



**Is “Cutting Edge” a bad thing?**

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**Abstract**

For a long time, MTI has been known as the leader in cutting-edge technology and innovation. This prowess has led our competitors to use the argument that “cutting edge” or “state-of-the-art” is a bad thing because it has not been proven. They would go on to claim that new technology is a bad thing because it has not been proven. In this article we want to challenge this argument and give a fresh perspective on this debate.

**Definitions**

*Cutting-Edge/State-Of-The-Art:* These terms are often used to describe techniques and technologies that put to use the latest theories and innovations. At some point, every technology and technique was “cutting-edge”. The first time the Egyptians saw the wheel, there is no doubt that someone recognized this to be a shift in the way things are done. Obviously state-of-the-art technologies provide a paradigm shift in many ways. Alexander Graham Bell completely revolutionized the world when he created the telephone. I doubt he knew that one day people would be walking around with a telephone that has no wires (a cellular phone), all because of his innovation. It is plain to see that, ultimately, state-of-the-art technologies provide for a better, more efficient way of performing tasks.

**Discussion**

So, what is so bad about state-of-the-art technologies? Some would say that these technologies should not be used in a detention facility because they have not been proven to be reliable. This is a fallacious argument for two reasons. First, MTI does not use any technology that has not already been proven in other markets. Second, it is foolish to hold back the tide of technology and innovation that



brings about fundamental change simply because of questions related to reliability. Ultimately, the question is not “can it work?” The question is “does it work?”

Even though the technologies that MTI uses are new to the detention marketplace, they are nowhere near new to the world in general. Let us take as an example the use of wireless communications and handheld devices for the control of direct supervision areas. Is this technology new to the detention marketplace? Absolutely! Is this technology new to the world? By no means! Wireless communications were first used in 1901, when Italian physicist Guglielmo Marconi demonstrated a ship-to-shore wireless telegraph, using Morse Code. Although modern wireless systems have better performance (more bandwidth and better reliability), the basic idea is the same (dots and dashes that represent information). Depending on the wireless protocol used, engineers can achieve the same lossless delivery as that of a wired network. Wireless technologies are used for aircraft guidance systems, emergency management communications, and the remote control of military drones. Why, then is this technology not suitable for a detention facility? The same could be argued for MTI’s use of handheld devices, Ethernet-based communications, and even PLCs.

Finally, to hinder the use of state-of-the-art technologies in a detention facility only hinders the advancement of that facility’s efficiency and safety. These technologies usually translate into less overhead, more security, and less time to perform tasks. It would seem that these would be desirable goals for the administrators of any facility.

Granted, every facility has to determine what the most feasible use of these technologies is. Obviously, the use of handheld devices in a maximum security prison is not advised. But, given the right circumstances, most new technologies have their place and add value to the practices of any facility.