ASSA ABLOY’s CLIQ technology provides an intelligent access control solution for public services

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Resilience and efficiency have become watchwords for public institutions, before, during and after the ongoing health crisis (COVID-19 pandemic outbreak). In delivering services fit for the modern world, these institutions need more than just innovation and accountability. They require flexibility and agility, too, including in how they approach security.

Importance of locks and keys
The lock and key have enjoyed public trust for a long time. Keys were used in Ancient Egypt and Assyria, and warrant a mention in the Christian Old Testament. As a technology, the key is familiar and proven, user-friendly and dependable. It can also be inflexible and time-consuming to manage.

The security challenges of delivering public services do not stand still, but standard mechanical keys cannot move with changing times. Filtering access intelligently and dynamically has become part of security’s job description.

**Intelligent, programmable keys**

Intelligent keys combine the features of electronic access control with the convenience of a mechanical key.

Yet there is no need to dispose of the key altogether. Organisations can adapt it, rather than throw it out all-together. Intelligent, programmable keys combine the powerful features of electronic access control with the convenience of a mechanical key. They are keys that are familiar and user-friendly, while evolved at the same time.

When a key has a brain, it can do more with less. These efficiencies are critical in a world where demands on public institutions are at levels not seen in generations.

**Cutting workload and solving the issue of lost keys**

Lost keys present mechanical security with its most intractable problem. When a key goes missing, time and budget are expended to remedy the situation. Extensive re-keying and re-issuing to relevant key-holders are complex and expensive. Programmable keys, however, solve the problem quickly.

The French town of Villiers-le-Bel, north of Paris, faced these familiar key management challenges. Each person in their Municipal Technical Centre carried approximately 40 physical
keys. If one was lost or stolen, all compromised cylinders had to be changed. To prevent unauthorised access, all the keys had to be replaced as well at great expense. Key duplication costs were mounting.

“One [lost] key cost from €3,000 to €4,000 for changing cylinders and replacing the keys,” explains Fabrice Girard, Territorial Technician at the town’s Municipal Technical Centre.

**Electromechanical key-operated locking solution**

To fix this expensive lost key problem, Villiers-le-Bel city administrators chose to combine trusted mechanical security with new electromechanical key-operated locking, all managed within the same flexible, wireless access control system.

Now, lost or stolen electronic keys are cancelled instantly using secure cloud software that works inside a standard browser with no software installation required. Administrators can program access rights for any key, padlock or cylinder. They filter access to specific sites and doors according to the precise requirements of every municipal employee.

**Programmable locking cylinders**

In Aalborg, Denmark, around 3,000 citizens in home care now have programmable locking cylinders installed at their front door. This replaces a cumbersome mechanical master-key system. Aalborg’s installation was tailored to meet the needs of this vulnerable group of city residents.

If a home care resident loses their key, its access rights can be deleted from the system without the need for a lock replacement, keeping the keyholder’s home safe and saving the city time and money on rekeying.

Managing Aalborg’s system is straightforward. Lock installation was quick and easy with certified
technicians simply replacing each old cylinder with a programmable cylinder with no wiring and no major alterations to the door.

Faster, safer access to buildings

In Skellefteå, Sweden, electromechanical locking has given local firefighters faster, safer access to any building.

Aalborg’s fire brigade quickly took over the maintenance process. Brigade staff now grants or revokes access, and tailor permissions for different users or locations according to defined needs.

In Skellefteå, Sweden, electromechanical locking has given local firefighters faster, safer access to any building. To speed up emergency response times and improve firefighter safety, the local service fitted houses with secure façade key cabinets. Property keys are stored inside the cabinets, so authorised firefighters get rapid building access if there is a fire.

Remote key updater

When the emergency call comes, firefighters update their individual, programmable key at the station or while on the move, using a remote key updater kept in the fire engine. There’s no longer any need for fire stations to hold multiple sets of keys or for off-site firefighters to divert to the station to collect the right key.

More rapid response means a better chance to prevent a fire spreading. Safety is improved for everyone, including Skellefteå residents at home and firefighters at work.

Clear workflow bottlenecks in public housing

With crime against empty properties on the rise, public authorities in the English city of
Rotherham aimed to minimise the time a council house stands vacant.

However, workers from multiple departments require access to prepare a property for a new tenant. Passing keys securely between all relevant staff members was a major cause of delay.

**Intelligent key technology**

At Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC), intelligent key technology helped streamline these workflows, upgrading security and saving money at the same time. RMBC identified physical key handover as a major bottleneck in their workflow. They needed a solution to speed up the process.

Now, each relevant RMBC staff member is issued with their own programmable key. Using simple online software, security managers issue the precise permissions which every staff member needs.

The access rights of any key can be amended or revoked at any time. Physical handover of mechanical keys and the time and money spent coordinating this process has now been eliminated.

**Wireless electronic cylinders perfect for historic buildings**

"Public spaces inside protected heritage buildings often cannot opt for card- and reader-based access control"

Building type can make a big difference to the access control system chosen. Public spaces inside protected heritage buildings often cannot opt for card- and reader-based access control.

Here, wireless electronic cylinders that simply replace existing mechanical locks solve the problem, preserving doors which may be centuries old. The issue of aesthetics also affects
modern public spaces, albeit differently.

**Intelligent key security**

In Stuttgart, innovative design was a key element of the city’s new library building. Door security should be discreet and not disrupt the vision of Korean architect, Eun Young Yi. This was the first public building in Stuttgart’s Europaviertel, a unique creation with a double façade with glass bricks, a brightly lit atrium that is four-storey in height, and public entrances on all four sides.

Almost as soon as it opened, the building was declared an architectural icon — ‘instantly one of the world’s most beautiful libraries’. Intelligent key security is hardly noticeable for the library’s many visitors, yet critical for protecting Stuttgart’s precious public heritage.

**Managing keys for a mobile workforce**

Many public services involve managing and directing a mobile or contractor workforce. Mileage expense mounts up when workers must return to base to collect keys or update their access rights.

Mobile workers use more fuel and increase the carbon footprint. Business can be made more sustainable quickly by reducing the mileage they travel. To reduce miles while maintaining security is not easy, especially if people only rely on mechanical keys to secure remote or dispersed sites.

**Bluetooth-enabled intelligent keys**

Bluetooth-enabled intelligent keys eliminate the need for workers to return to headquarters to collect or return a mechanical key.
With a Bluetooth-powered solution, everyone carries their own programmable key and keeps its access rights up to date on the move, simply by making an encrypted connection to a secure smartphone app. This basically means fewer miles driven and less money wasted on unnecessary fuel.

**CLIQ, one technology solution**

 CLIQ combines electronic and mechanical security in a range of wireless cylinder applications

All the installations referenced above and many more across the full spectrum of public services run on the same technology, CLIQ from ASSA ABLOY. CLIQ combines electronic and mechanical security in a range of wireless cylinder applications, including a full range of mechatronic and electronic cylinders and padlocks.

CLIQ locks are installed without wires with every cylinder’s power supplied by a battery inside the CLIQ key.

**CLIQ Connect Bluetooth-enabled keys**

These keys are physically identical and programmable by a system administrator using a desktop updater, by key-holders with a portable programmer, or in the case of CLIQ Connect Bluetooth-enabled keys, via an encrypted connection to a secure smartphone app, minimising both wasted journeys and unnecessary social contact between workers and office staff.

Intuitive software makes it simple to manage access rights, enable and disable keys, along with allowing customisation of access schedules, on site or on the go.
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