



# Case Study

BY ANN LONGMORE-ETHERIDGE

## One for the Books

**Crime novels are among the miles of books sold at Strand Book Store, where real crimes are now easier to solve with the new IP-surveillance.**

THREE CENTURIES AGO, English essayist and poet Joseph Addison wrote, "Books are the legacies that a great genius leaves to mankind." The Strand Book Store is dedicated to helping the public obtain copies of such legacies for their own libraries. With its "18 miles of books," the store has much to offer, but it can't afford to give it away. Hence, the store needed to find and install an integrated CCTV system that could be operated effectively by management and employees without a weighty manual as required reading.

In 1927, Strand, named after the famous publishing street in London, opened on Fourth Avenue, one of 48 book stores on New York City's legendary Book Row. The owners, the Bass family, eventually moved the store to its current location on Broadway. Over the decades, the amount of space that Strand encompasses has grown from 4,000 to 55,000 square feet on five floors of an 11-story building. Additionally, a second store in the Financial District opened about 10 years ago, and Strand also has a large Web site that allows readers from around the world to choose from an inventory estimated at several million books.

Eddie Sutton, the store's general manager, says that he had "very little contact with security for the early part of my career," but after being instrumental in the establishment and operation of Strand's retail Web site, employees occasionally came to him with security technology problems. Eventually, he became the de facto security manager.

In the 1990s, Strand had a traditional analog camera and Videotape recording system. Because of the length of time it

took to find recorded incidents, and the propensity for employees to forget to replace videotapes, this system was ousted around 2001 in favor of a digital camera and DVR system. However, according to Sutton, this only made things worse.

The DVR was complicated to use, malfunctions were frequent, and retrieval of images was difficult. Another dilemma was that the number of cameras installed (less than a dozen) exceeded the system's storage capacity. When that capacity was reached, as sometimes happened over weekends when Sutton was not at work to delete previous recordings, no footage was preserved.

In 2004, in the midst of a large-scale renovation project, Sutton and Strand's owners decided not to expand the digital system into new areas of the building that were coming into use. "The calls to me had become more frequent to take care of issues that I really couldn't [fix] because

of the limitations of the equipment ...but just wasn't worth it," he states.

At the same time that Sutton was casting about for options, Strand was installing a hybrid telephone system that was partially voice over IP. "I thought, 'There has got to be a security system that is running over IP. Something must be out there.' So I googled it and almost immediately found On-Net."

On-Net Surveillance Systems, Inc., of Suffern, New York, sent representatives from the company and a local contract systems integrator to Strand to discuss On-Net's NetDVR IP video surveillance system. "One of the things they did was a demo where they used a PC in my office to access a remote camera, and it was immediately clear that if you could use a browser, you could operate this system," Sutton says.

Sutton then worked with Fairview, New Jersey-based Nortronics, the systems



integrator, to decide exactly what was needed. "We talked about our requirements; we did numerous walk-throughs of the store for camera placement and to decide if we [would] need fixed or pan-tilt-zoom cameras," Sutton says.

They also looked at known and potential problem spots in the store with an eye toward accident prevention. In the past, customers had fallen off ladders and down stairs or had had books tumble from shelves and strike them. "For insurance purposes, you want to have those areas covered as well."

The installation began in 2005 and continued through 2006. In the first phase, 12 IP network cameras were installed—the majority of those in areas that had not been used as retail space before. As more areas were refurbished in 2006, more cameras were replaced or added in areas such as the main level, the loading dock, stairwells, and warehouse space. There are now 36 cameras.

Sutton says the installation of the equipment went smoothly, and, after tweaking, the system functioned perfectly. "Once I figured out the system, it didn't require very much in terms of help from the integrator or On-Net."

The system allows custom views to be created, such as by floors or all entrances and exits. Users can log in from remote locations as well. The system worked last winter when a disturbed individual entered the store and pushed a security officer and patrons.

### **The camera footage showed that a security guard provided by an outside agency took the money."**

before it is written over. Any authorized user who merely opens a browser and logs in can watch camera feed around the clock. Sutton assigns usage rights in conjunction with the store's owners. Access is "very limited," he explains, but the main floor manager in each store can produce clips, so that if police need them right away, they don't have to wait.

"In the past, when there have been incidents like this... it was hard for the police or the district attorney to understand what happened," Sutton recalls. But during this incident, "I was able to follow the sequences from the time that the person entered, while he made his way through the store to the places where incidents occurred." When the police responded, Sutton could present them with evidence that didn't rely on eyewitness accounts, which can be contradictory and unreliable.

In another incident, a man claimed that after his daughter had retrieved her bag from Strand's oversized-bag-check area, all the money in her wallet was missing. Sutton says he ran the CCTV sequence from two different cameras that are focused on the bag-check area. The camera footage showed that a security guard provided by an outside agency took the money. This kind of crime solving would have been impossible prior to the system's installation, he says.

Strand paid approximately \$50,000 for the system, Sutton says, adding that the technical support from On-Net has been "responsive and helpful. The system is exactly what I thought it would be, and it's great."

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On-Net Surveillance Systems Inc (OnSSI) develops the most advanced non-proprietary, open architecture, Intelligent IP Video Surveillance solutions. OnSSI's systems deliver feature-rich camera management, sophisticated recording and archiving, automatic Push Live Video on event, and a complete control-room video-wall management solution using the IP Network as a limitless virtual matrix. OnSSI's systems can be found in a wide range of municipalities, federal and local government agencies, as well as enterprise, industrial, and educational settings. For more information, visit: [www.onssi.com](http://www.onssi.com).



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