

# Breaking down information silos to improve GSOC efficiency and effectiveness



Microsoft's Global Security Operations teams adopted Visual Command Center® from IDV Solutions, an Everbridge company, to reduce costs and protect company assets and operations.



## SUMMARY

Microsoft's security operations centers had evolved to simultaneously monitor security at hundreds of company facilities, and also follow global news and weather reports, to spot events that could endanger company assets.

But with over 60 unconnected systems and data sources to track, security operations had become unwieldy. With an eye to the future, the software company was seeking a way to consolidate its internal and external security data, lower its operations costs, and improve its ability to protect its assets.

The answer was Visual Command Center, a comprehensive, interactive visualization that has become central to GSOC operations and provides the security groups with a cost-effective way to identify and mitigate risks.

## COMPANY PROFILE

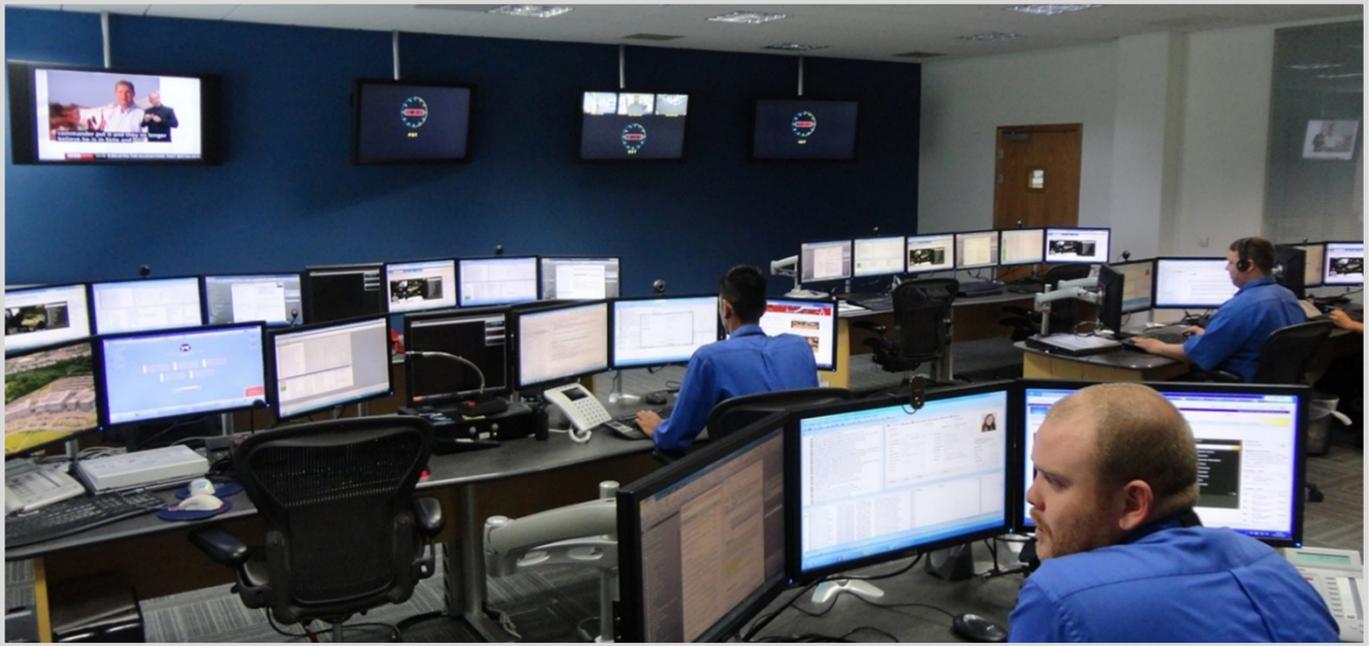
Microsoft's Global Security Operations Centers (GSOCs) monitor the safety and security of the company's facilities and operations around the world

## THE PROBLEM

To monitor Microsoft's global interests, GSOC operators were using more than 60 separate data sources and proprietary technologies. The company sought to integrate information from these sources into a single application that would provide a cost-effective way for operators to spot problems and react more quickly to potential threats.

## THE SOLUTION

Using Visual Command Center, Microsoft was able to consolidate its internal security data, live video feeds, web news feeds, and more in a single, interactive map view. Security operations staff now has instant access to the information they need to evaluate risks and take action.



**SITUATION**

Microsoft operates Global Security Operations centers (GSOCs) in Redmond, Washington; Reading, England; and Hyderabad, India. Operators at these centers are responsible for the safety of more than 700 Microsoft properties (sales offices, regional headquarters, data centers, etc.) and thousands of employees. Streaming into the GSOCs each day are live video feeds from 8,500 building security cameras, messages or alarms from over ten thousand card readers, and weather and news data from multiple web sources.

Before Visual Command Center, operators had to manually coordinate the locations of company assets

with the information from building security systems, and the locations of events in news feeds and weather reports. It had become a challenge to determine which facilities might be affected by an event, to contact the right people, and to keep them informed.

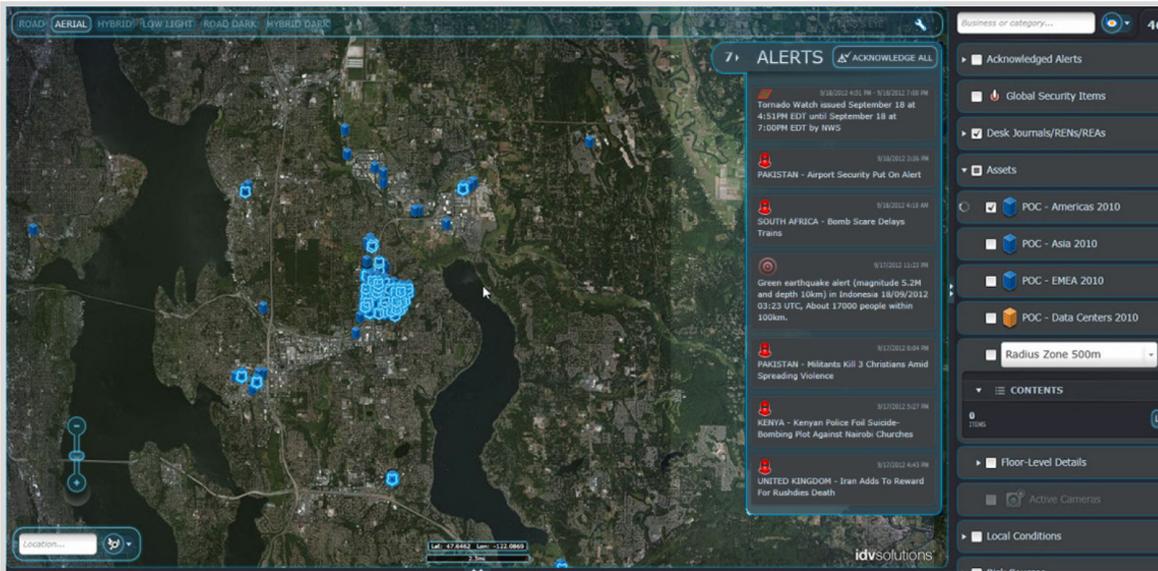
**SOLUTION**

Today, the GSOC staffs handle the same wealth of information, but interact with it in a very different way. At each GSOC, large monitors display the Visual Command Center map, which unites real-time news, weather, traffic data, and other outside feeds with the company’s incident reports, facility data, and physical security systems.



*This Visual Command Center map shows Microsoft facilities around the globe.*





*Visualizations of internal security data and external risks help the GSOCs identify threats to Microsoft operations.*

“Before, our security operations used 60 proprietary technologies that didn't interoperate,” said Brian Tuskan Senior Director of Microsoft Global Security. “Now, all but two are integrated into a single management and alarm system.”

The monitors sequentially display views of data and geographic regions that the security staff have identified as important.

“These ‘favorite views’ let us rotate between regions, for example, North America, Latin America, South America, for a good picture of what's going on,” said GSOC Director Steve Rodgers.

**ALERTS HELP USERS IDENTIFY THREATS**

To help identify events that matter to the company, Microsoft's security professionals rely on Visual

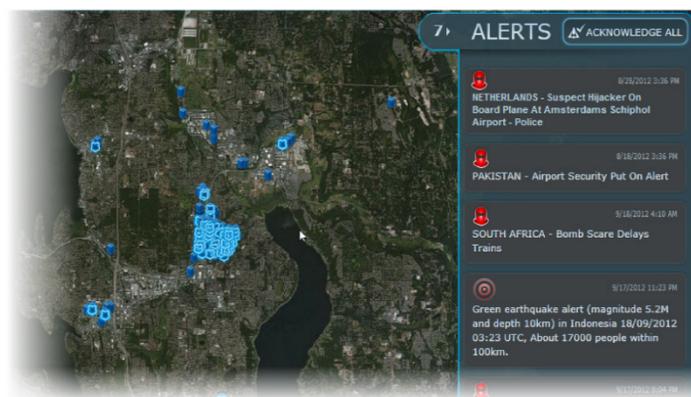
Command Center's alerting feature. The software monitors real-time feeds for weather, natural disasters, and global security incidents, generating an alert whenever one of these potential threats occurs near one of the company's assets. Each alert appears on the map and timeline, and a notification is also sent by e-mail to selected contacts.

“It helps our security managers assess what could happen,” said Rodgers. “The alerts speed up our reaction by bringing to light what's occurring and what's affected.”

**USERS INTERROGATE DATA SOURCES WITH INTERACTIVE TOOLS**

Once security operators identify a potential threat, they can interrogate a wide array of data sources to get a complete picture of the situation. Visual Command Center provides data feeds for more than 100 sources of risk, including severe weather, natural disasters, breaking news, real-time traffic, terrorism, disease outbreaks, and more.

It connects to the company's physical security systems and internal data stores as well, so when the teams receive an alert, they can access systems and information for the affected facilities. This includes being able to view security camera feeds, building schematics, and the statuses of door locks and alarms. Integration with security officers' “desk journals” means that as these officers record their daily activities like patrols, this data



*An alert is triggered when a risk event occurs near a Microsoft facility.*

“Visual Command Center (VCC) plays a critical role maintaining situational awareness at a consistently high level. From an operational perspective, this allows more efficient and thorough reporting.”

**Michael Foynes**

Senior Director Microsoft Global Security Operations

is immediately available on the Visual Command Center screen.

From this variety of information, workers can extract the most relevant details using searches and interactive filters. By drawing spatial queries directly on the map, they can isolate data from a specific geographic area. They can immediately see how many people and square feet are threatened, to evaluate the potential impact of an incident.

In addition to responding to alerts, Microsoft’s security and executive protection teams use these interactive features to manage security for corporate events.

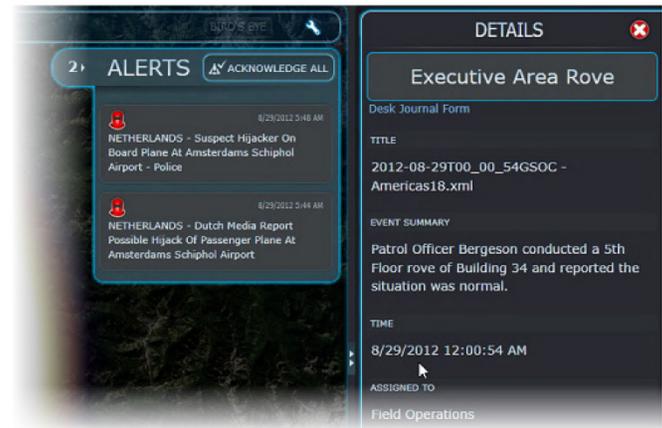
“For example, for a recent Atlanta event, on the map they drew a two-mile-wide boundary around the hotels that would host the event,” said Rodgers. “Then they were able to use spatial query to take a look at what was happening there. They could bring up crime, weather, and traffic, to provide information to the event security coordinator on the ground.”

Accessing Visual Command Center on laptops, these security teams in the field can work with the same data and visualization that’s available in the GSOC.

### OPERATORS TAKE ACTION TO INFORM EMPLOYEES

Operators at the GSOCs use the information derived from Visual Command Center to initiate action, typically to alert facilities and traveling employees to events that might affect them.

As an example, Rogers cited an incident where a breakdown in radio communications caused officials to falsely suspect a hijacking at Amsterdam’s Schiphol airport. This alert was of interest not only to



*As security officers record their patrols (roves) of Microsoft buildings, this information is immediately available from the Visual Command Center map.*

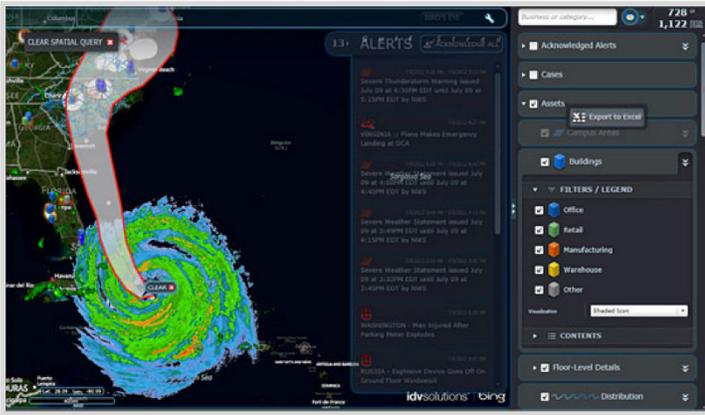
Microsoft’s workers in the Netherlands, but to employees traveling through Europe that day.

“Visual Command Center allowed our European, Middle Eastern, Asian and African centers to access the specific details of the incident,” he said. “There were able to use that information to create regional advisories based on that event. On another occasion, we had a rash of aviation incidents in Russia. We were able to alert our travelers to delays, airport closings, crashes, and increase their awareness.”

### COST EFFECTIVE RISK AWARENESS

Visual Command Center enables Microsoft to reduce costs while protecting the company’s assets and helping personnel on the ground stay safe and informed, said Mike Foynes, Senior Director of Microsoft Global Security Operations.

“As an example, Visual Command Center feeds data about earthquakes directly from the USGS to the map



“Visual Command Center speeds up our reaction time. It’s of huge benefit, not just to the GSOC but to our people in the field.”

**Steve Rodgers**

Director Microsoft Global Security Operations Centers

and will provide alerts,” Foynes said. “This allows us to maintain a minimum, and cost effective, staffing model versus having to overstaff analysts on any given shift to constantly comb the web for updates on natural disasters, news events, etc.”

Visual Command Center has become central to the GSOCs’ daily operations and an important part of its emergency management process.

“Visual Command Center (VCC) plays a critical role maintaining situational awareness at a consistently high level,” said Foynes. “From an operational perspective, this allows more efficient and thorough reporting.”

The software was put to the test in 2011, after the earthquake and tsunami in Japan, and during the civil unrest of the “Arab Spring” in the Middle East. During both events, security teams used the software to check the proximity of Microsoft offices to danger zones, and to disseminate situation updates and maps.

“Visual Command Center speeds up our reaction time,” said GSOC Director Rodgers. “It’s of huge benefit, not just to the GSOC but to our people in the field.”

#### About Everbridge

Everbridge, Inc. (NASDAQ: EVBG), is the global leader in critical event management and enterprise safety applications that automate and accelerate an organization’s operational response to critical events in order to keep people safe and businesses running faster. Everbridge is based in Boston and Los Angeles with additional offices in San Francisco, Lansing, Beijing, London and Stockholm.



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