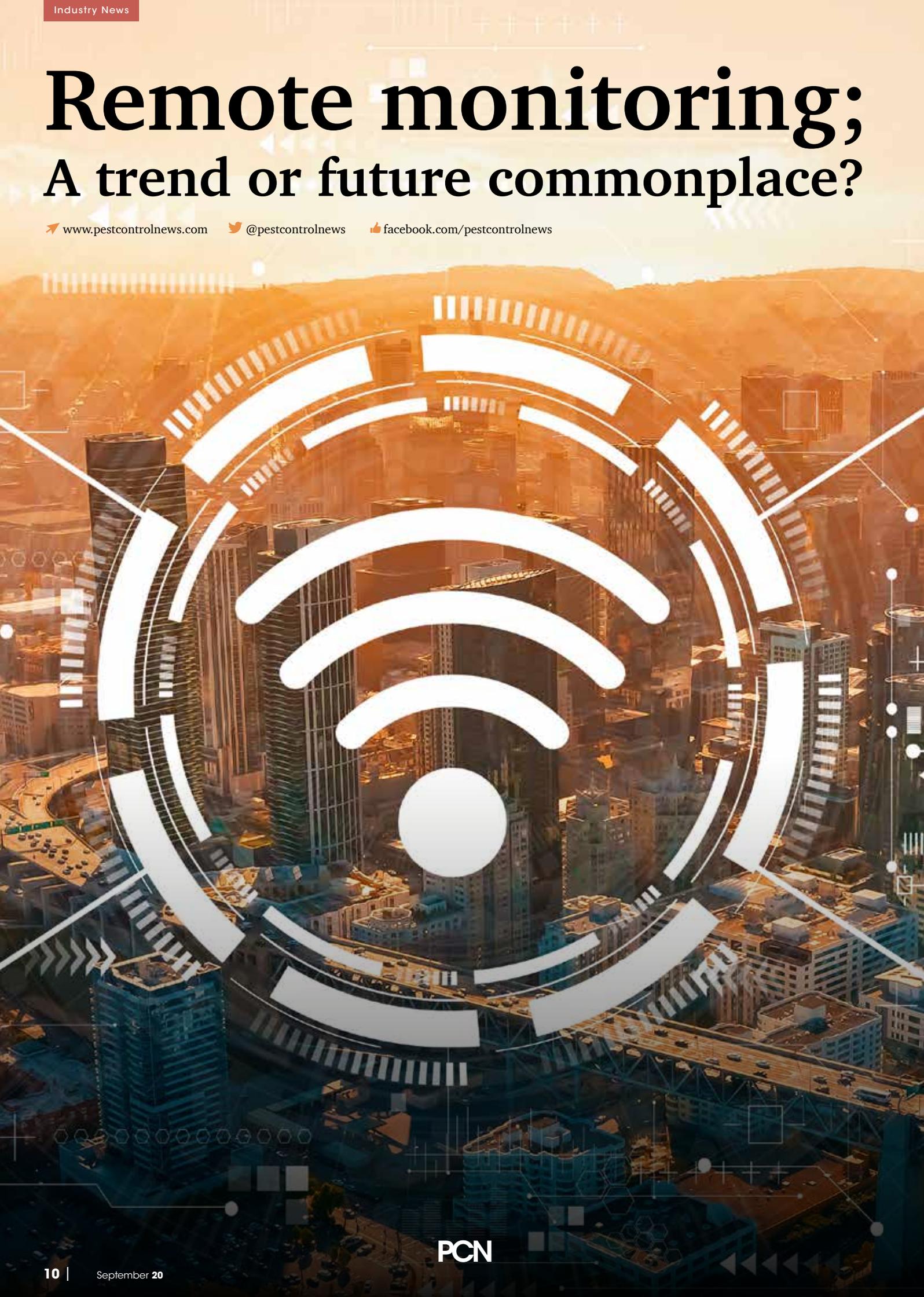


Remote monitoring; A trend or future commonplace?

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With more remote monitoring systems arriving on the UK market it seems digital monitoring is here to stay. Large company investment from the likes of Bayer and Bell Laboratories are a concrete sign that remote rodent monitoring systems are not going anywhere. Remote systems may have started out as a novel trend for the most tech savvy and willing to invest among us, but as prices come down and the market for remote systems opens up, there will be a system to suit all budgets in the not too distant future.

Why do we need remote monitoring?

Pest controllers have always had an issue of not being able to be on site 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Remote monitoring (in whichever form is chosen) may well prove to be the missing link. Wildlife and trail cameras have also improved in recent years and are quickly becoming a go to for questionable pests, challenging scenarios and surveillance. As we ease out of lockdown, remote monitoring technologies could have been crucial for maintaining service in these unprecedented times – the wonderment of hindsight, but lessons for the future.

There is also the huge bonus of safety. Those awkward rodent monitoring points deep in a fully automated, guarded pick and pack warehouse, roof space, false ceiling, wall voids, floor voids, unattended sites - problem solved. Access is only needed to set up the system and if there are any captures or alerts, effectively and safely monitoring these high-risk areas. Not that this takes anything away from the professional pest controller – it simply adds to the arsenal. An extra tool to define presence, monitor more widely, satisfy auditors and allow more time for inspection and observation on site as opposed to time spent monitor checking. The system may also help to tick several audit requirements.

Another clear sign of the investment from industry suppliers is from PestWest, at the moment the only manufacturer to develop a remote fly monitor in the form of the FlyDetect® range of electronic fly units. This system uses a tiny camera to take a photo of the glue board in the unit. The system can be customised with alerts at certain fly count numbers, and also take readings for temperature and humidity (invaluable if you are the person carrying out trend analysis, where temperature and time of year is essential for expected trends and limits).

What is available?

There a few established systems already, including the GreenTrap online system (GTO) with monitoring sensors that detect movement on whatever monitoring point has been installed.

Rentokil's PestConnect system, Futura's Emitter system, Victor's VLink (building on their electric shock traps with digital links and alerts).

The Wedge system from Traptec, adding digital alert capability to normal rat and mouse traps, now with a central hub base station.

Signal, one of the most recent to market; has nevertheless quickly become established due to the all in one solution. There are several types of monitor available, all with the sensing system built in. For example, the mouse trap base has the digital alert chip, the battery and everything else all in the base. A break back trap looks like a normal break back trap with a very clever technology inside.

All of the above are already available in the UK. The Bayer Rodent Monitoring System (RMS) and Bell Laboratories system are both expected on the UK market very soon, forecast for 2021.

What will help?

Flexibility is needed for all the products that service the remote monitoring arena. Flexibility will be in the shape of the type of the monitor, from remote sensors to integral traps. We may even see glue boards with movement sensors becoming a feature.



Even the most technologically sound mind can get frustrated by new technology, so the correct support for product set up is essential. Practise beforehand may also be a valuable exercise before heading off to site to install a new system.

Has pest control finally reached a digital age?

In summary with advancing technology in all other areas of our being, digital pest control might just be the boost that brings us right up to date. However, it is not a case of conducting a routine visit by just looking on our mobile phone or tablet. The pest professional still has to be skilled, digital pest control monitoring may be just what is needed to do a safer job and monitor a wider area. Most importantly it should allow extra time for the paramount site inspection rather than box checking, with the added bonus of being able to monitor 24/7 in real time thus saving labour for call outs and false activations. Future digital remote monitoring will no doubt encompass all other types of pest monitor too.



Futura's Emitter Trail Camera

