

**MDI Security Systems****CHALLENGE**

Provide a turnkey platform for business-critical software from a leading provider of open-architecture security systems; provide 24/7 support to customers with sensitive security needs at multisite facilities around the globe

**SOLUTION**

A bundled suite of Dell products and services, including Dell™ PowerEdge™ 2850 servers with 3 GHz Intel® Xeon® processors running Microsoft® Windows Server™ 2003, Dell OptiPlex™ GX620 mini-towers, Dell Latitude™ D600 notebooks, and Dell mobile wireless computing products

**BENEFIT**

Reliable Dell hardware helps MDI Security Systems deliver a trusted platform for hosting top-secret security systems; MDI reduces internal development and integration costs by eliminating the need to build their own computing hardware; Dell's global support infrastructure helps ensure high availability for large enterprise-class organizations with disparate facilities worldwide

# Mission Possible

## The Dell OEM Industry Solutions Group beefs up the ONE Unified Technology Platform developed by MDI Security Systems

When engineers at MDI Security Systems design a global video surveillance system that is unified with access control and alarm management, they understand that there is far more at stake than just meeting a set of functional requirements. No one can get past the door on their watch. MDI has been a leading provider of unified security management solutions since 1979, providing open-architecture command and control solutions for a long list of notable high-security enterprise customers around the globe, including financial institutions, nuclear power facilities, industrial manufacturers, and “the top tier of the three-letter classified government agencies,” according to Michael Garcia, vice president of marketing for MDI.

The rich knowledge and practical experience of MDI engineers have helped them create the ONE™ Unified Technology Platform, an open-architecture command and control operating system. It is an adaptive technology platform that unifies all the vital components for managing and monitoring the physical security, network, and business management systems of multisite facilities. The ONE platform unifies a number of physical security functions, such as access control for a business-critical server room, intrusion detection at banks, video surveillance, and systems management for

military installations. Using the fully unified system, customers can manage all their security events 24/7 from a point-and-click dashboard-style desktop application, reducing risk, increasing visibility, and enabling rapid response times.



“Dell has established a reputation of stability and reliability. When we deliver our unified security solutions on Dell servers and equipment, our customers associate us with that same level of technical trust. Dell and MDI—it’s a win-win partnership.”

— **Michael Garcia**  
Vice President of Marketing  
MDI Security Systems

#### **Flexibility means security for customers of all sizes**

In this high-tech environment, the scalability and flexibility of MDI security systems form the cornerstone of the company’s outstanding reputation. “Our customers range from small local convenience stores to highly classified and meticulously customized military sites around the globe,” explains Garcia. “Each customer has different security needs, and the system has to be agile enough to accommodate them all. Plus, technologies like biometrics, facial recognition, and bomb detection sensors that can be integrated into our ONE platform are constantly evolving, so a wide variety of security products have to interoperate effectively.”

Achieving this level of agility and technical adaptability while adhering to security technology mandates and product compliance certifications requires a robust and trusted hardware infrastructure. Initially MDI produced its own system hardware, but keeping up with Underwriters Laboratories (UL) requirements and government specifications was very time consuming and not cost-effective. MDI needed to find a UL-certified hardware vendor capable of keeping pace with the rapid expansion of security technologies.

Charged with seeking an outside vendor for the system’s hardware platform, Tim Rohrbach, MDI’s vice president of technology and chief information officer, evaluated the products of several major manufacturers. He quickly established that Dell was MDI’s best bet. “It wasn’t just because the systems are scalable, the support is excellent, and the cost was right where it needed to be—it was also the fact that Dell is so well accepted by the markets we serve,” Rohrbach explains. “Dell is seen as the benchmark for the

federal government, and the federal government is seen as the security benchmark for commercial, industrial, and educational leaders around the world. It makes sense for us to partner with a premier company that leaders across all markets already know and trust.”

#### **Dell servers reinforce the arsenal**

Dell has proved to be a perfect match for MDI. MDI systems are hosted on Dell PowerEdge 2850 servers with 3 GHz Intel Xeon processors, which are clustered for redundancy and can run a variety of fault-tolerance software applications, such as EMC® LEGATO® software and Microsoft® Cluster Server, to allow system failover in the event of an outage. Each PowerEdge 2850 hosts the main MDI application and Microsoft® SQL Server 2000 and 2005 databases, with the option of separating the servers and creating additional redundancies.

“Using Microsoft® SQL Server on Dell PowerEdge servers gives us the performance our customers require and have come to demand over the past decade. With the combination of Dell and Microsoft products, our clients’ system administrators can manage the security of the entire enterprise from one centralized station—which can help increase the return on investment and lower the total cost of ownership for our clients,” says Garcia.

MDI’s ONE unified technology platform and the Microsoft® SQL Server 2000 and 2005 databases run on the Microsoft® Windows Server™ 2003 operating system. “PowerEdge servers running Windows®, SQL Server, and MDI software have proven to be a very stable platform,” Rohrbach says. Dell’s industry-standard technology also allows a much larger variety of upgrade and peripheral options for MDI’s customers. “Our customers like the variety of options you can buy with the servers. This range of options enables us to provide value add-ons and greatly improve customer satisfaction,” adds Rohrbach.

#### **Dell desktops and notebooks augment the battery**

Rohrbach also chose Dell workstations and notebooks because of their ability to handle the complex operations carried out by its customers’ security personnel. As part of a typical security system setup, MDI uses the Dell OptiPlex GX620 mini-towers with Intel Pentium® 4 processors. “These workstations can be set up in many different ways depending on the customer’s needs,” Rohrbach explains. “They handle everything from compiling reports to creating employee badges with PIN numbers to monitoring alarms to dispatching security guards. The OptiPlex GX620 offers top-notch performance, great value, and the ability to support a four-monitor video security configuration, which makes our customers very happy.”

To complement the product suite, Rohrbach selected the Dell Latitude D600 notebook for its robustness and high performance. The Latitude notebook easily plugs into the MDI security system for remote diagnostics, and is rugged enough to handle the range of operations performed by mobile security personnel. "The Latitude notebooks are incredibly durable," Rohrbach says. "Out in the field, the equipment we use needs to be tough, and the Latitude notebook has proven itself to be a true road warrior."

**Dell flat-panel monitors round out the fortifications**

All of the MDI systems use Dell flat-panel displays because of their outstanding graphics capabilities—in some instances up to 50-inch screens. The clarity and color matching achievable with the ATI graphics engine in Dell's products are essential for the security activities of MDI customers—including video surveillance, license plate recognition, and intelligent video analytics. "A good example would be work we have done for some well-known casino chains, where the video security system needs to be sharp enough to differentiate a red chip from a maroon chip at extended distances," Rohrbach explains. "You need the right technology to accomplish custom solutions like that—for us, the choice is easy because Dell is at the top in the field."

**HOW IT WORKS**

**HARDWARE**

- Dell™ PowerEdge™ 2850 servers with 3 GHz Intel® Xeon® processors
- Dell OptiPlex™ GX620 mini-towers with Intel Pentium® 4 processors
- Dell Latitude™ D600 notebooks

**SOFTWARE**

- Microsoft® Windows Server™ 2003
- Microsoft® SQL Server 2000 and 2005

**SERVICES**

- Dell Enterprise Support service

**Dell support helps ensure zero margin of error**

Since Dell offers a wide range of products and options, MDI can obtain all the parts it needs from one source and depend on that source for technical support. "There is zero margin for error in our business," says Garcia. "One of the best things about Dell support is that it is almost never needed. But if there is a glitch in the hardware, we need redundancy and technically capable staff to quickly resolve the issue. Downtime in a secure environment is not acceptable. Dell support staff understands the technology involved in keeping these systems up and running. It is a great

comfort for us and our customers to know that Dell has the infrastructure in place to support these enterprise systems worldwide."

**The Dell reputation translates to additional sales**

The Dell reputation for reliability is key to helping MDI encourage potential customers to consider its security systems. Also, since MDI moved to a Dell platform, the amount of troubleshooting on a fully installed system has significantly dropped, reducing the company's IT management costs and improving customer satisfaction. "Dell has established a reputation of stability and reliability," Garcia says. "When we deliver our unified security solutions on Dell servers and equipment, our customers associate us with that same level of technical trust. Dell and MDI—it's a win-win partnership."



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