



FAST FACTS

Customer

Texas Biomedical

Technology Partners

Open Options Access Control

Mercury Security

Convergent Technologies

Industry

Bioscience

Geography

Texas

Texas Biomedical Research Institute

Medical research institute in Texas implements leading-edge technologies for fail-proof security solution

Bioscience is an industry that relies on innovation and creativity. Its people, processes and physical assets are its most precious resources and securing these resources is not only critical to a bioscience organization but to the future of scientific discovery. So when Texas Biomedical Research Institute (Texas Biomed) in San Antonio, Texas found itself operating with an outdated security platform, its security team researched and discovered Open Options.

“Texas Biomed chose Open Options as the standard for our access control moving forward due to DNA Fusion’s flexibility and support as well as its integration of non-proprietary systems and hardware,” said Mark Hammargren, CPP®, Texas Biomed Director of Security.

Located on a 200-acre campus on the Northwest side of San Antonio, Texas Biomed is pioneering and sharing scientific breakthroughs that protect you, your families and our global community from the threat of infectious diseases. Since its founding in 1941, the Texas Biomedical Research Institute has gained worldwide recognition in scientific and academic communities for the quality of its basic research. Their scientists are able to conduct their research amid 550,000 square feet of space that includes laboratories, offices, an animal hospital, a library, and specially designed animal facilities.

Evolving to Interoperable Access Control

In 2016, Texas Biomed’s security was operating on two separate platforms, including Open Options’ DNA Fusion for newly constructed buildings. Texas Biomed’s former access control provider was an outdated system, and due to limited parts and support, became more and more expensive to maintain each year. Furthermore, consoles were installed in multiple locations and didn’t communicate properly with each other, posing numerous security threats.

For over two decades, Open Options and Mercury Security have worked together to provide a true open architecture access control solution. Because of Open Options’ commitment to open architecture and their numerous third-party technology partnerships, Mercury Security named Open Options one of the company’s first Platinum Elite partners in 2014.

Hammargren also cited the ability for the software to alert security personnel of unauthorized access and forced entries, the option to absorb system upgrades without having to completely reinstall the software, and loss prevention as a few major requirements their access control system must fulfill.

Texas Biomed worked with Convergent Technologies to implement Open Options' DNA Fusion across the entire campus.

"We chose Convergent as our integrator because of their reputation in the marketplace, customer service, and the fact that they had the best value when specifying the project," Hammargren said. "That, coupled with Open Options' excellent products, service, and support definitely helped the transition."

The initial implementation took a few months to complete. During the implementation process, all on-property card readers were integrated and several keypad readers were added. Various hardware settings were also updated and continue to be updated as the facility's occupant's needs evolve.

Security Structure

While Texas Biomed's security is ultimately monitored from their 24/7 Security & Emergency Operations Center (SEOC), their DNA Fusion system can be managed locally from multiple areas around the campus, including server rooms, the Director of Security's office, and main entry and exit posts, to name a few.

"We have found DNA Fusion's ability to customize a system operator's interface and privileges in the software to be extremely helpful in our day-to-day security," said Hammargren. "For example, security officers at our facility's entry and exit points use layouts specifically built to allow them to contact employees and supervisors, and to visually verify the person using the badge is in fact the person holding it."

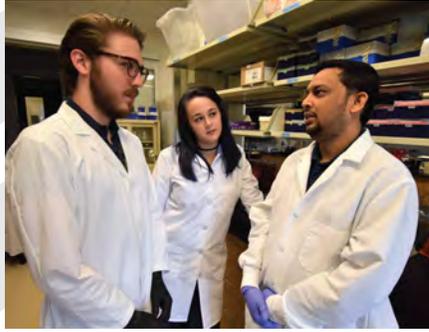
Texas Biomed has numerous DNA Fusion operators, ranging from the director of security to SEOC officers.

"We have had one of our senior emergency communication specialists attend Open Options training, which significantly helped close gaps in our knowledge of the product," said Hammargren. "This knowledge allows us to easily conduct DNA Fusion training onsite between operators."

In addition to the easy-to-learn interface, Hammargren also cites the clear layouts and menu options, ability to quickly change grid views, and effortless software updates as a few of DNA Fusion's stand-out features.

Fulfilling a Unique Set of Requirements

Because Texas Biomed houses laboratories full of expensive equipment and controlled substances and has numerous sensitive support areas such as HVAC and boiler rooms and server farms, it is extremely important that access be closely monitored and managed. As part of Texas Biomed's security procedures, they implement dual authentication and anti-passback at some of their more sensitive locations. The anti-passback feature requires that for every use of a card at the "in" reader, there be a corresponding use at the "out" reader before the card can be used at the "in" reader again.



“These measures ensure only the appropriate individuals are granted access to restricted areas around the campus, which is crucial to our overall security,” said Hammargren.

Texas Biomed also has their DNA Fusion system time synced with video surveillance to further enhance their security.

“DNA Fusion’s reporting capabilities are extremely helpful in managing our day-to-day security,” said Hammargren. “For example, running a “Who Has Access” report quickly shows our team which employees have access to what doors, and also allows us to easily modify that if necessary with just a couple clicks.”

Access levels are set according to facility and an employee’s need to access specific areas. For example, all employees have entry gate access but only IT personnel have access to communication and server areas. Access is also tailored to allow for direct path of travel if an employee needs access to a secure area in the middle of another secure area.

“It is extremely simple for us to assign or update access levels in the DNA Fusion software, which is invaluable if we need to make changes on the fly” said Hammargren. “We also have the ability to do this with multiple cardholders at a time using global access levels and personnel groups.”

Texas Biomed’s time schedules are configured to secure facilities after normal business hours in addition to serving as a foundation for alarm functions, such as “door forced” or “door held”.

In addition to Texas Biomed’s 24/7 SEOC, the organization also integrates NEC’s ExpressCluster high availability software into their DNA Fusion system for reliable, fault-tolerant security. The integration between DNA Fusion and ExpressCluster provides the facility with a comprehensive application redundancy solution for high availability and remote disaster recovery of their DNA Fusion system in the event the primary server goes down.

“We rely on the integration between DNA Fusion and ExpressCluster to ensure our security system remains operational, and to provide uninterrupted coverage,” said Hammargren. “When access control systems stop working, the entire operation is at risk, which isn’t something we can let happen.”

Looking to the Future

“Open Options has seamlessly integrated into Texas Biomed’s security program, and continues to provide robust and reliable access control for our facility,” said Hammargren. “We look forward to connecting other security systems, such as alarms and video, in future master planning and facility design.”

