

# OXFORD COLLEGE FIGHTS CAMPUS CRIME



**The University of Oxford has installed SALTO access control technology to protect its students, staff and equipment from the ever increasing threat of crime in the education environment.**

According to research by the Home Office, university students are far more likely than the national average to become victims of crime with opportunist thefts and burglary being the most commonly reported offences.

This is frequently due to the fact that for many young people, further education is their first experience of looking after themselves and living away from home. Consequently, they usually have little background knowledge of or experience of crime reduction measures.

Most crimes are of an opportunist nature with the most frequent involving the theft of wallets, purses, bags,

jackets and money from office areas, especially desks, drawers and lockers. But, of more concern is the problem of burglary. Thieves know that many students own high-value portable items such as laptop computers, i-pods, mobile phones and DVD players which can be easily sold on for cash and so this can make their rooms an easy target for property crime.

One university where the threat of crime is being taken very seriously is the University of Oxford. The oldest university in the English-speaking world, Oxford can lay claim to nine centuries of continuous existence and is determined to do all it can to protect its students. To help achieve this one of the youngest and smallest of





the University's 39 colleges, Mansfield College, has invested in an electronic access control system that has already resulted in a big reduction in campus crime.

'Oxford is, in general, a very safe city in which to live and study. However, burglary is a real problem in Oxford and it is important for our students to be aware of the need for personal security and crime prevention and to know that we are working closely with Oxfordshire Police to help us keep our campuses safe places to live and work' says Mansfield College Head of Maintenance Tony Berezny.

### **TECHNOLOGY EVALUATION**

'With several other colleges at the University already using SALTO for their access control requirements we wanted to upgrade our own levels of security protection and so decided to evaluate the technology for our own use. Having done this and found it offered pretty much everything we were looking for, we decided to introduce the system in Mansfield College starting with just our external doors initially to see how users would adapt to it as it is quite different to our previous conventional keyed system.

The actual technology itself was extremely simple to install and local SALTO business partner BMA Varsity Ltd, Oxfordshire's leading locksmiths, carried out the job, installing 8 on-line WRM2001 proximity wall readers controlled by i-Button read/write keys and a mix of electronic handle sets from the Comfort and Security ranges. This was all very straightforward with no undue problems despite the age and condition of some of the doors and their architectural surroundings.'

### **SOFTWARE CUSTOMISATION**

SALTO's PRO-Access electronic locking system was also installed at the college to provide real-time on-line perimeter access control. This enables all the doors to be operated by one database (although it is powerful

enough to control the entire campus if necessary) managing the intelligent electronic locks and i-Button proximity keys for stand alone wire-free operation. All updating of the locks is achieved via the software with virtual on-line performance provided by the SALTO Virtual Network (SVN). This is a smart combination of on-line and stand alone readers that provide 90% of the benefits of a fully on-line access control system but without such a system's attendant high costs.

The new access system was very quickly embraced by the students and staff at the college and the installation has already been expanded to include bedrooms in the student accommodation block and also to individual office doors, giving them control over a total of some 102 doors in a mixture of on-line and off-line formats. These are currently accessed via 550 i-Buttons in circulation with staff and students at the college.

Ramesh Gurdev, one of SALTO's UK Area Sales Managers comments: 'The capability of multi-site growth built into the system has been key for the university offering them future compatibility and product longevity. They now have all external doors networked so that they have real time audit and instant management capability as well as these doors acting as the hotspot data transfer points. The flexibility of the read/write i-Button means that an ergonomic and robust fob type key can be used for data transfer within the system.

Tony Berezny concludes: 'The University of Oxford and Mansfield College in particular enjoys a relatively low rate of crime and we are working hard to keep it that way. We are determined that students and staff should continue to feel safe and that their property is protected.

We have found that SALTO has been invaluable in crime reduction and it has really improved the security of the campus. It has been fault free from day one and we plan to expand the system on an annual basis as our budget permits.'

