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### The Internet of Access Control

Internet of Things (IoT) technology has the potential to transform the way that Facilities Managers (FMs) manage buildings. It opens up a plethora of new choices for managing building services such as HVAC, lighting and, more recently, access control. But as Grant Macdonald, Managing Director of Codelocks, explains, FMs must be equipped to properly assess and adopt these new technology choices if they are to realise the potential benefits.

According to market analysts Navigant Research, the global market for building automation systems (BAS) is set for strong growth over the next few years. This is being led by early adopters reaping the benefits of better building control – especially around energy management – improving comfort and convenience for occupants, reducing energy costs and ensuring compliance with new energy codes.

Importantly, Navigant identifies another key driver for smart buildings: the integration of smartphones into many human interactions within the world around us is shifting our expectations of the built environment.

For access control applications within buildings, we can identify similar market drivers to energy management. There is an imperative for FMs to reduce costs, and for access control it is often the time it takes to manage or replace keys, or change access codes that contributes most to the cost burden. With new EU Data Protection Regulations coming into force during 2018, many businesses will review their compliance by looking at how they control and audit access to information that is held physically within office buildings. The latest connected digital locks offer more convenience for end users by supporting access via smartphones alongside keypad and card entry, which resonates with the shift in users' expectations.

Despite all the benefits of smart building technology solutions, FMs still face a number of challenges in implementing solutions that will work well for them. With so much choice available, FMs need to spend more of their time researching new products and understanding what, if any, will provide the best return on investment while meeting their budget constraints. Furthermore, retrofitted applications need to work with their current systems and address the specific requirements of their buildings and people.

#### What today's FMs need from access control

Implementing access control in the modern workplace is a balancing act between maintaining ease of movement around a building while controlling the levels of access for individuals and groups of employees.

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By integrating wireless technology within an electronic digital lock, you can now offer ultimate end-user convenience while minimising the time they have to spend managing their locks. Wireless 'smart' locks offer features that far exceed those offered by traditional mechanical or standalone electronic locks. As well as supporting more flexible user modes, they are simpler and cheaper to install than traditional and expensive wired card-access systems.

With smart locks, you can provide users with the access method that best suits their needs, whether that's using a card, invited smartphone or simple keypad code access. For other users, such as service personnel, FMs can easily issue a time-sensitive code to allow temporary access. Other advanced features, such as code-free entry, ensure that FMs can quickly and easily set locks to the most appropriate level of access.

In the past, one of the biggest challenges for FMs is the time that they had to spend managing and changing access codes on keypad locks. Changing the keypad codes regularly is good practice and helps to ensure the integrity of access throughout a building. While changing the code on a mechanical lock is fairly laborious – you have to remove the lock from the door, electronic locks help to ease this problem by enabling FMs to download new codes from a PC. Wireless control takes the level of convenience a step further by allowing codes to be reprogrammed from an authorised smartphone.

Having an audit trail facility helps you to monitor and track employee, visitor and service staff movement. With wireless smart locks, FMs can now access this information more easily than ever through a smartphone app.

### Easing adoption

FMs can make their lives easier when evaluating and implementing new IoT-based building services by working with solution providers, as opposed to simply purchasing products. A solution provider will be able to offer a full package including specification and technical advice about where and when to deploy different products, ensuring that both needs and budgets are met.

As the technology within products become more sophisticated, without proper training and after-sales support you may not get the most out of your investment in the new technology, leaving potentially useful features unused. A good support team will suggest how to get the best out of the technology based on your specific application, and may be able to offer customised software to exactly meet your needs.

A key concern that FMs raise when considering wireless lock technology is security from hacking. You should ensure that the technology you invest in has the appropriate levels of authentication and encryption built-in to the hardware, software app and infrastructure (for example, the vendor's servers) to reduce the risks from hackers.

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## Summary

Smart digital locks are the latest IoT-based innovation that can help make FMs' working lives easier. Deployed in the right applications, smart wireless digital locks will help FMs to implement better access control within their buildings while significantly reducing the burden on their time for on-going management tasks.

Combining smart technology with wireless access alongside traditional keypad and card access options will add to standalone locks' ability to take an even greater share of the access control market. Increased levels of convenience and control will also lead to their specification in new market areas, such as home rental and home care service applications.

## About Codelocks

Codelocks designs and manufactures a wide range of innovative, standalone keyless door, locker and cabinet locks for organisations that need to control access within their buildings. The product range includes stylish push-button mechanical locks, digital electronic and wireless 'smart' locks that are easy to manage and can be operated using a keypad, card and smartphone. Convenience is at the heart of all of Codelocks' products. Our user-friendly approach enables building and facilities managers to have complete control over who is entering and exiting. The locks are cost-effective, easy to fit and programme, can be retrofitted and do not require complex wiring or external power. We offer full access to expert technical advice and customer support.

For more information, visit [www.codelocks.co.uk](http://www.codelocks.co.uk)