

National Small-bore Rifle Association

Surveillance cameras aren't just for protecting people and property. Faced with the Commonwealth Games in August 2002, the National Small-bore Rifle Association wanted to install cameras to improve its range scoring procedures. Thanks to Computer Network Limited, the National Small-bore Rifle Association has improved procedures, introduced dual use monitoring and can expand the system if required.



The Lord Roberts Centre in Bisley is a purpose-built venue for small-bore and airgun shooting on state-of-the-art electronic targets. The Centre is run by the National Small-bore Rifle Association (NSRA), the 100-year-old national governing body for small-bore rifle & pistol, airgun and crossbow target shooting.

Constructed in 2001, The Lord Roberts Centre is a two-storey building featuring two international 80-lane shooting ranges. The building includes all the latest IT technology such as a 150-point multi-service cable network for telephone and data communications. John Hoare, NSRA Secretary, says that funding restrictions meant that cameras were planned but not installed.



The Lord Roberts Centre hosted the prestigious Commonwealth Shooting Federation Championships in August 2001, a precursor event to the 2002 Commonwealth Games. While the latest electronic targets were used, co-ordination between the Range Officer and an out-of-view Control Room relied on an audio link. The Control Room's job is to produce computer-based scores and constantly-changing running orders.

"We decided that our audio-only communications system was unacceptable. The operating company for the Commonwealth Games 2002 agreed to fund 50 percent of the costs for range cameras."

Backed by this funding promise, the NSRA set out its objectives. It wanted to give the Control Room staff a good real-time view of events in a 10-metre indoor airgun range so that accurate real time results could be produced.

"The work was deemed essential particularly for the co-ordination of the Finals. Results are displayed in two different formats before and after each one of the ten shots in final events," explained Hoare.

The NSRA also considered the future use of cameras. In the long term, it wanted a surveillance system capable of covering more areas. For example, sports hall monitoring might keep staff costs down. The first floor airgun range also doubled as an in-line hockey rink so the range cameras had dual use requirements from the start.

According to Hoare, network cameras were previously evaluated but dropped for lack of funds. Contacts were renewed with potential suppliers including Computer Network Limited. Other than coping with varying ambient light, the cameras also had to offer fixed-focus but there was no need for movement or zoom.

"Computer Network Limited were very competent and focussed on our needs. Their customer service attitude was superb as was their speed of response. Not only was the price right but they were local too," commented Hoare.

Although the supplier was quickly chosen, obtaining the promised funding was slow. In the end, the final go-ahead for installation was given only days before the August 2002 Commonwealth Games.

"Computer Network Limited did the work well and on time, becoming part of our team. I cannot praise their attitude and technical response highly enough. They were very good indeed," commented Hoare.

Apart from a site survey, the work included installing two Axis 2120 network cameras and the AXIS Camera Explorer software. A loan PC was also provided for the duration of the Commonwealth Games. One of the cameras gives a general view and sight of the results" board. A second camera is pointed towards the Range Officer for the benefit of the Control Room. When the area is in use as a hockey rink, the two cameras offer general monitoring if required.



Live images are viewed directly from within Microsoft Windows Explorer from any PC on the network. The cameras are displayed as logical objects, appearing in a list alongside files, folders and drives. Users click the selected camera for a view of the video stream. Hoare says it all proved highly successful for the Commonwealth Games.

"The cameras gave us exactly the view that we're after. Our officials were far more confident that they were doing a good job in controlling the event and providing the results. It all worked perfectly with no problems whatsoever."

The investment in two cameras is only a beginning. Because the entire building is already networked, additional cameras may be easily placed elsewhere. Combined with Milestone XProtect software, future plans will see more widespread surveillance to minimise staff supervision. There are other ideas too.

"We have been discussing the next stage with Computer Network Limited. We want to integrate our range images with the results system so that people anywhere in the world can watch shooting events via the web," explained Hoare.

Accessed via a regularly-updated web page, this will enable anyone, anywhere to keep in touch with key events as they unfold. The National Small-bore Rifle Association is continuing its 100-year-old work to educate and regulate while embracing new technology with a passion.



