

Sensaphone's IMS-4000

The infrastructure monitoring system at Turner Studios protects production equipment.

BY BOB DOUGLASS

Turner Broadcasting Systems' Atlanta campus is a sprawling complex of large office buildings spread across several acres. Within those buildings, staff and equipment work to support the organization's mission of producing news and entertainment for a variety of media outlets, including Cartoon Network, CNN, TBS, TNT and Turner Classic Movies. Not surprisingly, the space and the technology are expensive to run and maintain, and even more expensive to replace.

The complex houses Turner Studios Engineering's pre- and post-production facilities. A division of Turner Broadcasting, Turner Studios produces numerous programs every year, including live broadcasts of NBA games, Atlanta Braves baseball games and "Dinner and a Movie." In fact, Turner Studios provides facilities and resources for all of the Turner Entertainment Networks worldwide.

Turner Studios' facilities include fully equipped studios, editing suites and graphics production centers. The studios are supported by terminal gear rooms for storing switches, network gear, video servers and so on. And it is absolutely critical that the temperature in each gear room remains cool.

In the mid-1990s, the studio experienced several incidents when the add-on cooling system failed. Staff members scrambled to address the problem before any equipment was damaged from prolonged exposure to the high temperatures.

Walt Youmans, broadcast engineer with Turner Broadcasting, researched possible early detection systems. He learned that a remote environmental monitoring system with auto-dial-

ing capabilities would be an uncomplicated, but significant, step toward safeguarding the equipment.

Initially, Youmans installed a Sensaphone 1104, which offered four monitoring inputs and four alarm notifications. Later, expansion at Turner Studios meant Youmans needed a



The Sensaphone IMS-4000 family includes Host, Node and PowerGate units. Each Host and Node unit can support eight environmental sensors.

more robust solution; he chose Sensaphone's IMS-4000 infrastructure monitoring system.

The IMS-4000

The IMS-4000 monitors for power failure, smoke and fire, temperature and humidity changes, water on the floor, motion and more. An interface allows users to connect to and monitor any dry contact device or any 4mA to 20mA device.

When potentially dangerous con-

ditions are detected, the system alerts engineers who can take the necessary steps to prevent lost network functionality. Those alerts are issued via e-mail, pager or phone.

The system also comes with an internal data logging function that accumulates time-based snapshots and event-driven data. The data history can be viewed using the built-in Web interface or through the Windows-based PC software delivered with the product.

The system works with a dial-up line and comes with built-in voice, data and modem with a standard RJ-11 phone connection, in addition to the 10/100 Ethernet interface. It is also supplied with an internal UPS battery backup robust enough to continue its monitoring functions for several hours after the power is lost.

The investment at Turner Studios proved to be reliable. In one incident, the system sounded an alarm at 2 a.m. It automatically contacted the technical staff and dispatched the appropriate engineer to respond. The system had detected a significant increase in temperature in a room that housed complex and expensive computer graphics equipment vital to the network's day-to-day business.

Had that situation gone undetected, Youmans said, it would have likely resulted in several hundred thousands of dollars in repair and replacement costs. The implementation of the IMS-4000 system has been so successful that Turner Studios is considering expanding its use to other areas of the complex.

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