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**Wash. shopping center keeps score**

Urban mall keeps track of visitor numbers with intelligent video solution  
By Rhianna Daniels - 06.2008

BELLEVUE, Wash.--For shopping centers, the value of retail space for the developer and tenant is directly related to the foot traffic on the property. Bellevue Square Shopping Center did not have a way to effectively measure how many people were visiting the more than 500,000-square-foot shopping center, said Glen Bachman, vice president of operations for Kemper Development, the mall's owner.

To be able to report accurate numbers to its tenants, Kemper installed a real-time shopper counting network in its Bellevue Square Shopping Center.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

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"Tracking the amount of people coming and going into the property is important because over any one period it is important to look at the increase or decrease in this traffic," Bachman said.

Mate Intelligent Video's iSense, an embedded video analytics appliance with an on-board camera provides bi-directional counting on shoppers in real time. Counting data is delivered via a wireless network to a reporting system, enabling managers to access information via a web browser.

John Szczygiel, president of Mate, said the system "lets them in a very simple way to get information from an automated system that didn't require manual data entry and require posting people at certain locations."

Kemper used to count cars in the parking lot to estimate traffic at the mall, but that failed to provide an accurate number.

"Counting cars is almost a perfect system for suburban shopping centers that are far away from the city," Bachman said. "But since we are located in a downtown area, every week more and more people walk in to our shopping center property rather than drive."

Bellevue's traffic patterns are reported to tenants on a monthly basis.

The mall's security staff also has access to the video feeds and can view footage if there is an incident. Bachman said there are also cameras focused on sensitive areas "Quite often in the middle of the night something will be damaged by a delivery person, for example," he said. "That damage is always thousands of dollars so having video documentation is key."

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