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From left to right, Chris Jones (Project Engineer), Adrian Brown (Technical Director), Kieron Stead (Business Development Manager) and Mark Gyves (Electrical Services Manager -Man Utd)



Manchester United Football Club has used the Net 2 system from Paxton Access to control the egress of fans at its grounds at Trafford Park. Although primarily an access control system, the Net 2 software has been specially adapted to meet the Club's exact requirements. The result is a system that is both simple to operate and highly effective, allowing for the upmost flexibility in controlling the crowds.

Manchester United Football Club needs no introduction. With 330 million supporters world wide its fame has spread well beyond the borders of the UK. As one of the founding members of the UK premier league, its home stadium at Trafford Park has almost iconic status with the club's fans. With a capacity of 76,000, security and the safe movement of both home and visiting fans on match days is of paramount importance to the club.

On match days, entrance to the ground is controlled via turnstiles, while departure is facilitated via a series of exit gates at the rear of the stands. These exit gates are collectively opened at around the three quarter time to allow for the safe egress of supporters.

As Mark Gyves, Manchester United's Electrical Services Manager, explains: "We had a system in place which enabled us to open and lock exit gates on an individual basis. However it would be more convenient to have the flexibility to individually and collectively release and lock these gates."

Garndene Communication Systems Ltd, who has been working with Manchester United since 2004, were asked to source a suitable solution. We suggested using Net2 – an access control system from Paxton Access, supplied by Network Video Centre (NVC), a trading division of Norbain SD Ltd. Although the system was required for egress rather than access control, we were confident that the Net2 system could do the job.



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A total of 82 doors in the Stadium are now controlled using the system which, although very sophisticated, is also simple to use thanks to the graphical user interface. The computer monitor shows a graphical representation of the stadium with each of the doors displayed on the graphic. Contacts are fitted to each door which indicates the status of the gates, so the operator can tell if they are closed and locked, closed and unlocked, or open and unlocked. If a door is opened locally, an alarm event occurs on the screen graphic which can be investigated and then acknowledged once the cause has been established.

What the club required was to group doors together in a block; one single icon on the computer screen's graphic could then control that particular block of doors. *"We already had a good understanding of the Net2 system and a co-operative relationship with Paxton Access,"* says Adrian Brown of Garndene. *"I was sure that by working closely with them we would be able to meet the exact requirements of Manchester United."*

Garndene consulted with Paxton and a special software package was developed to exactly meet these requirements. *"I've been very impressed with Garndene's level of service and with the flexibility they have displayed in meeting our needs. This has proved invaluable as it has ensured we're getting the best out of the system as well as creating flexibility for the system operator,"* says Mr Gyves.

The Club is happy with the way the system works for them. *"The graphical interface is very easy to manage,"* comments Mr Gyves. *"This is important as we may not always have the same operator available. I am confident that even in an emergency situation, we have a quick and effective system for unlocking all the doors and evacuating any of the stands in a controlled and safe manner."*

He continues, *"Garndene's ability to deliver the software was crucial as we needed it to be precisely tailored to meet our requirements. The software is key to the whole system and the great thing is that it's not static. We are able to manipulate and alter it to suit, should we need to make any stadium changes."*

