

An alliance for innovation

This month we talk to Johan Jubbega of OSSA to find out more about the recently established initiative and how it can help manufacturers and installers with choice and security

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Johan Jubbega, President of OSSA, pictured at IFSEC 2019



According to its website, the Open Security & Safety Alliance (OSSA) is a collaboration initiative developed to create a framework providing standards and specifications for common components including an operating system, IoT infrastructure, collective approach for data security and safety solutions.

We caught up with Johan Jubbega, President of OSSA during IFSEC 2019 to talk about the initiative and how a group of technology rivals managed to come together to serve a common cause and make the security industry more secure.

What is OSSA?

It is an alliance of like-minded companies that have come together to address common problems and challenges we have in the security and safety industry in order to stimulate innovation.

When I say common problems this is all about security and involves data security, privacy, market fragmentation and a limited

usage of data produced by the security devices. The goal is to make it easier for application developers to come into our industry and getting access to a common standardized platform (including an operating system) to deploy their applications and thus stimulate further innovation.

Who is the ‘we’ in OSSA?

First of all we have a number of founding partners including Vivotek, Bosch Building Technologies, Pelco, Milestone Systems and Hanwha Techwin. We came together about a year ago and discussed the idea of an alliance. We then founded the Alliance and launched it in September 2018.

In the meantime we took on around 25-30 companies which encompass all elements of the security industry such as device manufacturers, system integrators, distributors and video management solution providers to tackle the whole ecosystem because you need devices and also the applications to be sold through ➔

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integrators and distributors. On top of all of that we have a member called Security and Safety Things which is building an OSSA specified operating system for cameras and a digital market-place for apps.

We are moving very quickly and we believe that by 2020 we will have the go-live of an ecosystem, including the camera operating system, digital market-place (like an app store) and partners that deliver their first hardware and software offerings compatible with the ecosystem.

The founding partners are essentially competitors, so how did you all come together?

To be honest, there we had a lot of interesting discussions. But already soon we found out that certain topics can only be solved together. Addressing these challenges together gives us a much better chance of raising the bar in the industry, and stimulating the market and technology development.

So what are the challenges that you are addressing?

As we were only founded recently we are still finding new problems! Typically though we have identified concerns around cyber security and the protection of privacy.

The OSSA specified operating system is therefore based on Android Open Source Platform (AOSP), which means it already comes with a lot of security built-in, giving us a good starting point. And with the contributions of all

of our members, we have already hardened that operating system to make it even better for security applications. I believe that an open alliance developed by all of us will greatly benefit the market, of course we all want to differentiate from each other and there will be many areas where device manufacturers can try to do so, but we all have one objective of raising the bar and to battle any security and potential threats we may come across.

What do you need manufacturers and installers to do now?

The more security manufacturers we can get involved with supporting the Alliance, the broader the open platform will eventually be – ultimately offering more choice for installers

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and integrators. Ideally all devices with their unique differentiators that are offered in the ecosystem will be able to work with any software application. For the installers this will be a big benefit because they will have the luxury of a broad choice of vendor technologies, each with their own differentiators such as image quality or security add-ons, but sharing a common operating system and approach to data security and privacy.

Are developments such as AI changing the nature of the work OSSA is doing?

New technologies, such as AI, need powerful processors. Therefore we encourage System-on-Chip (SoC) manufacturers to join the alliance, so that together we can define a baseline regarding the performance of hardware. After establishment of this baseline, it will be possible for a wide range of app developers to come in and make use of the power that is available in cameras that are based on OSSA's specifications.

Another objective of the alliance is to educate the industry on these new developments and where we are standing so that installers and integrators are prepared for what is coming.



What is the difference between the Open Security & Safety Alliance and ONVIF?

ONVIF is an open industry forum that provides and promotes standardised interfaces for effective interoperability of IP-based physical security products. OSSA focuses on developing a framework outlining a common standardised platform for security and safety devices solutions. The framework provides standards and specifications for common components including an operating system, IoT infrastructure, collective approach for data security and privacy, and a drive for improved levels of performance. In addition, the Alliance aims to promote new business models to encourage the adoption of more data-centric services by users.