



Where Are My Keys?

By David McPake

After 40 years in the security industry, I have seen a lot of changes. In our early years, I don't think we had a single solution for our clients that involved electrons or IP addresses. You're probably not surprised to hear that.

What might surprise you though is to discover that the core of our business is still centred on a solution that is entirely electron-free and, in one form or another, is one we have offered since the day we opened our doors 40 years ago... that solution is master key system.

I don't think anyone would argue the importance of a key system in any facility. Balancing security and access, key systems are highly cost-effective, intuitive to use, and extremely reliable. Key systems come in all shapes and sizes, but ultimately they all fall into one of two groups - Unrestricted or Patented.

Unrestricted keyways and key systems are by far the most common you'll find. You probably have several

of them on your keyring right now. These keyways are available through every locksmith, many retailers, and the plethora of automated key cutting kiosks popping up everywhere. There is convenience in being available everywhere. But these key systems offer little in terms of security and control, as anyone can duplicate these keys – your authorization as a property manager isn't needed. There are even apps that will scan your keys, and have copies mailed to you the next day. That's the ultimate convenience.

But the trade-off for this convenience is security and control. How many property managers have had to fire a sub-contractor? A painter or a plumber perhaps. Even though the contractor returns the key you gave him, there's no mention of the 7 copies he made for his technicians, for their convenience.

And then there is the tenant that loses their keys to a common element.

As the keyway is uncontrolled, they don't need to contact management. He or she can simply have their spouse's key duplicated. Their problem is solved.

Many buildings have moved to card access systems. And though expensive to install, they can help eliminate these sorts of issues. But the high costs typically limit card systems to main entrances only, and in our experience, only about 5% of openings in a building ever end up being carded. As a property manager, how can you control and manage the other 95%?

There are other solutions, such as WiFi locks that communicate with your smart phone. These solutions too can eliminate unauthorized key duplication and lost keys, but they are still costly. There are a few affordable versions on the market, but these are integrated with residential or un-graded hardware – hardware that just won't last in a

Key Questions to Ask Yourself:

- Does this system have a federal utility patent?
- Can it be easily master keyed?
- Can the master key system be expanded if needed?
- How many changes does the system have available to deal with lost keys?
- How much are cut keys?
- What is the procedure for ordering more keys?
- How many other dealers have this keyway?
- If needed, can we transfer our system to another security provider?
- Who will keep track of the keys we order?
- How long does it take to get keys when needed?
- How long have you carried this product line?
- Can you give me references I can speak to?
- How long have you been in business?
- Do you have an on-site service guarantee?
- How many technicians and trucks to you have?
- Can I contact the manufacturer to speak with them?
- When does the patent on the system expire?

commercial housing environment, and often won't meet fire codes.

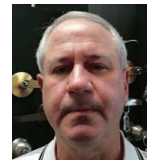
There is another option. Despite having a team of technicians that know more about IP addresses, mega pixel cameras, door operators, and smart phone apps than I ever will, the vast majority of what we do still centers on Patented Key Systems. And there's a reason for that, it's because they work.

A key system with a federal utility patent offers the best balance between control and affordability. Systems such as Medeco's M3 or X4 lines, are easily tailored to a building's needs while ensuring that every key is tracked and accounted for. And just as importantly, only you have the authority to request keys – not your tenants.

Patented systems can come in different forms as well. Some of the solutions we deploy for clients are designed to offer patented key control, while the majority of our systems combine patented key control with UL rated high security. A UL rated lock is really the only option for any opening where there is a risk of physical attack – such as kicking, bumping or drilling. You

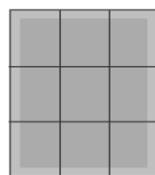
might be surprised to know how often these attacks happen in buildings, and I sleep better knowing our clients and their residents are protected.

With a drive towards smart technology based-security, as a property manager, you have more options than ever when considering security solutions. The most important piece of advice I can give you is this... ask lots of questions of your security providers. And keep in mind, sometimes the best solutions are the ones that have a long and proven track record. ■

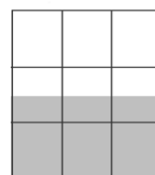


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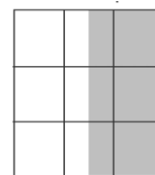
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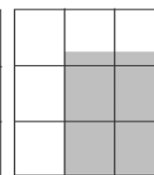
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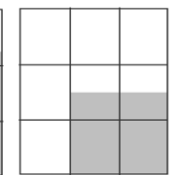
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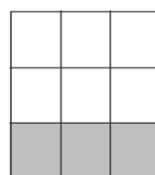
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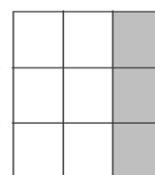
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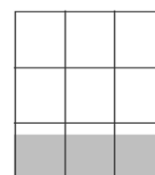
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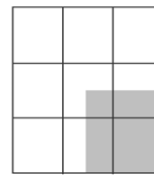
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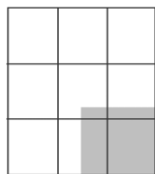
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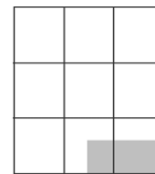
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