Facit

Case study:

Metropolitan Gaming

Behind the Scenes: Surveillance, Trust and Data Protection in Casinos

Overview

Metropolitan Gaming needed a secure, efficient way to handle rising volumes of video-heavy subject access requests across its UK casinos. By integrating Facit's Identity Cloak directly into its Milestone XProtect system, the surveillance team automated complex redaction tasks masking faces and identifying features across crowded gaming floors without footage ever leaving their secure environment.

Objectives

- Improve the efficiency and accuracy of video redaction
- Ensure GDPR-compliant handling of subject access requests (SARs)
- Keep all sensitive surveillance data securely in-house
- Integrate redaction seamlessly into existing surveillance workflows

Introduction:

The Overlooked Backbone of the Casino Experience

For a lot of people, the image of a casino is about the glamour and excitement. It’s like an extension of the hospitality and tourism industries, a place to go for a night out and maybe a bit of a flutter. But scratch beneath the surface and you'll find something a lot more real - the real backbone of the casino experience is surveillance.

Surveillance in modern casinos is about more than just stopping bad people from getting away with crime. It's about protecting the people in the casino - customers and staff alike - and also about making sure that casino operators don't fall foul of the law. Surveillance is also about protecting vast amounts of data because, in a world in which personal data is starting to be treated almost as sacred, organisations need to get it right.

One man who has had to wrestle with the technological and legal aspects of surveillance is Lee Jarvis, Senior Surveillance Supervisor at Metropolitan Gaming. Metropolitan Gaming operates seven casinos across the UK.

Talking to Lee, you get a glimpse into an environment that's almost impossible to keep on top of; it's complicated, sensitive and never sleeps. However,the right technology can make the difference between scraping by and being confident you've got everything under control.

The Challenge:

Watching Over Casinos at Scale in a Data Protected World

It's easy to understand that a casino needs a lot of surveillance. You've got the gaming tables, the entrances and exits, the cash handling areas, restaurants, car parks and perimeters. At one of Metropolitan Gaming's venues, there are nearly 300 cameras working 24/7.

This kind of extensive coverage brings with it serious responsibility. The organisation has to manage a massive amount of data and do it in a way that respects people's rights. The UK's GDPR means that people have the right to know what data an organisation is holding about them - including video footage. So, subject access requests (SARs) are a fact of life in any modern surveillance operation.

In a casino, SARs can pop up from anywhere. A customer might ask for footage after an incident in a car park. A diner might want to see video from a restaurant incident. Also, it's not just customers; insurers will want to see footage after an accident, and staff might want to see video to sort out disputes.
Plus, video footage nearly always contains several people. On a busy gaming floor, you might have 200 people in a single frame. So, to comply withdata protection law, you have to anonymise anyone who's not the main subject of the request. That means redacting faces, bodies and any other identifying features from the footage, without compromising the video itself.

The Hard Lessons

Why Manual and Outsourced Redaction Just Don't Work

When Metropolitan Gaming first started dealing with GDPR, they experimented with manual in-house video redaction. However, it proved to be a tedious, time-consuming process that was prone to human error.

Outsourcing the task was also considered, but ultimately ruled out. The costs involved in external video redaction services were prohibitive, given the frequency and complexity of requests.

More importantly, there was a strong reluctance to allow sensitive surveillance footage to leave Metropolitan Gaming's secure infrastructure. Handing over personal data to third parties introduces additional risk and complexity, and potentially undermines the data protection principles the organisation wants to uphold.

What they ended up with was the clear realisation they needed a professional solution that could be controlled in-house.

The Solution

Integrating Identity Cloak with Milestone XProtect

Facit's Identity Cloak was deployed as a playback plug-in within Metropolitan Gaming's existing Milestone XProtect video management system. Initially, the organisation used Identity Cloak as a standalone solution, but the move to the integrated plug-in marked a significant step forward.

Milestone XProtect is a widely used video management system that takes feeds from different types of cameras and systems and brings them all together into a single, easy to use interface.

By adding Identity Cloak into this environment, Metropolitan Gaming streamlined their redaction workflow.

Identity Cloak enabled operators to detect and mask individuals within video footage automatically, by using advanced redaction tools that go far beyond simple blurring.

Faces, bodies and other identifying features can be obscured using a range of masking options, including custom shaped blur tailored to the scene. Crucially, the plug-in operates directly within the playback process, which reduces the number of steps required to produce compliant footage.

The Solution

Lee Jarvis says one of the main advantages is being able to import third party footage into the Milestone system and apply the same redaction tools to it. That's a major help when dealing with incidents that involve footage from external cameras or partner organisations.

Rather than juggling half a dozen different platforms or resorting to do-it-yourself workarounds, the organisation can handle everything within one secure environment. The result is not just operational efficiency, but operator confidence.

That is, confidence that redaction is being managed effectively, consistently and in line with regulatory requirements.

Putting Process into Practice: A Team Effort

Today, Metropolitan Gaming's surveillance team typically consists of around 12 members, with Lee Jarvis acting as the main Identity Cloak operator supported by other trained users. Over time, the team has learned Identity Cloak's features and how to maximise use of useful masking options to redact video faster and more accurately.

You can't just wing it with regards to redacting footage from a busy casino floor; it's a tough job that requires serious technical know-how.

There are many moving parts - people coming and going, camera angles changing constantly - it's a complex scene. However, being able to blanket-redact and create custom shaped blur and apply them intelligently enables the team to handle even the most hectic scenes with ease.

Getting the redaction process smoothly embedded into the day-to-day surveillance workflow has made it feel a natural part of how the team operates, and it has become just another tool in the box rather than some separate, burdensome chore.

The Results: Compliance Without Compromise

The practical benefits of a Milestone-Identity Cloak integration are clear.

When it comes to dealing with subject access requests, the team can handle them with ease and professionalism, without putting too much strain on internal resources. Footage shared with outside parties or legal teams is compliant and airtight. Plus, when it comes to internal issues or staff investigations, the team can generate high-quality evidence that takes everyone's rights into account.

What's most important to Metropolitan Gaming is that they're taking a proactive approach to data protection. They're positioning themselves ahead of the data protection curve, rather than reacting to SARs or regulatory scrutiny.

In an industry in which reputation really is everything, being able to show that you respect people's personal data carries a lot of weight. Customers may never even see the surveillance room or the redaction process, but they're the ones who benefit from the professionalism that makes it all tick.

Conclusion - The Best Way to Conduct Surveillance

Casinos are always going to be high-surveillance environments; it's a fact. The financial, regulatory and reputational stakes are too high for anything less.

But as Lee's experience at Metropolitan Gaming demonstrates, effective surveillance is about more than installing cameras. It is about managing complexity, selecting the right technology and treating data protection as an integral part of operational excellence.

Lee concludes: "For us, Identity Cloak is a significant cost-saving tool that enhances our data protection capabilities in what is always a hectic and complex environment."

In an industry defined by risk and reward, the balance between vigilance and responsibility may be the most important win of all.

About Metropolitan Gaming

Metropolitan Gaming is a British gaming company that operates eleven casinos across the United Kingdom and Egypt, alongside an online platform. The business was formed in 2021 and brings together well-established casino brands with strong reputations in key leisure and hospitality destinations.

In the UK, Metropolitan Gaming operates a diverse estate of city-centre and destination casinos, including flagship venues such as Metropolitan Mayfair, the Empire Casino in London's West End, Alea Glasgow and Manchester235.

Today, the company concentrates on delivering regulated, high-quality gaming and entertainment experiences, supported by modern operational, compliance and security frameworks.

Further Reading
Why Private Members Clubs Need Smart Video Redaction Technology

About Facit

Cutting-edge compliance and video analytics software

Solve problems, create opportunities and enhance business operations

23	80+	2
Countries where Facit solutions are developed	Current customers	Technology patents granted

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We offer consistently high-performing products thanks to years of in-depth team experience and innovative testing.

Simplicity
We offer simple solutions to complex problems, saving you time and resources.

Excellence
We help our clients future-proof their organisations with compliant document and video redaction solutions.

Innovation
We work with the brightest minds from around the world to deliver innovative solutions for our compliance and video analytics clients.

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