

# Playing it Smart with Your Smart Safe

## The Importance of a Secure, Flexible, and Affordable Wireless Connection

Anyone used to dealing with a large amount of cash knows hard currency can save a lot of money in purchase transaction fees and other expenditures. Having cash on hand can also create a number of additional problems. While credit card transactions are automatically authorized, processed and deposited, those handling paper payments must deal with

counterfeit currency, and a stack of bills and change waiting to be taken to the bank.

Fortunately, technology has finally seen fit to help alleviate some of these cash difficulties through the introduction of the smart safe or intelligent safe.

## What Makes a Safe “Smart”?



Smart safes are designed to sort and count cash, check for counterfeit currency and automatically communicate the deposit information to the retailer's bank account. The technology removes a lot of the time and effort cash normally requires, with the added benefit that the deposit happens much sooner.

## Added Security

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Security is another major concern for retailers dealing in cash. Large amounts of hard currency can make any location a target for theft – both internal and external. The most common losses are when employees find cash too tempting to pass up and begin skimming off the top. Potentially more frightening is the possibility of becoming a target of robbery. Both situations can result in large losses – especially for those locations dealing primarily in cash.

In addition to transactional/internal security, smart safes also limit outside access more thoroughly than traditional safes. Many smart safes come with pry resistant doors, anti-lock drilling features, bolt reinforcements, high security locks and keys as well as the potential for tamper sirens and other security options. Data security options are also common. However, data security relies heavily on the network or type of connectivity selected for use with the safe.

## Convenience & Connectivity

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Smart safes rely on dependable communications to operate properly – to communicate with the retailer's financial institution, to monitor real-time visibility of cash levels as well as integration with armored car services and point-of-sale systems. There are several options for this connection, however, not all connection options are created equal.

- Landline/DSL – While an onsite landline or DSL may seem like the obvious solution,

this plan has a number of drawbacks. It severely limits the locations available for smart safe placement, potentially requiring the machine to be set up in a less desirable or less secure area than the merchant prefers. Landlines also have a tendency to run on a general shared network through unsecured servers, or through the store's computer system, leaving the banking and cash data more vulnerable to hacking. Landlines can also cost thousands of



dollars to set up and merchants risk being placed on a waiting list for installation. In addition, using a landline or DSL can slow down or, in some cases, kill the sales process because the retailer's IT department will need to be involved; taking control of the installation out of the smart safe providers hands.

- WiFi/LAN Connectivity – Utilizing a local area wireless network is also an option. WiFi frees up safe placement options, however, like landlines or DSL, there are potential problems with this option. Limited range of service, interference as well as complex propagation effects that are beyond the control of the network administrator are drawbacks. In addition, WiFi has security weaknesses that could put

the merchant's financial information at risk. And, visible WiFi network may actually attract the attention of hackers.

- Cellular Communications (Wireless 3G or 4G Communications) – Wireless 3G or 4G connections are far less likely to be hacked than WiFi due to the security and encryption inherent in the cellular technologies. Like WiFi, using cellular communications allows the safe to be placed in an optimal location. “Cellular” wireless is easy to install and maintain, has a more reliable signal and wider range than WiFi, and is often faster and less expensive than other communications options. Cellular is also the banking industry's preferred communications method.

# The OptConnect Difference

After years of being the leading provider of reliable wireless solutions for ATM deployers in the U.S., OptConnect recently extended their proven technology to operators of other financial terminals requiring transaction/communication services including kiosks, electric vehicle charging stations, micro-markets and smart safes.

“Offering our wireless solutions to other businesses is a natural expansion of our business,” says OptConnect Director of Business Development Wayne Vandekraak. “We’ve made significant investments in our products and support systems over the years, and have a proven track record of great quality service.”

Utilizing a private cellular 3G or 4G network – by far the most secure communications system available, OptConnect offers a fully managed service solution that combines hardware,

communications, monitoring, a lifetime warranty and 24/7 tech support into one single monthly package with zero capital investment.

Unlike carrier’s cellular data plans, the OptConnect program guarantees no overages, protecting retailers from additional costs during busier days and months that require higher volume smart safe use. In addition, unlike DSL which uses dynamic IP addresses that change daily and make it difficult for the financial institution to recognize incoming data from the smart safe, static IP address are available from OptConnect at no additional charge.



"Through OptConnect's managed service solution, merchants are also guaranteed to stay current with the latest technology without having to pay for costly upgrades or replace equipment," notes Todd Hallenbeck, who recently joined OptConnect as business development manager after working in the cellular industry for the past 20 years.

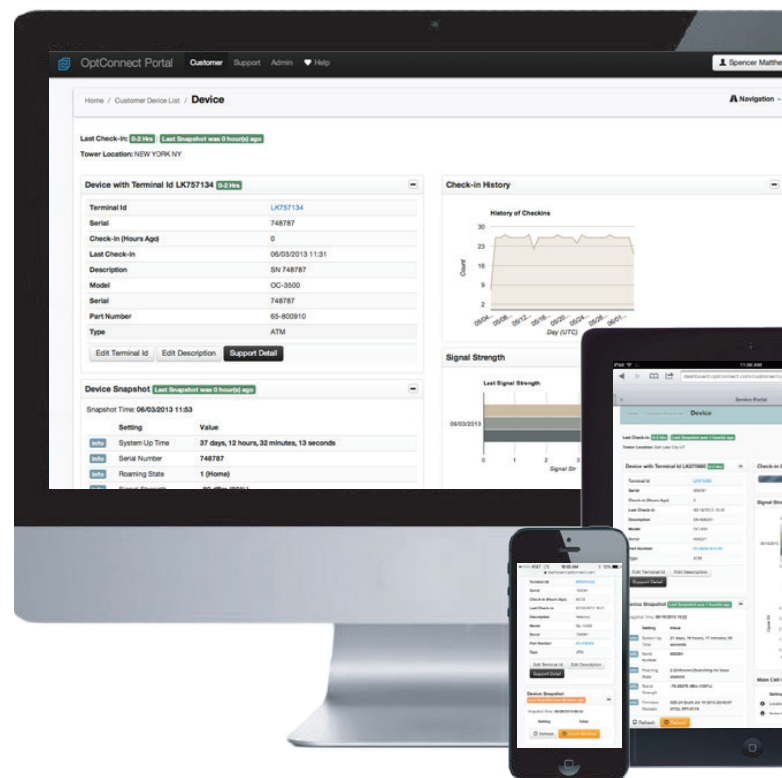
Hallenbeck provides an example. "We have a client that – without our managed service solution in place – would have had to come out of pocket to replace hundreds of their modems because they are running 2G."

"The cellular companies only have so much air space so they are phasing out 2G to make room for 4G," he says. "Which means routers need to be upgraded to a more current version."

According to an August 2012 article in the Wall Street Journal, AT&T Inc. will phase out its 2G wireless networks by Dec. 31, 2016 to make better use of its limited airwaves by upgrading to faster 3G and 4G technology. Verizon is also shuttering its 2G network and has begun the process of phasing out its 3G network in favor of 4G-LTE service, according to a December 2014 Gigaom report.

"Our customers are protected from having to replace out of date equipment," Hallenbeck says. "They have the peace of mind of knowing they have a lifetime warranty. We replace obsolete equipment, at our expense."

In addition, OptConnect puts the merchant in control of their smart safes through a web-based portal. OptConnect's portal allows merchants to manage and monitor their smart safes remotely. They are alerted to problems and can reset their routers from anywhere.



## OptConnect Smart Safe Program Highlights:

- **Fully Managed Service Solution**
- **Hardware (3G & 4G)**
- **Private Cellular Network Data Plan**
- **Watch-Dog Monitoring**
- **24/7 Technical Support**
- **Lifetime Warranty**
- **Expert Partner – leading provider of wireless solutions for ATMs**
- **No Large Capital Expenditure**
- **Total Communications Solution**
- **No Data Overages**
- **Access to OptConnect web-based portal to monitor their smart safes**

“Not only do we have years of experience and the knowledge to provide the strong communications resource a smart safe needs, OptConnect's total communications solution is easier, faster, less expensive, more reliable and more secure,” says Vandekraak. “Our wireless solution allows a merchant to put the safe where they want it, not where phone lines dictate it must go. ”

The right smart safe solution should save retailers time and money. Proper implementation can allow for higher levels of security through data encryption and a more secure communications network. For many merchants dealing in high cash volume, a smart safe is a logical addition to the operations and security of the retailer – and OptConnect is the obvious choice for merchants who need a fast, flexible, secure and more affordable connection.

Interested in learning how OptConnect's Wireless Managed Service can impact your business?

Contact us today to get started: **877-678-3343**

