



Integration of Visitor Management with Access Control Systems

INTRODUCTION - WHY YOU NEED IT

This white paper provides a description of the integration process between HID Global's EasyLobby® Secure Visitor Management (SVM™) software and a variety of physical access control systems (PACS). It is written to present a description for the “why” and “how” of the integration process between EasyLobby SVM™ and access control systems.

Organizations today face a myriad of security challenges at their facilities. Managing the access of authorized personnel into a facility is a major concern. The primary challenge for many organizations is to secure their facility from unwanted personnel while also allowing a free flow of people who have a legitimate purpose for being on premises.

Complicating the issue is that non-employee guests, contractors, vendors, or business partners require and expect certain levels of access to people and places within an organization they are visiting. Managing access rights for visitors from the front desk should be streamlined to ensure that the right people have the right access to the right places at the right times.

Organizations generally handle the flow of visitors into their facilities in one of two ways:

1. Visitors and guests are always escorted by an employee or host.
- or
2. Visitors and guests are allowed unescorted access to facilities.

Organizations that always escort visitors through their facilities do not need to integrate

their visitor management system with their access control environment. An employee or host will always be able to gain access to any doors with his or her credentials as they constantly escort the visitor.

The integration of visitor management with access control becomes necessary when

guests are allowed unescorted access to a facility but still need to be allowed access to some areas and denied access to other areas.

With an integration between EasyLobby SVM and an access control solution, an organization will be able to:

- Allow authorized visitors or contractors the ability to move through the facility unescorted (when appropriate, or as an option)
- Limit unauthorized personnel from entering restricted areas.
- Track activity of everyone – including visitors – who have entered and left the facility.
- Issue temporary access for Employees who have misplaced their credentials, or for employees needing access to another facility in their organization that is outside their normal worksite, for which they normally do not need to have access.

Integrating an organization's visitor management software with its existing access control system allows the two solutions to work together to grant entry to authorized outside personnel in a secure and traceable manner. The two systems working together can centralize the control and flexibility available for ease of access where possible and restricted access where necessary.

An Environment Without Integrated Visitor Management

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Organizations without an integrated visitor management and physical access control are not utilizing the full benefits of either system.

In many organizations – even those that use an access control system – visitors and

contractors are still being asked to sign a paper visitor log. While the paper method of keeping track of visitors is perceived as quick and easy, it provides little security and poses several other problems, including the following:

- Names are often illegible or could be false.
- In an emergency such as a fire, it is impossible to quickly determine who is still in the building (check out times are not always required or enforced)
- Information regarding who has visited the company is readily available for everyone to see, but this information should be confidential (and in some environments it is mandated by law to be confidential)
- Auditing paper logs is cumbersome and inaccurate, leading to poor compliance.
- The paper log and hand-written visitor badges presents a poor image to visitors and communicates a message of lax security

In an un-integrated scenario, Visitors are often issued a sticky badge to wear, with the expectation that they will be escorted or that an employee will open any secured doors they come across. Alternatively, the front reception desk may hand out pre-activated visitor badges with generic access assignments to all or some areas of the building. This is particularly risky, since leaving access badges active and in a desk drawer or on the desktop in plain view opens the potential for theft which would likely go unnoticed.

Handing out pre-activated badges also raises the possibility that visitors could walk out of the facility with the card, giving them possession of a card with access to the building, and there is no real record of who was given a specific access credential. To remedy these problems, a visitor management system like EasyLobby will both streamline the visitor experience and safeguard an organization's facility. The vulnerabilities inherent in manual and ad hoc credentialing are mitigated by using a system like EasyLobby.

HID Global EasyLobby Integration with Access Control Integration

The integration between EasyLobby and access control systems enhances the functionality of both solutions. Although most access control systems do a great job of tracking employees, traditionally they have not considered the unique requirements for tracking visitors or temporary guests.

HID Global's EasyLobby Secure Visitor Management (SVM) solution provides enterprise-class visitor registration, tracking, reporting and badge printing, web-based pre-registration by employees, package and asset management that make it an ideal fit to augment the capabilities of access control systems. SVM also incorporates the latest in Mobile credentialing and can integrate with HID's Location Services, which provides internal location tracking functionality for visitors and employees as they move through the floor plan of a complex building or campus.

EasyLobby SVM is tightly integrated with over 55 of the most popular access control systems. For the complete list of systems integrated with EasyLobby, visit the [HID Global website](#).

The EasyLobby integration with access control is a one-step process. It does away with the need to send people to the security office for access credentials or to have your front reception team changing the settings on your access control system. The proper access can be granted directly from EasyLobby SVM using pre-configured access groups or access levels that limit the possibility of lobby attendants granting incorrect access. All the possible levels and groups in a complex access control system are boiled down to intuitive choices in EasyLobby that are made as part of the natural workflow as the visitor is being registered and checked in.

The EasyLobby integration allows organizations to grant temporary cards, HID Mobile Credentials, or barcode access to certain visitors and contractors directly from the EasyLobby SVM visitor form at the time of check in. The information entered into EasyLobby is seamlessly passed to the access control system when the visitor is checked in. An access credential for the visitor is activated in the access control system using the visitor information entered into EasyLobby. Access credentials are automatically disabled when the visitor is checked out, or at the defined visit end-time to prevent cards from being stolen or misused. Employing the EasyLobby integration with an organization's existing access control system eliminates the problems associated with having a stack of live cards left at a reception desk to hand to visitors.

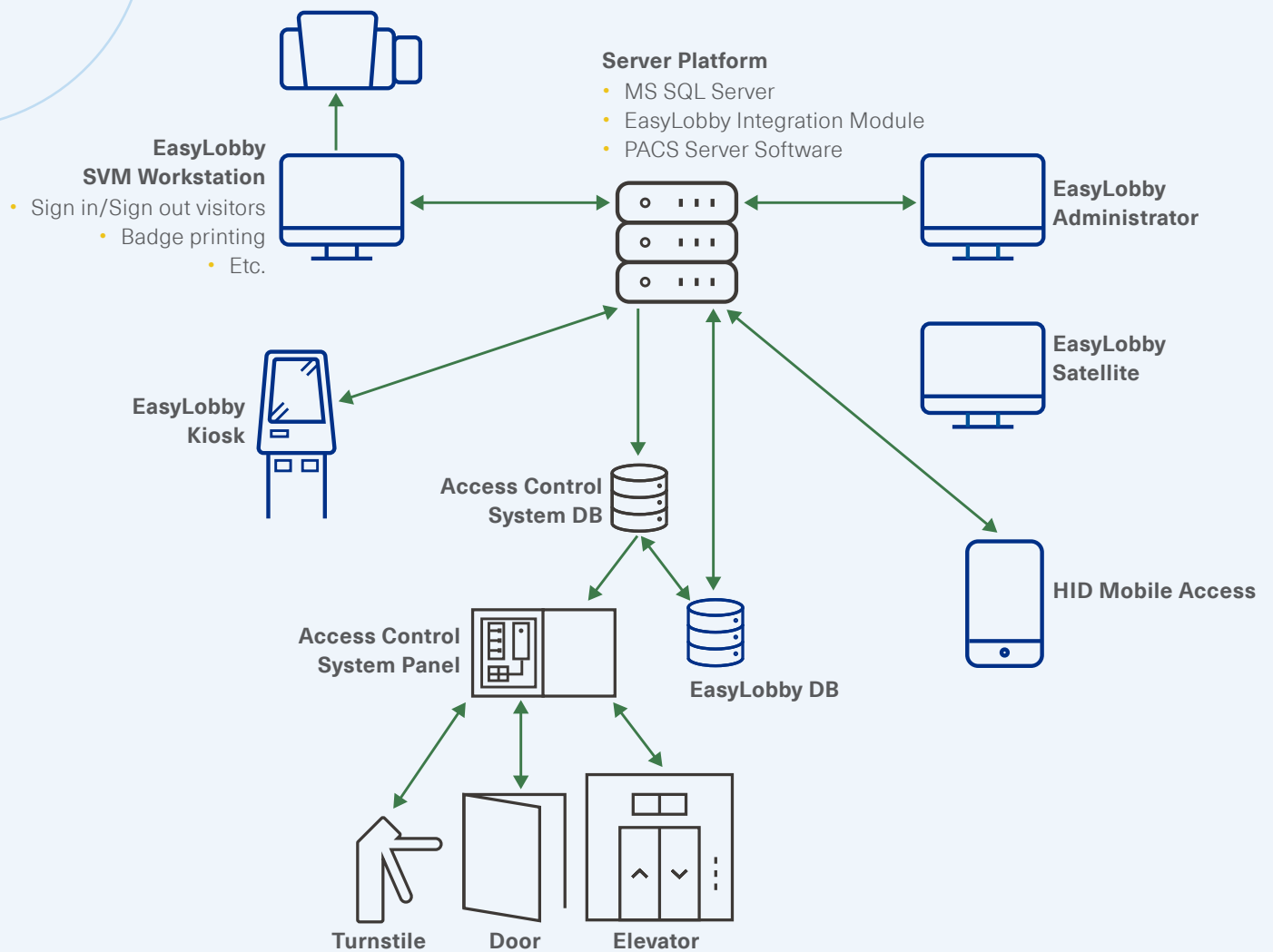
The EasyLobby database also has a record of all visitors that were given an access card providing a complete audit trail. Administrators can review the records of exactly who was provided with a card and what dates and times the card was active.

System Topography

How do all the pieces fit together? The following diagram demonstrates how EasyLobby

SVM is integrated with an access control system and how the various features of visitor management come together in one cohesive system.

EASYLOBBY SYSTEM LAYOUT WITH ACCESS CONTROL INTEGRATION



How the Integration Works Together

HID Global's EasyLobby Secure Visitor Management software resides on a Windows® computer, typically at the reception desk and automates the entire process of registering a visitor and printing a badge.

Several deployment options are available when integrating EasyLobby with an Access Control system. A configuration and installation utility is provided by EasyLobby SVM that allows users to specify the location of the EasyLobby Database and the location of the API for the access control system. Connectivity to these resources can be tested and confirmed in the user interface of the configuration utility along with a number of integration settings and troubleshooting settings. The exact form of the user interface for the configuration utility depends on which brand of access control system is being integrated with EasyLobby SVM.

By using the access control system GUI, customers can create access levels appropriate for visitors and/or contractors and create matching categories or clearances in the EasyLobby SVM GUI. When a visitor is checked in using EasyLobby SVM, a trigger in the EasyLobby database is executed to gather all the visitor information needed by the Access Control System. An EasyLobby Integration Windows Service then sends this visitor information to the access control system. EasyLobby is configurable to have flexibility in how, for example, a card number could be derived from either the visitor's barcode number automatically generated by SVM or from the smart card number loaned and assigned to the visitor by the guard or receptionist.

When a visitor is checked out of EasyLobby SVM a different trigger is executed that gathers the information related to the checkout operation. The EasyLobby Integration Windows Service then performs configurable functions related to processing the checked-out visitor's badge and related information.

When using smart cards, the cardholder record is only created when the corresponding card field is populated in the EasyLobby visitor form. EasyLobby supports USB barcode scanners and smart card readers which can be used to scan the card number directly into EasyLobby or to automate the checkout process.

Convergence and the State of Access Control Integration

The convergence of Access Control Systems and Visitor Management systems has been happening for many years, and now physical access control extends from its traditional assortment of peripherals and subsystems for security, surveillance, and identity to now integrating with devices from the Internet of Things (IoT). Also, modern integrated PACS systems must support various adaptations of smart devices for mobile credentialing, biometrics capture, and for location detection. The expanding universe of potential integration points underscores the continued need for bringing together physical and logical security, identity management, and visitor management into cohesive solutions.

The new and emerging visitor management modules that are now embedded into some of the larger Access Control systems is the best evidence for the benefits of integrating Visitor Management systems with Access Control systems. These modules within a PACS system are not as powerful as a full-featured, dedicated Visitor Management product like EasyLobby, which has 20+ years of direct experience working with varied and complex visitor management situations and scenarios. Our Secure Visitor Management product, when integrated with a Physical Access Control System creates a full and flexible solution with more capabilities, options, and configurability than an embedded visitor management module.

Conclusions

Business continuity, regulatory compliance, true risk mitigation, optimization of existing security assets and operational efficiencies are all within reach when you deploy a comprehensive and integrated visitor management and access control solution. Stand-alone, non-integrated access control systems and other security systems are a thing of the past. They are neither operationally efficient nor cost effective, and they expose your organization to security threats.

By gaining control of your environment through highly integrated access control and visitor management solutions, you can strengthen your overall security, improve user productivity, reduce administration costs, enable regulatory compliance, and improve the image of the organization by having it be more security conscious.

EasyLobby's integration with an access control system helps ensure that an organization is controlling its security infrastructure rather than being controlled by it.

For more information on HID Global's EasyLobby Secure Visitor Management solutions and integration with access control systems, visit the HID Global website at www.hidglobal.com.