## Case Study

By Michael J. Daly
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# Checking out first class security arrangements at the Queens Library

**Sielox**

*Backward-compatible access control technology offers the ability to move forward with new developments while still making good use of the initial investment in a security system*

### Securing the libraries

The Department of Logistics and Security Management, headquartered in the Central Library building, is responsible for the security of all its sites, including logistics, safe preparation and shipping of library material, protection of library assets and even RFID (scanner) technology so patrons can check out their own books. Under **Thomas W. Galante,** *Library Director,* there has been an ever-increasing emphasis on increased customer service in all forms. Galante believes that security is a component of good customer service, ensuring a safe, comfortable environment for all the library's customers.

### Technology and its implementation

RFID (radio frequency identification) is part of the overall security technology and its implementation. Security management also includes access control, alarm systems, CCTV and digital recorders. The department has a number of security technicians on the staff and also relies on the cooperation of the IT department.

Actually, this vast library base is protected by a relatively small security force. Contract security amounts to some 4,000 hours a week, and the department itself has about twenty-five people. It is headed by the director; **Barbara Kavanagh,** *Assistant Director;* and **James Phelan,** *Operations Manager,* plus investigators and administrative staff. Actual on-site security professionals are only employed in the Central Library and a few community libraries. Security-related functions such as shipping and preparation require sixty additional staff.

### Access control for customer and employee safety

Access control is extremely important in the huge Central Library building. It was implemented by competitive bidding about 1992. The bid was secured by Integration Systems of Cliffwood, NJ, a complete security systems integrator.

The primary reason for the move to card access was security: controlling the library space. Protecting library assets, including rooms full of irreplaceable historical documents relating to Queens Borough, was an important reason, but the prime mover was customer and employee safety in the main library which fills nearly a city block.

Central Library offers public access to the entire main floor. There is limited public access to the second floor. Only partial public access is granted to the auditorium on C level.

C1 and C2 are the areas where rarely used library materials are shelved. They consist of nearly a square city block filled with row upon row of library stacks. Control there is extremely important. These areas must be strictly off- limits to the public, as ensured by access control. It is desolate at that level especially at night, and public access would be unacceptable in huge spaces, with many hiding places, but where employees must work.

Happily, Queens Library has never had a problem with its stack areas, even before the institution of access control. However, management is well aware that serious issues have been reported in other libraries that do not have appropriate control.

### Busy public areas

Central Library is a busy place! It serves the local community with neighborhood library service, and is also the main reference library for the whole county. Many Queens' high schools converge

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#### New AC1700 Access Control

Sielox has introduced a new generation of access control technology. It is the most advanced controller in the industry. A true IP solution supporting PoE and data transfer rates up to 100 Mega bits per second, the AC-1700 can be deployed as a main or terminal controller.

Implemented as a main controller, the AC-1700 can control up to 16 terminal controllers, including one on-board, providing regional anti pass-back functionality and regional input/output linking.

Featuring a removable secure digital card (SD), the AC-1700 has storage capacity ranging from 128 MBytes to 8 GBytes for controller database and events storage. Equipped with a web-based maintenance port, technicians can perform infield diagnostics and updates on the AC-1700 using a Web browser.

Consistent with previous Sielox product introductions, the 1700 Series offers unparalleled modularity and scalability for a total access control solution to effectively manage the security of a facility.

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*About the author*

*Michael J. Daly, Director
of Logistics and Security
Management at the Queens
Library, has been with the library
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City Police Department, he began
at the Queens Library as director
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*He is a member of the American
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Administration and Management
Association (LAMA) which is
responsible for suggested security
practices at this nation's libraries.*

*About Queen's Library*

*The Queens Library serves 2.2
million people from sixty-two
locations, seven adult learning
centers and two family literacy
centers in the New York City
borough of Queens. The Central
Library building occupies a full
block in Jamaica, NY.*

*About Sielox*

*Sielox is a leader in electronic
access control security solutions.
It offers a deep product line,
proved product technology and
years of experience. The company
continues to offer backward-
compatible technology,
vigorously supporting its legacy
products.*

*The Sielox flagship offering, its
enterprise-capable Pinnacle™
access control software solution,
provides total control of the entire
access control network, plus the
ability to upgrade or reconfigure
controllers, readers, proximity
cards and other hardware. It
incorporates agile methodology
for future software development.*

there. In the afternoons some 2,000 children enter the building. As a community library, Central has plenty of computers for public use. It also serves as a quasi social center, providing a space for kids that's off the streets and has some supervision. There are also a number of summer youth work programs supported by various city and private agencies. It is essential to restrict the public, and such casual employees, to public areas, for everyone's safety and to protect the library's assets.

In addition to the Central Library, access control is provided in a number of the community libraries: Flushing, Cambria Heights, South Jamaica, Langston Hughes, and the recently completed Long Island City branch.

### Forward-looking backward-compatible technology

Sielox enterprise-capable Pinnacle™ software provides total control of the entire access control network, plus the ability to upgrade or reconfigure controllers, readers, proximity cards and other hardware. It incorporates agile methodology for software development.

Of extreme importance to the Queens Library system is Sielox's firm policy of offering backward-compatible technology, vigorously supporting its legacy products. Sielox allows its customers to update, so as new technology is introduced and tested the library's access control can move in that direction while maintaining its previous investment. The library has literally millions of dollars invested in card access systems. With the system in place, security managers can control locked and unlocked doors throughout the network all from the main building.

Security professionals at the library are impressed with the ability to move forward with technology without jeopardizing the initial investment. Presently the original 300 boards are being changed to the recently introduced AC 1700 (see sidebar).

### Piggybacking on the network

Currently, Verizon fiber optic connects all library buildings on a network through the IT department. The card access system is piggybacked on that network. In the beginning it was dial-up modem, cobalt boxes and a dedicated phone line programmed to download periodically.

In the Queens access control program, every employee has a card that includes work location, ID and card access, and an RFID chip and barcode for self-checkouts of library materials.

### Looking forward

Queens Library is moving into a major renovation project that is expected to go on for years. Among the sixty-two stand-alone libraries are several original Carnegie buildings, more than a hundred years old and important historic artifacts in their own right!

Every year the library spends some $40,000 to $50,000 upgrading its security, always on a wait-and-see basis. When a new upgrade comes on the scene security management chooses to wait until it's settled in and tested by others. Given the size of the Queens Library organization, management is not willing to put in a new upgrade until it has an established track record.

### Department specifics

Logistics and Security employs four security technicians and completes its own maintenance and repairs. With a huge area to be maintained by few technicians, it is considered essential to have all equipment absolutely interchangeable.

### Introducing access technology to the library staff

Whenever a new technology is installed, issues can be expected. If employee buy-in isn't obtained, employee morale may be affected: Is Big Brother watching over the staff? The library's administration has made a concerted effort to always respect the rights and privacy of its staff, justly earning the staff's trust. At Queens Library, "security" is used to protect staff, not control them.

In the years the Queens Library has had access control there has not been a single harassment incident related to the use of the cards. Access control is, in fact, a protection for library staffers in relation to their outside lives.

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