integrated physical security because we think it describes the current product functionality more accurately than other terms, but still, this hints at a bigger issue: What exactly do these products offer, and where are they headed?

For this report our *Network Defense*

& *Product News* (NDPN) lab tested a software solution that contained a single operating platform from which all security systems could be seamlessly controlled. Our testing criteria included a software application that integrated video surveillance, access control, intrusion alarms and any primary building management system (elevator alarms, HVAC and lighting). Additionally, this solution needed to

systems management solution and the company's scaled-down, enterprise-grade solution for the middle market, iTRUST. During our lab testing, the products open architecture design and ease of implementation demonstrated its overall scalability and extensibility. MDI's powerful and flexible open architecture allowed



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### SAFENET VERSION 6.2.1 AND ITRUST VERSION 6.2.1

MDI's Integrated Security and System Management software offers a scalable, flexible and affordable security solution for both enterprise and small business applications. The company manufactures a full range of security products including, access control hardware, digital video recorders, security cameras, access control readers and accessories.

#### Key Performance Indicators

Usability	Good
Capability	Good
Performance	Excellent
Interoperability	Excellent
Scalability	Excellent
Security	Good
Affordability	Excellent

be flexible enough to deploy enterprise-wide with the ability to scale down in order to meet the needs of a small business application. MDI Security Systems has been involved in the physical security market for more than 25 years. During those years, the company went through several changes including corporate structure, corporate name change, different product offerings, and various office locations. However, through all of that, MDI maintained its core competency as a leading software and intelligent security hardware provider.

The company has spent the last few years refining its patented technology to create a solution that integrates security at the enterprise level with the ability to manage all of the disparate systems from a centralized location and console.

For this year's product awards, *NDPN* tested MDI's flagship product, SAFENet, its enterprise security and

our staff to easily integrate other third-party applications and devices.

The product supported several, commonly used databases including Oracle and SQL server. This functionality allows significant savings in already invested and installed hardware devices. End users will not be limited in the third-party products they use when implementing MDI's product and their security system can integrate with any external system or application.

When our *NDPN* staff had surveyed customers in the field in regards to the products ability to integrate with other applications, we received mixed feedback. Many of the company's existing customers complained that the SAFENet system was inoperable with a Mercury panel. Mercury Security, the manufacturer of Mercury panels, has been at the forefront in designing hardware for the access control market and its products are deployed in many facilities as part of a total access control system.

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# CORPORATE PROFILE

## SHAVLIK TECHNOLOGIES

In the past, companies that worried about security breaches hired guards, bought canine defenders and put in "high-tech" surveillance systems. Today, criminals, information-seekers and even malicious employees can bypass physical deterrents, hide behind snippets of computer code, and access, steal or destroy a company's most private information files.

The weak link in today's security is not anything physical – its unpatched computers and unprotected networks.

In 1993, Mark Shavlik saw this



need in the business community and decided to help companies secure their computer systems. He founded Roseville, Minn.-based Shavlik Technologies and began offering a unique approach to computer security application design and development – the first step in achieving information security.

Today, Shavlik Technologies offers easy-to-use, affordable security products to help organizations stay ahead of security vulnerabilities due to missing patches, weak accounts and passwords. It also offers software support for its family of security solutions and Shavlik Security Services Group experts work with customers to review security technology, processes and policies.

In February, Shavlik announced the latest version of Shavlik HFNetChkPro, the industry standard for security patch management. Available now, Shavlik HFNetChkPro 5 offers significant features and enhancements to provide the most comprehensive patch management tool available, while continuing to provide ease-of-use and the ability to get patched in 30 minutes or less. Other patch management products from Shavlik Technologies include Shavlik NetChk Security, Shavlik Security Agents.

According to Mark Shavlik, the

### Shavlik HFNetChkPro5 ProPlus Edition

The Shavlik HFNetChkPro 5 Plus feature set provides enterprise deployment and reporting features combined with the power of HFNetChkPro 5.

The Pro Plus feature set extends the Shavlik HFNetChkPro 5 product with the inclusion of 6 add-on modules for enterprise patch management:

Benefit	Main Features
<b>All benefits of the Basic Edition and HFNetChkPro 5 feature sets, PLUS:</b>	
<b>Commandline support</b>	<b>Commandline scanning</b> Launch scans from the commandline at the Shavlik console. Great for scripting.
<b>Increased scan speed</b>	<b>Scan 256 machines concurrently</b> Scan more machines at one time. This module raises the number of simultaneously scanned machines from 64 to 256. (An upcoming version of the HFNetChkPro Plus scan engine will be able to scan up to 256 machines at once, significantly improving the time it can take to scan your entire network.)
<b>Shavlik Distribution Server</b>	<b>Distributed patch deployment</b> Deploy patches to remote networks using distribution servers.
<b>Shavlik Report Server</b>	<b>Web reporting portal</b> View scan and deployment reports from anywhere on the network.
<b>SQL Database Support</b>	<b>SQL Server database</b> Save scan and deployment results to a shared SQL Server database. Significantly improves application performance and enables multiple Shavlik consoles to share the same data.
<b>Custom Patches</b>	<b>Patch XML Editor</b> Create your own XML files to scan for and deploy custom patches. (The ability to support custom patches will be available to Shavlik HFNetChkPro 5 Plus customers shortly.)

two most common vulnerabilities exploited by hackers are configuration errors and software defects. Patch management tools, like Shavlik HFNetChkPro, can prevent attacks on software defects, but configuration errors are the responsibility of the security managers, information technology personnel, and even end users. In response to this security threat, Shavlik Technologies announced Shavlik NetChk Security, a security information and configuration management tool that identifies security configuration errors on Microsoft-based workstations and enables system administrators to correct the errors. Shavlik NetChk Security will be available in the third quarter of 2005.

But patch management and security management software are only the beginning for Shavlik. Spyware has become an increasingly challenging problem for businesses – adversely impacting productivity, decreasing bandwidth and compromising network security by allowing computer hackers a foothold to systems. Shavlik recognized this problem and announced Shavlik NetChk Spyware, a new anti-spyware product, available in the second quarter of 2005. Unlike most anti-spyware solutions currently on the market, Shavlik NetChk Spyware is designed specifi-

cally for the enterprise and is not simply an enhanced version of a home user product.

The number of security vulnerabilities increases daily, and it has become imperative for businesses to protect systems to prevent lost productivity, increased IT costs, infringements on privacy and increased risk for liability. Shavlik Technologies helps companies ensure that information and systems are secure by identifying and eliminating areas of vulnerability. In turn, customers using Shavlik's products see a significant drop in network and system failures, fewer successful attacks, and a decrease in lost productivity, privacy and security infringements, and liability risk. **NDPN**

For more information about Shavlik Technologies, visit [www.shavlik.com](http://www.shavlik.com).



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During tests, we wired a Mercury panel to the SAFEnet system and immediately realized its ease-of-use and seamless integration, without having a programmer configure the application. This supported MDI's commitment to its open architecture technology and design.

The development of MDI's API technology and object-oriented approach allows for a seamless interface with third-party systems and hardware devices, thus providing end-users with no risk of choice in suppliers and installers of mission critical systems.

After testing the company's SAFEnet system we looked at iTRUST, MDI's enterprise-grade security and system management software designed specifically for small to mid-sized organizations. When we opened the box for the iTRUST system, our lab staff was surprised to see a digital video recorder. We loaded the DVR system, with the cameras MDI supplied to our staff, and we were able to run an access control system through a video server.

The iTRUST solution provided us with the same benefits and functionality of the company's enterprise SAFEnet solution. What impressed our *NDPN* staff was the ability to use the same equipment for multiple purposes. MDI's iTRUST solution is the most cost-effective and powerful small business application on the market. To explain how simple and cost-effective this solution is, we loaded the iTRUST software on the company's proprietary ViewPoint DVR, connected two standard CCD analog cameras, plugged in MDI's DDCII (dual door controller) fully distributed Ethernet based IP appliance, connected a reader, and within minutes we had a fully functional access control and video management solution from a single system. It gets better, the iTRUST software and hardware solution (without the DVR, cameras and reader) is sold for \$1,000 dealer cost.

If you are looking for a flexible and scalable enterprise solution or a solution that fits a small business application with enterprise-grade functionality, our choice is MDI's SAFEnet and iTRUST.

For additional information on MDI products, visit [www.mdisecure.com](http://www.mdisecure.com). **NDPN**