

Worcestershire County Hall

Worcestershire County Hall was built in 1977. The building has three connected parts. The central section is the main reception and public areas, which include meeting rooms and a restaurant. The two wings house the offices of the many services crucial to the operation of the council. County Hall is home to the Council Chamber and the offices of the main political parties. This is a large site that needs to combine security while remaining welcoming to the public, who need to use the council's services. Since 1977, many of the buildings in Worcester used by different council departments have been vacated and the staff moved into the main County Hall campus offices.



With the increased number of staff and visitors at County Hall, Derek Orme, Worcestershire Council's property support Principle Engineer, was concerned about site security. County Hall had an access control system fitted, "But" explained Derek, "there were problems with the stability of the software and the system was not easy to expand." The Council required the software package controlling the system to run on Windows XP, the existing system was not compatible. Derek called in Crimestop Security Installers Ltd for advice on a system that would meet their growing needs. Simon Waite from Crimestop prepared costings on expanding and upgrading the existing system and also on a clean install of Net2, a PC based system from Paxton Access.

"We install a considerable number of Net2 systems and find them very reliable"

Simon recommended Net2, he explains, "With the existing system there were problems with support from the manufacturer. We install a considerable number of Net2 systems and find them very reliable. Paxton also give great support. In addition to controlling access from the public areas into the offices, the council needed to be able to grant general access to the main offices and restrict access to certain users in more sensitive areas. The software needed to make the allocation of different access permissions possible in an easy way. Net2 would meet all of the Council's requirements."

Having considered the options the Council decided to install Net2. Derek gives the reasons, "Net2 would give us flexible control over access rights, it is easy to expand the system and it runs on Windows XP. On the original access control system, the cost to extend and upgrade the software was high. The quote from Crimestop for the Net2 system was very reasonable. We would be getting a system with good support that would do all we asked. An added bonus was that we could retain our existing HID door readers and access cards. I also have confidence in Crimestop and the service they provide"

Net2 now controls access on over 60 doors and turnstiles in the building plus 6 car park barriers. The system manages access rights, and reports on over 2,000 users. In addition 96 fire doors are monitored by Net2.

"The quote for Net2 was very reasonable"

How does the system work for Worcestershire Council? "In such a large building with such diverse activities, restricting access to particular areas could be a nightmare," says Derek, "but with the use of the access level and department features in the Net2 software it is easy to control. Barriers and road blockers to the public parking areas automatically open on approach. Staff use their access cards to open these when leaving for the day. Visitors are given a token that allows them to open the barriers when leaving."





Reception is the hub where all visitors report. Visitors freely use the restaurant facilities and the other public areas. A key issue was restricting access to the offices. The access to the office areas on the right and left of the reception area are secured from casual entrance by a turnstile and an adjacent gate. All staff are issued cards that allow movement through the turnstiles. The adjacent gates may only be opened by designated members of staff. The turnstiles prevent casual access to the office areas by someone following a cardholder through. The gates are used for access by those delivering goods and to facilitate access for disabled people. Some offices are restricted to the staff working in the department. For example, the information business systems office where the main servers for the building are housed, is restricted to the IBS staff.

“The system is very easy to manage”

Upstairs from reception are the political and executive’s offices along with the Council chamber. Access to this area is again restricted by turnstile and gate. Access to each of the political offices is restricted to the members of the individual parties.



Colin Merrison, Worcestershire campus’ Facilities Manager, explains how they manage the system. “The software has been set up with the five departments that we have in the building. Each department has its own administrator who can issue cards to new employees. When a new employee starts the administrator issues the access card, access rights are automatically allocated as set up in the software for that department. If the department head wishes the employee to have additional access rights, then the request has to be put to me. If I approve, I alter the individual’s access levels on the requested doors.” How does Colin find the administration on a day-to-day basis? “No problem at all, the system is very easy to manage.”

“Access to the building is well controlled”

Facilities management and reception monitor the events on the Net2 system. If one of the fire doors is opened or a door is forced this appears as an alarm event on the PC screen and can be investigated.

Derek is very happy with the system. He says, “Access to the building is well controlled, without compromising our need to be open to the public.” He speaks highly of Crimestop and Simon Waite, “The installation went ahead efficiently and on time.”

“Expandability was a key requirement for us”

With County Hall on-line, the system has been extended to WildWood, another building on campus. Net2 controls access on 8 doors. The system is linked via LAN with TCP/IP adaptors to County Hall.

Derek says, “Expandability was a key requirement for us. The ease of adding the doors at Wild Wood has proved the system. We have taken over another building in the area and may expand the Net2 system to that building as well. Being able to have central control of the buildings via TCP/IP is so convenient and makes managing access so much easier.”

Derek would have no hesitation recommending Net2 to any business considering access control.



System user:	County Hall Worcestershire
Installer:	Crimestop Security Installers, Birmingham
Type of site	Split sites
Type of system	Net2 PC based system
System description	2 buildings site, multiple barriers, doors



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