

Cybersecurity: Who's in control when the building becomes connected?

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Part of REDI: The Digital Manifesto



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Building owners must know what was agreed, delivered and tested

Øystein Balstad of Defendable argued that a smarter building is not a goal in itself. Using ventilation as the example, he said a building must first sustain three qualities: safe and comfortable use, stable day-to-day operations, and flexibility when services, needs and vendors change. Only then should owners discuss access control, segmentation, logging or monitoring. Connecting ventilation to an external analysis service creates value but also a dependency, so the direction, purpose and influence of each data flow must be deliberate decisions. When HVAC behaves abnormally, the owner needs to know what was changed, who had access and what evidence is available, often across several systems and vendors. A requirement is not verified until tested, through document review, technical verification, physical security tests and audits, and the checks continue after handover.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Define what the building must sustain before drawing connections or choosing security measures.
- A service bought for analysis does not automatically need the ability to influence building control.
- If vendor access uses a shared account, the owner may see that somebody connected, but not who.
- At handover, owners should see access control, event visibility and intact system boundaries demonstrated.
- Owners need not understand all the technology, but must know what was agreed, delivered and tested.