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Toys 'R' Us retail chain plays smart move for significant alarm savings

Leading retail chain Toys 'R' Us is set to make significant operational savings by switching the intruder and personal attack alarm monitoring for its total UK estate to Chiron Technology's Iris system.

Adoption of the Iris technology – which is Europe's fastest growing IP alarm transmission and monitoring system – means Toys 'R' Us will take advantage of Chiron's secure IP-based dual-path alarm signalling and reduce its alarm monitoring bill by around 70% compared with its previous use of existing line protection systems and back-up.

The chain has chosen to use the Iris 840 dual-path IP/GPRS signalling system to provide communications between its 73 UK stores and its alarm receiving centre, provided by contract management and monitoring provider SSS Management Services.

SSS' NSI-approved ARC, which is accredited to BS5979 and BSEN ISO 9002, was built in 2002 using state-of-the-art receiving technology. This includes secure digital-based TCP/IP communications for monitoring of intruder alarms, CCTV, access control and other management systems. SSS boasts an impressive portfolio of leading retail clients and has some 7000 connections – an increasing number of which employ broadband ADSL connectivity.

The move by Toys 'R' Us follows extensive trials at key outlets during 2006. A growing number of major retail chains are actively looking at switching to the Iris system, following the example of companies such as Halfords, Thomas Cook and Topps Tiles, says Ian Tredinnick, Chiron Technology's MD.

"There is now widespread recognition in the industry that Iris is a secure and sensible alternative to Redcare," he adds. "Most compelling is the fact that substantial cost savings can be made very soon after the initial capital investment on equipment."



The Iris system also offers other significant advantages, including the potential for easy upgrading to include an element of visual verification, with pictures from existing cameras being sent direct to the monitoring centre operator's screen simultaneously with the alarm activation. This can allow the operator to scan pre- and post-event images to help verify the cause of an alert.

For retail chains like Toys 'R' Us, Chiron's 'future proofing' technology also makes it possible for managers to remotely dial-in to stores to observe customer flows and to improve efficiency. Iris is also easier to install than alternative systems and offers enhanced capabilities such as the ability to accept dynamic as well as fixed IP addresses.

Iris is supported by over 60 monitoring centres across Europe and is applicable to all systems from high security to residential. Many alarm panel manufacturers are now offering Iris technology embedded within their panels and the system is independently certified to EN50131 and 50136 approved to Grade 4 ATS-6.

An increasing number of insurers are also backing the system, allowing customers to reap the benefits of Iris' alarms-over-IP monitoring cost savings, added value functionality and future-proof technical capabilities.

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