THE *power* OF *audio*

Ian Bridgewater, Managing Director TOA Corporation (UK), explains the importance of being able to communicate effectively in the security industry

The world is full of sound that often we don't hear. The backdrop to our lives - we know it is there, but we simply don't think about why we need audio or the complexity behind how it is delivered.

So why is audio important? In an ever-changing world the need to communicate effectively has never been more paramount. Control and management are at the forefront of our industry, particularly around travel, events and security. Increased incidents that have impacted on public safety have become more prevalent and the need to provide greater instruction for evacuation or to add voice for security measures is key to industry and product development.

The use of audio in the security market is two-fold. It can provide direct communication to add a voice to Video Management Systems, SIP servers/phones and IP systems adding audio to visual contact such as CCTV. Whilst in modern building development audio is key to communication, safety and security. Public address and voice alarm systems provide sound solutions for evacuation combined with the ability to deliver general paging and background music.

Audio in security - the significance of IP

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of audio to help protect people and property allowing manually or automatically triggered voice messages using common industry standard protocols to deliver information.

IP allows clear messages to be automatically triggered by IP cameras, image sensing and motion detection systems or to be delivered live via VoIP (Voice over IP). This also allows for centralised and remote monitoring for security companies to manage multiple sites from one location, more cost-effective and time efficient.

Since covid there has been increased demand for remote monitoring especially in facilities that require full or partial limitation to engineers on site such as schools or hospitals. Remote monitoring enables immediate action from security teams when they can see a visual disturbance with the ability to curtail any anti-social activity with a clear command.

IP will continue to be at the forefront of combining voice and visual security with its flexibility for both indoor and outdoor applications and those that are remote from standard installations such as detention institutes, farmlands and industrial sites.

IP audio can enhance security solutions creating safer working environments and the ability to monitor projects and react to situations as they arise.

Voice evacuation - the key to crowd safety

Traditional bell sounders tell us we need to do something but don't tell us what we need to do. It is generally believed that people respond 75% more to a direct instruction and delivering such is a great advantage for the safe evacuation of a building.

Voice evacuation systems reduce the risk of delayed reaction to an emergency and are the preferred ▸



solution for multi-functional facilities such as office blocks or transport hubs. They enable essential service providers; security, police, fire and health professionals to control situations not just with full evacuation but lowering risk factors using zoned areas ending the 'one out all out' scenario that we have had in the past.

Increasingly popular with management companies and landlords, a voice alarm public address system can be linked to the fire alarm that is triggered in the event of an emergency. Pre-recorded messages or live announcements are designed to help evacuate a building in the safest way possible. Regulated by British Standard BS5839-8 as best practise this covers the design, installation, commissioning and maintenance of these life safety systems. New installations of voice evacuation systems must use EN-54 certified products, and it is a legal requirement for power supply, control and indicating equipment and speakers to adhere to this.



Ian Bridgewater,
Managing Director at TOA Corporation (UK)

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Public address and voice alarm systems can be used in many applications. From office blocks to venues and from airports to stadia. At TOA our systems are custom-designed and built for the application as we believe that each project requires Individual design to suit the end-user needs. For example, in theatre venues we often add the ability to have show relay which is unique to this industry where in airports we can connect to automatic announcement systems generating information in over 30 languages. In our opinion all systems should be designed for the individual project and should be flexible for future expansion and product development. Easy to operate for the end-user to maximise their capabilities is also essential in design.

Public address and voice alarm systems give greater flexibility to communicate with employees, visitors and the general public to many facilities ensuring that people are safe and informed whilst giving key services the ability to control, command and assist in the most safe and proactive way.

It enhances customer experience delivering not only security information, but background music, paging and general announcements.

Sound advice

Creating a sound system requires skilled knowledge to get the profile right for the building resulting in balanced and controllable audio. It is especially important when dealing with life safety and security where system failure is not an option. As an audio manufacturer our ethos is to support projects with our expert technical advice so we can ensure that a TOA system meets all the legal, regulatory and end-user requirements.

For more information contact TOA Corporation (UK) Ltd on 01372 389799, visit www.toa.co.uk or see us at The Security Event in Hall 5 Stand C25. ■