

# Tower Hamlets

## Future-proof control room visualization



“From a technical perspective, this system is ready for the future, and when the industry migrates to a fully digital infrastructure it will be able to handle it.”

Up until 2006, the CCTV system for the busy London Borough of Tower Hamlets was part of the control room operations at the neighboring borough of Newham. But when Tower Hamlets decided to put all CCTV surveillance activities under its own control, the city brought a very ambitious project to the table for a control room that will serve its purpose well for years to come. For the control room visualization part, Tower Hamlets relied on Barco’s all-in-one solution for managed security monitoring.

Barco delivered six 67", SXGA+ video wall cubes, which are integrated into a three by two set-up, along with six video wall controllers.

The new control room came into operation in February 2006. Handling well over 200 cameras, the Tower Hamlets control room represents one of the most advanced, forward-looking CCTV operations in the UK. Together with partners Comfort Zone, Synectics, Thinking Space and EMC2, Barco took part in the creation of a system that would give Tower Hamlets maximum capability and efficiency for the longest possible time.

Management and engineering personnel of Tower Hamlets chose to get the best technology available, and at the same time, to keep their daily running cost – the amount of staff hours required to fulfill a demanding role – to a minimum.

### **Better ergonomics for better collaboration**

The Tower Hamlets control room was designed to allow multiple teams – in this case the police and CCTV teams – to efficiently work together. Barco's ergonomic video walls significantly facilitate this collaboration.

"Barco's video wall technology needs to make the operators' jobs as comfortable – and efficient – as possible," says Mark Gelfs, Tower Hamlets' CCTV engineer.

"In previous designs, spot monitors were placed close to the operators. This actually mixes up two functions – operators are using their close up vision when they really should be looking into the middle distance," he adds.



So the Tower Hamlets operation does not have spot monitors on the desks. The video wall screen is placed a few feet away and is configured so that a large display area, which acts as the spot monitor, is surrounded by smaller images from the other cameras. This way, operators are much better able to take in what is happening on the other cameras using their peripheral vision.

The 'spot monitor' in fact, being larger but further away, takes up about the same ratio of vision as it would if it was smaller but sitting right in front of the operator – the difference is that he or she is looking ahead and comfortably into the middle distance. What's more, as the video walls present larger middle distance pictures, other participants in the control room can also view the same pictures, which makes collaboration much more efficient.

### **Cost reductions**

With Barco's video walls, running costs are also significantly lower. For example, the lamps in a single Barco projector are only 100 Watt; and have already well outlasted their advertised 8,000 hours useful life.

Total power consumption per screen is only 210 watt, thus saving energy and being greener.

Another useful side-benefit from switching away from a traditional CRT set-up is the reduced need for air conditioning. There's much less power consumption, heat, dust and static.

### **A future proof system**

With the new surveillance system controlling well over 200 cameras, Tower Hamlets decided to put in its own fiber-optic cabling – 11km of it – because of the potential saving on operating costs. Following the capital investment in the fiber, they estimate an annual saving of in excess of £100,000. From a technical perspective, this system is ready for the future, and when the industry migrates to a fully digital infrastructure it will be able to handle it.

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