

FAQ Guide

Visitor Central

Visitor Management System



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Introduction

Overview

GE's Visitor Central™ extends all the benefits of an electronic visitor management system—and more. Besides replacing manual paper-based visitor logs and producing professional, customized photo visitor badges, Visitor Central can also integrate with your access control system—giving you more control and greater security. And it's more convenient, for both your company and your visitors.

Visitor Central lets you authorize employees to host visitors—based on your employee's access privileges. In addition, you can assign access privileges to visitors based on who they are or whom they're seeing. This allows visitors to open doors to authorized areas and create an audit trail for every visitor. What's more, you can configure access privileges to expire at a specified date or time. This allows multi-day visitors such as contractors to use the same visitor's badge throughout their stay. With Visitor Central, you can achieve the same level of control and tracking with visitors that you have with employees.

Visitor Management

Q: What is a visitor management system?

A: Visitor management systems are a series of tools that enable companies to measure and increase compliance with visitor policies. Enterprise visitor management systems usually contain the following four vital components:

- Appointment and Non-Appointment (walk-ins) management: This ensures that only authorized employees may invite visitors to a facility, and that visitors are tied to that employee for the duration of their visit.
- Watch Lists: These are groups of visitors who are categorized together. Sometimes visitors are grouped for neutral or positive attributes; for example, the visitor is a VIP or with a tour group. Other times the grouping is negative; for example, a visitor may be on a Watch List to be denied entry because of a specific concern.
- Visitor name badges: Badge creation allows employees to identify and separate visitors from standard employees. Badges also help enhance professionalism.
- Facility partitioning: This ensures that both the appointments and the check-in log for your offices have separate permissions. Employees in one office cannot make or view appointments for another unless given specific rights to do so. However, administrators can view both appointments and logs for everyone in the system.

Q: What is the difference between visitor management and access control?

A: Access control systems allow managers, via the security department, to control access to physical places directly by locking doors. Visitor Management is a series of tools allowing management to audit and control visitors, encouraging them to adhere to visitor policies.

Q: My visitors are always escorted: why would I need a visitor management system?

A: Even when visitors are escorted, visitor management assures that appointments are logged and reviewed, and that visitors are reviewed against Watch Lists *before* their visit. Visitor badges help minimize the risk of visitors straying from their hosts during a visit. In the event of an incident, digital logs help back-trace who invited a visitor and when they arrived to try and reconcile what may have occurred.

Visitor Central Functionality

Q: Does Visitor Central support Web-based pre-registration? How does it work?

A: Yes. Employees are given permission to log into Visitor Central and invite visitors to one or more facilities. Permissions may be taken from an access control system and/or assigned manually. Visitors log into Visitor Central to make and manage visitor appointments.

Q: Can Visitor Central scan information from driver licenses?

A: Yes, the driver license scanner captures the users data and photograph.

Q: Are Watch Lists supported?

A: Yes. Users can make any number of Watch Lists then mark a Watch List as access denied. For example, a company may want to make four Watch Lists: VIP visitors, a specific tour group, laid-off employees, and people who have made specific threats. E-mail notification to appropriate personnel would be sent when the visitors in the prior two groups check in so they could be treated appropriately. Visitor Central can be configured so visitors in the latter two groups are treated differently. The system allows pre-registration, but notifies security via e-mail. Security may review the individual to determine if they remain a threat and, if so, take appropriate steps. If a visitor is on an Access Denied Watch List and tries to check-in, the system alerts the attendant.

Q: Is there a way to recall information for returning visitors?

A: Yes, the system allows employees to look up prior visitors by multiple parameters to avoid data re-entry.

Q: Is Visitor Central scalable?

A: Yes, Visitor Central is built on true client-server architecture—the same used by GE's enterprise access control systems.

Q: What type of server should I purchase?

A: Specific server recommendations are contained in the system requirements. It is important to make sure you have adequate disk space to hold photographs of visitors. The amount of disk space required varies depending upon organization size and visitor volume.

Q: What type of stations to create badges (clients) should I purchase?

A: GE offers a well-suited badge station that includes a small form factor CPU and touch-screen.

Q: How is Visitor Central licensed?

A: Visitor Central requires a minimum of one server license and one client license. The number of employees who may connect and pre-register visitor appointments is unlimited.

Q: How do I make visitor name badges expire?

A: When designing badges, system administrators set timeout rules for the badges the design produces. Badges may be set to expire the same day of issue, a specific number of days after issue, or the issuing attendant may be prompted to manually enter an expiration date at the time a badge is issued. There are also several badge types and tokens that have time expirations. These would operate independent from an access control system.

Q: How does facility partitioning work?

A: Users may define an unlimited number of facilities (partitions). Each appointment log and visitor log is self-contained in that facility, though they may be rolled-up into one large report. Employees and attendants are given permission to make appointments and check-in visitors at one or more facilities.

Q: How difficult is it to install Visitor Central? Who do you recommend to install and configure it?

A: The complexity of installation depends on the environment and security policies of the customer's IT infrastructure. We strongly encourage an experienced IT system administrator to install Visitor Central, or be available should post-installation questions arise. Once the system is installed, great care must be taken to configure facilities so that the system is able to adequately scale as the customer's business grows. GE Enterprise Consulting is available to install Visitor Central and to help minimize complexity and maximize ROI. Contact your GE sales representative for more information on GE Enterprise Consulting.

Integration (access control and other systems)

Q: How can a visitor management system be integrated into an access control system?

A: There are two basic types of integration from Visitor Central to an access control system:

- Incoming Registration refers to the process of importing badge-holding employees from an access control system into Visitor Central
- Outgoing Registration refers to the process of exporting visitors, upon check-in, as badge-holders in an access control system with pre-specified permissions

Q: What access control systems does Visitor Central integrate with?

A: Visitor Central integrates with GE's Picture Perfect v2, Picture Perfect v4, and Secure Perfect 6.11.

Q: Is there a way to integrate Visitor Central into other systems?

A: GE Enterprise Consulting can provide custom integration.

Name badges

Q: Can I design my own name badge?

A: Yes, Visitor Central has a built-in badge designer. Each individual visitor type (visitor, employee, contractor, etc.) may be assigned a badge design for each separate facility. There is no limit to the number of visitor types or badge designs.

Q: Are there name badges that change color after they expire?

A: Yes, GE sells tokens—which change color after a certain amount of time they are activated—to visually indicate a visitor name badge has expired. Since Visitor Central supports all standard badges, many of these include the capability of changing color after they expire.

Q: Does Visitor Central require special name badges?

A: No, GE offers several choices of quality name badges. Users can create badge designs that adhere to any badge media specifications they wish to support.

Q: How expensive are name badges?

A: This depends on the type of name badge used. GE offers several choices of high-security name badges.

Q: Are there advantages to using one type or brand of printer over another?

A: This depends on the type of name badge media used.

Visitor Central Benefits

Q: What are some differences between Visitor Central and other visitor management applications?

A: Visitor Central is built on the technology and expertise of decades of experience in security technology. That's why over half of the Fortune 100 companies use a GE access control system. GE offers:

- A meaningful understanding of the requirements needed to implement a viable visitor management system
- World-class technology engineering, architecture, and support
- Top-notch feature set, including:
 - Web-based pre-registration
 - Comprehensive user permission control
 - Database partitioning
 - Integration with Secure Perfect and Picture Perfect access control systems

Q: I can buy a visitor badge system at a very low cost. Why should I buy Visitor Central?

A: Reference "[What is a visitor management system.](#)" While basic badge applications fulfill one of the key requirements of adequate visitor management—creating name badges—key security needs are left unmet.

Q: There are some companies that say I can just sign up at an Internet site and check-in visitors. That sounds easy—since visitor data isn't especially confidential why don't I work with them?

A: Visitor Central has a competitive feature set. However, beyond that, visitor data should be considered proprietary. End users considering an entirely outsourced model should consider whether senior managers would be comfortable if the public knew who was visiting their mergers and acquisitions department, their legal department, who was interviewing for employment, which suppliers were visiting their company, or who was on their user Watch Lists. The risks of an entirely outsourced, monthly model should be carefully weighed against the perceived benefits.