

ASSA ABLOY Forsythe Data Center Drives New Business, Security Service Innovation with Server Cabinet Locks

HES server cabinet locks enable large data center to offer unique, individualized access control and detailed audit trail accountability.

Providing independent consulting, best-in-class products, hosting solutions and financial services to more than 1,000 U.S. and Canada-based companies, Forsythe is one of the largest independent IT integrators in North America. Clients include dozens of Fortune 100 companies and hundreds of Fortune 1000 companies. For nearly 45 years, Forsythe has been helping organizations in all industries with information technology needs. Experience crosses all facets of information technology, including IT portfolio valuation, data center solutions, system solutions, connectivity and security.

In mid 2015, Forsythe opened the doors of the Forsythe Data Center, a 221,000-square-foot data center facility in Elk Grove Village, Illinois, featuring private data center suites with individual, client-controlled suite infrastructure. The data center is a new business venture for the company, providing modular, scalable, private data center suites for clients of all size.

"This new center takes the Forsythe one-stop-shopping model to the next level," said Steve Harris, Vice President, Data Center Development, Forsythe. "We now offer clients complete end-to-end services for their full technology infrastructure lifecycle, plus the facility to house them. We're providing clients with a more convenient, efficient and secure data center facility option."

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Unique Security Service

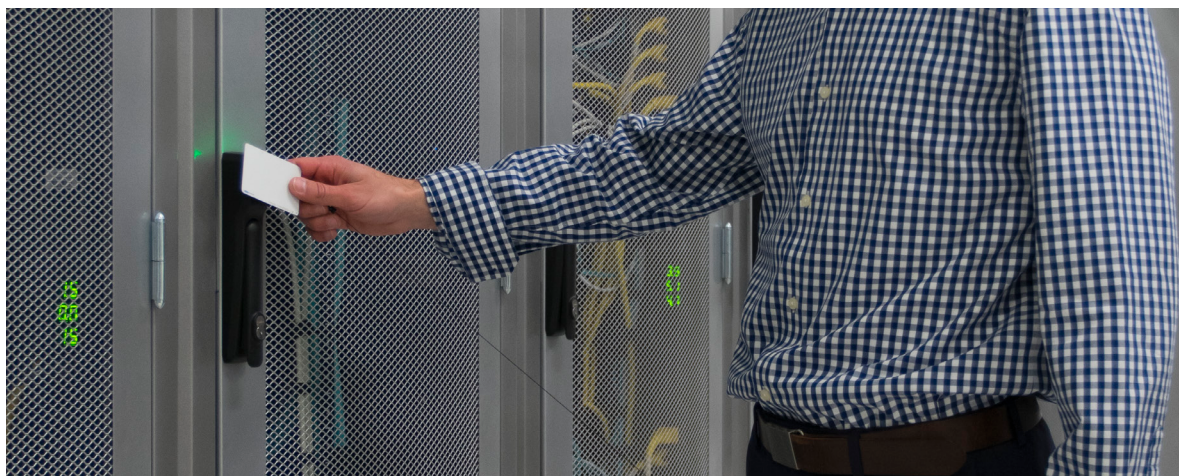
Harris explained that in planning and designing the Forsythe Data Center, the company wanted to bring something new to the market. In addition to leveraging the company's portfolio of existing services, Forsythe was driven to offer the data center for the future.

"We didn't see ourselves just offering a big warehouse with cages," said Harris. "We wanted to offer a unique experience that would really wow our customers. As we evaluated the market and looked at competitive solutions, we saw an opportunity in a new approach to extended security services."

The team discovered that customers were looking for more flexibility, control and accountability in regard to their cabinets and suites. But existing data centers didn't have much new to offer. Most followed the same basic model with sign-in logs, change tickets and access control only at the main room or suite door level. Most existing security controls boiled down to keys and escorts.

"In the center, we initially began using cabinet locks in our own Forsythe controlled areas," said Harris. "With a large number of visitors in and out of our various facility rooms we needed to make sure that vendors, visitors and staff would only have access to the specific cabinets in which they are authorized to access."

We quickly realized that our customers were looking for a similar solution, a way to control, credential and capture an audit trail at the cabinet level. We saw this as a unique service break through, and we began offering the HES KS200 Wiegand server cabinet locks to our customers."



Secure Cabinets, Controlled Suites

HES KS200 Server Cabinet Locks extend access control to protect data center assets from intrusion and expensive downtime by bringing real-time access control in a single-card system to individual server cabinet doors. Designed to install quickly and easily, on most swing-handle style server rack doors, the KS200 uses Wiegand wiring to integrate seamlessly with existing access control systems and ID badges. The system supports a Small Format Interchangeable Core (SFIC) mechanical key override. An additional optional extended DPS monitoring sensor can be connected to ensure that cabinets are closed, locked and secure. With an integrated, multi-technology reader, the KS200 provides robust, cost-effective access control to meet strict regulatory compliance and protect data.

"This has turned into something really interesting. We have a lot of customers who now use the KS200 locks on their cabinets in the multi-tenant and colocation areas," said Harris. "We're also getting requests to place the cabinet locks within private, customer-controlled suites, giving them the ability to control and track company staff accessing each server cabinets."

Harris explained that the Forsythe Data Center is making use of the KS200 cabinet locks in several different ways. From the smaller meet-me rooms to large telecom rooms, each cabinet has different networking within it, often with a different service providers needing access.

Even though Forsythe controls the rooms, the cabinet locks enable a way to monitor staff working in the room with the cabinets. Some customers have taken entire 1,000-square-foot suites, and once they gain entry, need a way to electronically lock and monitor cabinet access within its private dedicated space.

"Clients are coming in and asking about the cabinet locks. After explaining the system and its benefits, we're able to provide them with a hard-wall-separated and floored suite with its own cooling, power and now their own security and access capabilities," added Harris. "Clients need complete control of their cabinets. Especially in a suite situation, the customers want cabinet-level access control, and a complete audit trail of who has had access to their systems. They even want to see a Forsythe employee audit trail. They want a time-stamp record of all access."

Integrated Security

In regard to general security and access control, ASSA ABLOY products have been specified as the standard across the physical access infrastructure including mortise lock sets, control boards and reader boards with two-sided access. Forsythe worked to leverage system consistency and efficiencies across the platform.

"When we started this project our goal on the security side was to be fully PoE, to drive our lock hardware with Cat6 cabling, and in large part we did this," said Thomas McKinney, Director, Data Center Development and Operations, Forsythe.

"The HES cabinet locks allow us to run a Cat6 cable right from the network switch to the PoE enabled access control panel powering the lock, which is easier and much more cost-effective than trying to run independent lock power for each cabinet. The PoE part of the design was critical right from the beginning."



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"Our customers absolutely love the lock technology, the data we can provide, and the fact that physical keys no longer have to be controlled or managed," said Keith Zurawski, Director of Data Center Operations at Forsythe. "We have close to 200 locks installed, both for our own use and those for our customers. We use the locks heavily in our own environment because we adhere to the same controls in audit capabilities our customers require. We're definitely practicing what we preach."

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Partner Innovation

"Right from the beginning, this has been an interesting and rewarding project," said Chris Hobbs, Business Development Leader, Data Center Vertical Market, ASSA ABLOY. "Everyone involved has really helped bring this together. It's exciting to work on something new that will really make a difference in the business success of our customers. Forsythe is a forward-focused and dynamic customer with the best interests of their clients always driving their business model. It's truly a pleasure to work with and learn from their organization."

Hobbs also explained that ASSA ABLOY channel partner Anixter and systems integrator ESSCOE helped make the system a reality for Forsythe. Both Anixter and ESSCOE brought their access control experience and recommended ASSA ABLOY technology as the backbone of the system.

As a leading global supplier of communications and security products and electrical and electronic wire and cable, Anixter has a long and respected relationship with Forsythe. Anixter has provided the cabling and much infrastructure for the new data center. In this project, Anixter provided the KS200 cabinet locks both individually and as a pre-installed part of the cabinet rack kit. The KS200 is designed to fit a specific cut out, making installation fast and efficient.

"We're connecting the HES KS200 locks to Lenel's OnGuard Access application," said McKinney. "So all the biometrics, badge readers and KS200s are tracked and given access rights through the Lenel system."

Reliability Through Integration

The Forsythe Data Center is a Tier III, Uptime Institute facility, certified for its reliability and redundancy with potential communications and power issues. However, physical security has little to do with this quality rating.

"When you combine our uptime certification with such a high level of physical security that has six badge access points between the front door and the cabinet, plus more than 100 video security cameras, a 24/7 onsite guard service, you can begin to see that we take reliability and security very seriously," explained Harris. "The cabinet lock system is allowing us to take security even further. Our customers from the insurance, healthcare and financial markets appreciate the higher level of security, auditability and accountability. The HES KS200 cabinet locks are allowing us to make a significant step forward in providing peace of mind for our clients."

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