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Security in every aspect of our lives is a fundamental factor that contributes to our daily comfort and survival. Without modern security systems weâ€™d probably feel paranoid and unsafe in our own homes, communities, and workplace. The evolution of technology has gone far beyond the medieval bolts and chains and traditional lock and keys to keep intruders out. These days, businesses, buildings, and homes are installed with security access control systems.

Access control systems make sure that only authorized personnel or users can have access to a specific resource. For example, a big organization that has a wealth of resources and data in several rooms in a building can install access control systems for each room to control access to those rooms. Only employees who are registered into the system can go in and out.

This technology guarantees that only the right people can lay eyes on sensitive information and handle expensive equipment in the workplace. Access control systems also record entries and exits, so it would be easier for managers and business owners to monitor and locate their personnel at any given time. There are different types of key technologies used in access control.

Smart Cards and Tokens

Smart cards can have the same size as your credit card and contain either a microchip or a magnetic stripe that has the userâ€™s data. Smart cards are swiped on an access control device to allow access to a secured area. Tokens in access control systems are similar to smart cards but can only be used once to enter secure computer networks. Userâ€™s data from smart cards and tokens are verified with the companyâ€™s database to confirm identity and set the level of security clearance.

Passwords and PINs

Most access control systems utilize passwords and pins together with smart cards or other physical credentials. Passwords and personal identification numbers (PIN) guarantee that even when your smart card or access badge is stolen, the thief will still have a hard time hacking into the system or wonâ€™t easily enter a room. Consecutive incorrect password or PIN entries will alert the security department and possibly put the building in lockdown.

Biometric Systems

The latest and most sophisticated key to an access control system is biometrics. This involves encoding into the database human characteristics of the user such as fingerprint, handprint, retina, voice, or facial structure. This key technology is considered foolproof because unless human cloning is perfected, there is no way for an intruder to replicate another humanâ€™s unique physical attributes. For more information on access control systems, visit techrepublic.com.

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