

Avigilon and Motorola Solutions — Evaluation Field Guide

An honest one-page profile of the appliance-and-ecosystem VMS: the two suites, the self-learning analytics, the openness boundary, the licensing fork, and where it fits.

Avigilon at a glance: one brand, two suites

| Component | What it is | Deployment & cost |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| Avigilon Unity Video | On-prem recording & management (ex-ACC) | On-premises - CapEx per camera channel |
| Avigilon Unity Access | On-prem access control (ex-ACM) | On-premises - CapEx per door/reader |
| Avigilon Alta Video | Cloud-native video (ex-Ava Security) | Cloud - OpEx per-camera subscription |
| Avigilon Alta Access | Cloud-native access control (ex-Openpath) | Cloud - OpEx subscription |
| Self-learning analytics | UMD, UAD, Appearance Search, Focus of Attention | Edge AI - best on Avigilon cameras |

Avigilon makes the cameras (H4/H5/H6), the recorder software, and the on-board AI as one matched set. Owned by Motorola Solutions since 2018 (~\$1B); the video pillar of an \$11.7B safety ecosystem. Unity and Alta share a brand and a sales channel, not a codebase.

The appliance bet - what 'open' really means

Avigilon owns the camera, the recorder, and the analytics and sells them as a matched set - so the AI 'just works' without a separate analytics server. Unity Video speaks ONVIF (the common camera language) and exposes a .NET API/SDK, so you can record third-party cameras and wire in access control and building systems. The catch: the self-learning analytics, the edge AI, and the tightest performance come from Avigilon's own cameras. An 'Avigilon system' on mostly third-party ONVIF cameras buys the recorder and leaves the best part - the analytics - on the shelf. Keep 'ONVIF-conformant' and 'fully featured on Avigilon hardware' as separate ideas.

Licensing and the cost shape - two suites, opposite models

Unity (on-prem) is a one-time capital expense, per camera channel, in three editions - Core (<=24 cameras/server), Standard (<=75), Enterprise (300+) - with self-learning analytics included on the Avigilon cameras you bought. Alta (cloud) flips to an operating expense - a per-camera subscription bundling recording, storage, updates, and remote access. Illustrative 200-camera, 5-year software only: Unity \$150 x 200 = \$30,000 (software only; you run the servers and storage); Alta \$25 x 200 x 12 x 5 = \$300,000 (the whole service, no infrastructure). They look wildly different because they buy different things. Compare the shapes on the same five-year footing - storage and servers included - before you sign. Figures illustrative; integrators discount real quotes.

Where Avigilon fits - and where it doesn't

| Choose Avigilon when... | Look elsewhere when... |
|---|---|
| Self-learning analytics with minimal tuning are the job; you want cameras + software + edge AI from one NDAA-compliant, US-listed vendor; you already run Motorola radios / command center and want one situational-awareness fabric. Government, public safety, education, transit, utilities. | You have a large multi-vendor camera estate you refuse to replace - the open-platform camp (Milestone) fits better, because Avigilon's best features assume Avigilon cameras. You want one simple product, not a Unity-vs-Alta fork. You are wary of ecosystem lock-in. |

The four questions to ask before you commit

| |
|--|
| Suite - is this an on-prem Unity job (own servers, CapEx) or a server-less, multi-site Alta job (cloud, OpEx subscription)? Choosing the wrong suite is the #1 Avigilon scoping error. |
| Cameras - are you committing to Avigilon cameras to get the self-learning analytics (UMD, UAD, Appearance Search), or recording third-party ONVIF cameras and forgoing them? |
| Ecosystem - does the value case quietly assume Motorola radios or command-center integration? Price that adoption and its lock-in up front. |
| Cost - did you put Unity's per-channel CapEx and Alta's per-camera subscription on the same five-year footing, storage and servers included, as any rival quote? |

Engineering and procurement guidance, not legal advice. Appearance Search matches a person's appearance (clothing, shape) - not the same legal thing as biometric face recognition, which matches face geometry. Face templates are special-category data under GDPR Art. 9; biometric and plate features carry consent and retention duties (BIPA, local law). NDAA Sec. 889 is a procurement gate. Confirm specifics with qualified counsel.