

# PSIM Possibilities

Is the technology ready for prime time?



**Q**uick Quiz....what does PSIM stand for? A) Potentially Secure Information Medium; B) Physical Security Information Management; C) Powerfully Shameless Information Manipulation; or D) Been trying to figure this out for 10 years.

Clue: The answer is either B or D; but, one thing most of the answers have in common is "Information."

In a Dec. 22, 2014 *Fortune Magazine* article, Erin Griffith, author of *"How to Invest in the Internet of Things,"* writes that the potential of the Internet of Things radically outpaces the reality. "Research firm Gartner predicts the hype will soon collapse into a 'trough of disillusionment,' followed by a 'slope of enlightenment,' and then, eventually, a 'plateau of productivity.'"

CompTIA's Tim Herbert adds that "We often overestimate a technology's impact in the short term and underestimate it in the long term."

This reflects my own thinking on the evolution of impactful technologies, and we have two great examples of this in physical security — video analytics and PSIM. We saw the early hype surrounding video analytics dissipate into disillusionment, only to witness the technology become mainstream, reaching the "plateau of productivity" in cameras and VMS systems.

PSIM also had great early promise with upstart companies tackling enormous information management problems, only to see many of those acquired (such as Verint and NICE Systems) and their technologies evolve into broader, more capable product offerings.

## Ready for Prime Time?

I chaired a panel at the TechSec Solutions Conference in February — *"Is PSIM Ready for Prime Time"* — where we had a spirited debate about the meaning and value of PSIM. Dick Beard, CEO of KapLogic, started his part by presenting some past characterizations of PSIM, which seem to paint a picture of "trough of disillusionment." It included such characterizations as: too expensive; for enterprise customers only; too difficult and time consuming to install and maintain; too many failed installations; and more.

Beard went on to define PSIM as "a software platform that collects and manages information from disparate security devices and information systems into one common graphical user interface." It is a good description.

We are not talking just about managing security information, but rather aggregating any available relevant information and presenting it in a fashion that creates comprehensive situational awareness. Bob Banerjee of NICE would argue that the real objective is creating business value within and beyond security — through better situational awareness, management and reconstruction.

Ben Butchko, CEO of the consulting firm Butchko Security Solutions, views PSIM as a subset of the larger category of "command and control." Beyond situational awareness, think of operations or process awareness and consider what happens when one is "aware," such as response, analysis and improvement.

While much of this sounds high-end, Rob Hile of SureView Systems says "it's not just for the big guys

anymore," as his firm has enjoyed success with small-scale systems and the system integrator channel.

## Heading Toward Productivity

I would argue that PSIM is now on the "slope of enlightenment" — getting traction with end-users, integrators and even specifying consultants.

A SIA-driven industry effort to improve security products classification in the Construction Specifications Institute's (CSI) MasterFormat is proposing a new category, "Information Management and Display," to encompass information from subsystems that supply data (such as access control, video, personnel monitoring, network and facilities monitoring, crowd sourcing, and web intelligence) and that present data (such as video walls). This will make it easier to specify PSIM and similar products into projects.

If we are now on the "slope of enlightenment", when do we hit the plateau of productivity? In this case, there is not just one information-related plateau in the future, but successive plateaus, driven by technology. Once the industry gets accustomed to — and indeed expects — the value of pulling information from disparate sub-systems, crunching it, analyzing it, and presenting useful, timely results for better security and more efficient operations, we will be on the slope to the next plateau(s) determined by "Big Data" and the Internet of Things. ■

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