

■ BY ISRAEL GOGOL, FREELANCER

Traditionally used by critical infrastructure installations, physical security information management (PSIM) software is now moving into new verticals, offering more benefits and increased functionality. Recent verticals to gain from PSIM are municipalities, major sports events, large enterprises, and health care institutions. As the industry learns the added value of PSIM solutions, there will be a greater need for systems integrators capable of combining physical security, IT systems, and business operations.



How New Verticals Benefit From PSIM

PSIM solutions were first adopted by large enterprises and government installations with high security levels: military, law enforcement, and critical infrastructure facilities such as nuclear power plants, oil and gas, and water treatment facilities. Recent domains acquiring PSIM solutions are municipalities and mass transportation systems: airports, metros, and railways. Cities and mass transit systems benefit from PSIM since it enables them to integrate their already existing legacy security systems and enhance the levels of security, safety, and service they give to their residents and passengers.

“There are two major trends in the future of PSIM systems: The first one is already happening — a growing deployment as part of a safe city solution; the second one is a valid option, for which we see initial signs — the adoption by multinational corporations wishing to build a multi-layered global security system. In a safe city context, PSIM allows the integration of many disparate systems which will allow a better management of first responders and city infrastructure,” said Hagai Katz, VP of Business Development at Magal Systems.

“We are finding large corporations and city-wide safety programs requesting what we call ‘federation.’ This allows standalone PSIM deployments at individual facilities to work collaboratively with each other and in the event of an emergency situation to hand over control to an emergency response center,” added Adlan Hussain, VP of Marketing at CNL Software.

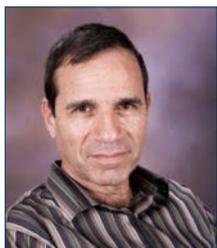
Large enterprises can use PSIM to monitor and integrate information coming from several facilities (even in different countries) without having to worry about different systems used at different sites.

The use of PSIM can be extended beyond the physical facility — “We have

a customer in India who has over 100,000 employees in one campus. They utilize 2,500 buses to ferry these employees to and from their offices," told Hussain. A major concern for the company was to ensure the safety of lone female travelers on these buses. A PSIM solution offered a way to identify this risk and mitigate it. PSIM software was used to aggregate information from the company's access control system (on each bus entrance), vehicle tracking, mapping, panic alarms, and onboard video. The solution brings lone females traveling on buses to the attention of operators. Following an alert, they are able to monitor video surveillance cameras from the control room, and can monitor buses for diversions from the route, speeding, unscheduled stops, and even have the ability to cut the power to these buses. "Nothing else on the market was able to connect all of this data and provide the right information and controls to operators at the right time," explained Hussain.

MASS SPORTING EVENTS ARE A CATALYST TO SAFE CITY PROJECTS

Mass sports events are another vertical that can benefit from PSIM solutions.



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▲ PSIM supports safe, effective and timely resolution of events, alarms, and management of more complex incidents that involve multiple simultaneous alarms at one or more locations. Photo courtesy of Vidsys.

Such an event requires the integration of several systems over several locations (e.g., training fields, stadiums, Olympic villages, access roads to the events, etc.). These events can serve as a catalyst for safe city projects. Once the event is concluded, the deployed PSIM solutions can also be used to ensure safety and security of the city. For example, Magal implemented a PSIM solution for the African Cup Games held in Gabon in 2012. The location and choice of the equipment were designed to answer future needs of Gabonese safe city projects so that it could reuse the African

Cup security systems. Whenever possible, wireless systems were installed. Without the dependence on a wired backbone, these systems could be easily relocated to other sites. After the games ended, the equipment from the stadiums (e.g., mobile explosive detection systems, vehicle mounted systems, metal detectors, sniffers, etc.) were deployed at air and sea port projects.

Other recent examples are deployments of NICE Systems' PSIM solutions in Brazil as part of the FIFA World Cup and prior to the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics in Russia.

HEALTH CARE INSTITUTIONS

PSIM is not limited to specific verticals. The National Cancer Institute (NCI), near Washington, D.C., used Vidsys' PSIM solution to integrate several organization-wide security and operational protocols across its five campuses and numerous off-campus facilities, housing 9,200 total employees. By creating a command center using PSIM, it was possible to both aggregate data from various systems and disseminate emergency data to staff in case of need. Following the

deployment of the PSIM solution, NCI operators could see, for the first time, how all systems were operating, and to have all of the systems working together for a 360-degree view of campus security. For instance, if a fire were to break out, the PSIM software would enable the controller to institute pre-set emergency response protocols, initiating the building mustering system and implementing evacuation procedures while simultaneously alerting emergency responders, recording the entire event for later review and use for regulatory and training purposes. In addition to improving security in a hospital environment, the software could be used to track medical equipment, ensure proper sterilization procedures occur after each use, and enhance adherence to regulatory and compliance directives.

WILL HIGH COSTS STOP THE PSIM MARKET FROM GROWING?

Despite vendors' attempts at making PSIM integration as quick and easy as possible, the complexity involved in PSIM deployment still comes at a price. If the deployment takes longer than originally planned, the costs rise as well. Therefore



▲ Mass sports events are major vertical fro PSIM solutions, as these events require integration of several systems over several locations.

it is crucial for customers and integrators to have the means and experience to manage the deployment timeline and expenses.

"PSIM is not for everyone. There is a cost, and often where security is not a high priority, it is too much to justify for many

organizations. In our experience, PSIM cannot be successfully implemented 'on the cheap.' Where security is mission critical, organizations understand the cost, equally they understand their specific risks and make sure the PSIM meets these risks," explained Hussain.

10 Tips for Successful PSIM Deployment

- 1. Buy-in:** Deploying a PSIM platform across an enterprise is unlike any other security investment. It reaches across all stakeholders within the enterprise, security, IT, and operations. Be sure to incorporate input and attain buy-in from these key stakeholders as early in the process as possible.
- 2. Well defined objectives:** Objectives need to reflect the requirements for the system in order of priority, and should be set in phases aligned to the PSIM rollout.
- 3. Mitigate risks:** Creating an up-to-date risk register and communicating this, along with its likely impact to all key stakeholders, will ensure that all risks are quickly identified, understood, and escalated before they jeopardize a PSIM deployment.
- 4. Scalability and flexibility:** Avoid choosing a PSIM solution that does not scale or allows you to easily change in-line with your business evolving over time. Otherwise you will need to upgrade your PSIM system prematurely.
- 5. Coordinate between stakeholders:** Managing multiple vendors and internal departments is a full-time job in itself. Employ an experienced full-time technical project manager to ensure all of the moving parts of a PSIM deployment are as expected and on schedule.
- 6. Identify requirements:** It is essential to develop an operational requirements document (ORD), which will help ensure a complete list of requirements is gathered. This needs to include input and output requirements of each system, functional requirements, as well as defining system-wide and technology requirements such as performance and usability.

On the other hand, James Chong, Founder and CTO of Vidsys believes that PSIM is scalable and therefore can be affordable for organizations large and small. “The efficiencies achieved create a strong case for return on investment (ROI).” These efficiencies include a shorter training time, as operators need to learn only one system as well as automatic auditing, which allows security officers to trust reports coming from the field and increase compliance with rules and regulations.

SYSTEMS INTEGRATORS PLAY A KEY ROLE

Systems integrators play a critical role in the success of a PSIM deployment. “Systems integrators need to understand that PSIM is a long-term investment. Acquiring and retaining the skills required to understand, implement, and support PSIM installation needs to be viewed as part of their long-term strategy,” said Hussain, “Today, we see many SIs looking at PSIM projects as single sales, rather than opportunities to forge long-term relationships with their clients.”

“A PSIM solution really requires the supplier to understand the needs of the customer — it is a true solution sell. The

best PSIM implementations we have seen require trust and genuine partnership. When this happens, the benefits and ROI become an obvious and tangible natural conclusion,” added Jamie Wilson, Security Marketing Manager for EMEA at NICE Systems.

EDUCATING THE MARKET

Customers and systems integrators are still unaware of the full potential of PSIM systems. PSIM vendors are constantly taking steps to educate the market on how to make the most out of their



▲ The best PSIM implementations require trust and genuine partnership among different system suppliers and system integrators.

investment.

Michael Mesaros, Group Product Manager at Proximex, a Tyco Security Products brand, recommends the use of user stories and use cases to educate customers on the full potential of PSIM systems. “Customers may have to rethink their workflows and operations in order to optimize the benefits they get from PSIM. We find that user stories and use cases are especially helpful in this regard. Sometimes a particular use case will resonate with a security operations manager and provide him/her with a new way of thinking about processes.”

PSIM is still the domain of large-scale facilities with high security demands. “The trend and the challenge now is to bring the same PSIM benefits to smaller organizations and for use cases involving fewer operators, or perhaps with no dedicated full-time operators at all,” added Mesaros. However, as the security industry continues to learn more about the benefits and added value of PSIM solutions, and as PSIM solutions facilitate faster and easier integration, we should see more and more installations deployed outside the traditional scope.



10 Tips for Successful PSIM Deployment

7. Establish change management rules: Since PSIM involves stakeholders across the organization; even a seemingly simple change in the system can have far reaching implications. Without documented change management rules, the complexity of features and requirements can quickly change resulting in a system that does not meet the original objectives.

9. Work closely with your PSIM vendor: PSIM vendors have a wealth of experience to help guide you through unknown factors that come up during deployment.

10. Select the right integrator: Many traditional physical security integrators are unprepared for the convergence between physical security and IT systems and might not have the skill sets required to deliver PSIM solutions. Choose an integrator with relevant IT systems engineering, project management, and physical security experience.

8. Establish cross-departmental partnerships: Establishing cross-departmental partnerships (e.g., IT, security, and operations) and getting all key stakeholders behind common objectives is key to getting the support needed to deploy an enterprise-wide PSIM solution. Keep regularly scheduled communications with all stakeholders to quickly identify and manage issues.

The box is provided by Adlan Hussain, VP of Marketing, CNL Software