

West Haven Police Department stays on the leading edge of law enforcement through technology.

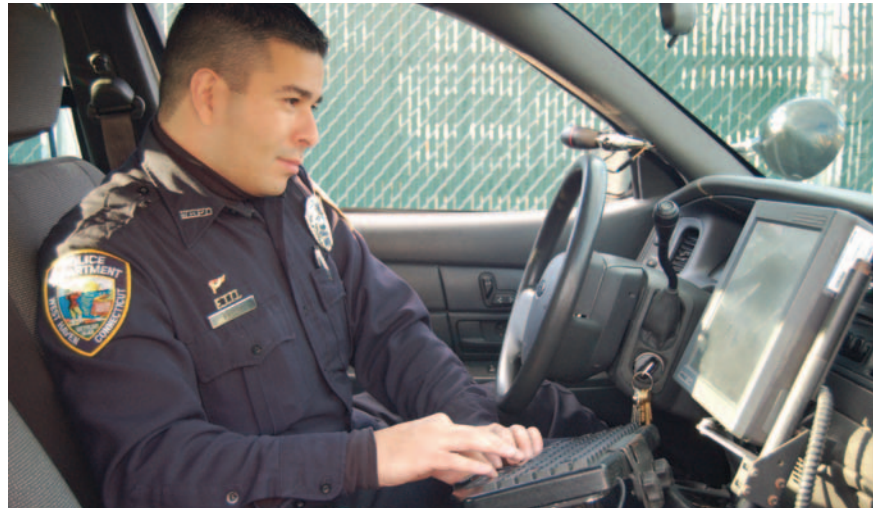
Overview

■ **Business Challenge**

The West Haven Police Department (WHPD) in Connecticut wants to stay at the forefront of public service and crime fighting by giving its officers the best possible tools. To do that, the department needs to leverage the latest in technology, working with industry specialists to create new solutions that enable officers to be more effective in the field, help dispatchers make better use of resources, and save both time and money.

■ **Solution**

The WHPD is teaming with IBM and IBM Business Partner DCS to implement first-of-their-kind technological innovations, including rapid, in-car display of mugshots for officers in the field, live tracking of police vehicles and a way for citizens to file reports directly via the Web. All data is stored centrally, enhancing security.



■ **Key Benefits**

- *Near instant mugshot availability*
- *Improved officer safety and effectiveness*
- *Accurate, live tracking of police vehicles*
- *Simplified access to data*
- *Enhanced security and management*
- *Citizens Web-based complaint filing saves time and money*

More effective policing through IT

Technology has long been used to make police work more effective. In-car data feeds, for example, have been in use for more than a quarter of a century. As technology has become more capable and less expensive, its use in law enforcement has also progressed.

The West Haven Police Department (WHPD) in Connecticut has long been a leader in the adoption of robust technology. It's this long-term commitment to innovation – constantly seeking to give its personnel better ways to accomplish their mission – that sets the WHPD apart.

Business Benefits

- Near instant mugshot availability to officers makes identification more accurate
- Photos delivered to officers in approximately ten seconds, versus as long as two minutes
- Accurate, live tracking of vehicles improves situational awareness and accountability, and helps dispatchers efficiently manage resources
- Keeping data centralized enhances access, efficiency, security and management
- Field-deployed technology improves officer safety and effectiveness, enhancing public safety
- Involvement of citizens via Web-based complaint filing saves significant amounts of money and enables WHPD officers to better focus on community policing
- Enables simplified access to data for the entire WHPD

“By doing something relatively simple like this, leveraging our technology, we can transform much of the way we operate.”

– Sergeant Joseph Wynosky,
West Haven Police Department

The department's three most recent initiatives clearly display this commitment. They include: a way to display mugshots in police vehicles on request in a matter of seconds, which helps officers positively verify the identity of suspects; live tracking of police vehicles with continuously updated maps available to both officers and dispatchers; and a Web site that allows the public to file routine reports directly, saving time and money.

Mugshots in seconds

Making mugshots available to officers in the field is an important new innovation that helps WHPD officers do their jobs better and more safely. WHPD, working with IBM Business Partner DCS, has devised a simple, highly effective method of displaying the photos only seconds after an officer requests the information – far faster than was previously possible.

“Having photos out in the car is very important to us,” says Sergeant Joseph Wynosky, one of two WHPD officers responsible for the department's IT operations. “It lets the officer make positive identification much more easily, and that not only protects the public, it increases officer safety because they know for sure who they're dealing with – often, individuals will give false or misleading information when questioned. And having it come up quickly is critical. The officer can't afford to sit around waiting for the picture to come up, not when a fast decision has to be made.”

With the new DCS system, when an individual is arrested, a photo is taken with a digital camera located in the booking area. The image then gets stored on the department's IBM System i5™ platform, where it is instantly available on request to everyone in the department, both in the field and at headquarters. But that in itself is not the true power of the solution: Speed of delivery to officers in the field is all-important, and existing solutions could take as long as two minutes to display a photo when a request was made. That was deemed unacceptable.

The solution was simple and brilliant. “I went to the head of our programming team and presented him with the problem,” says Mary Rooney-Lucas, president of DCS. “The next morning he came in all excited and said ‘I've got it!’ All we had to do was create a direct HTML link and present that to the officer as a secured, clickable tag. All of our IBM System i™ development work is made possible with the use of BCD's WebSmart – a developer's dream come true – that includes numerous tools to enhance programming productivity.

“We were able to set it up incredibly quickly. Within three days of the request from WHPD, we’d implemented the solution. It worked right away...and the longest they now wait for a photo to pop up in the car is 12 seconds. They couldn’t believe it. They started using it in the field right away.”

Knowing where the officers are

Situational awareness is highly important in police work. Dispatchers need to know where all of the officers are, all the time, and the officers themselves can benefit from being able to see how far away backup units are. To facilitate this, WHPD has installed the DCS Automated Vehicle Locator system, which takes GPS data from each police car and plots it in real time on a map available both to dispatchers and officers in the field. “We can see at a glance which units are closest to an incident, and we can readily see which units are busy because they glow on the map,” Wynosky says. “In addition, the system stores this information, so if there’s any question about whether an officer was—or was not—in a particular place at a particular time, we can prove it.”

Involving the public

The latest innovation at WHPD is an entirely new way of handling routine police calls, for things like lost items, abandoned cars and the like: a way for citizens to register complaints via the Web. WHPD is implementing a secure Web site (called Online Anytime) and process to enable this capability. “The motivation is to save money,” Wynosky says. “We did a study here recently, and we found that since 2000 we’ve had over 10,000 routine calls, in which we’ve had to send officers out. Each one takes an hour or so, and our costs, in between officer pay, wear and tear on the vehicles, fuel and so forth, run to about US\$150 per hour. The numbers are significant. By doing something relatively simple like this, leveraging our technology, we can transform much of the way we operate.”

Centralization and security are key

One of the guiding principles behind WHPD’s use of technology is centralization. “We’ve all seen the reports of sensitive information gone missing,” Wynosky says. “It seems we read every couple of weeks that another laptop gets stolen, containing secret data. We avoid that by not putting any data on our field computers at all. It’s all stored centrally on our IBM System i5 solution and served up to our officers via a secure, wireless link and a Web browser.” If a computer or even a police car is stolen, the department simply blocks access to the system and no data is compromised.

Key Components

Hardware

- IBM System i5

Software

- Custom DCS applications
- BCD WebSmart System i Web Development Solution
- BCD Nexus Portal and Clover Query

IBM Business Partner

- DCS
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Why it matters

The West Haven Police Department is constantly working to protect the public better, and has leveraged technology to great effect in order to accomplish that mission. Whether it’s the rapid delivery of mugshots to officers to help them positively identify suspects, GPS tracking of police vehicles or involving the public directly in police work, the WHPD’s initiatives have made crime fighting safer, more secure and more effective.

Keeping the data stored centrally also makes for considerable cost savings in terms of data management. "We've got 30 vehicles out there. Consider that to store the data on the laptops, we'd have to physically update it on a routine basis. That might take 30, even 40 minutes per system. That's a lot of wasted time and money," Wynosky says. "Not to mention the delay in getting information out to the field. With our system, the minute any information goes into the system, it's available to everyone."

A sound technology base

West Haven Chief of Police Ronald M. Quagliani emphasizes the importance of the department's technology platform. It's not just about the new capabilities that the WHPD is implementing. "Reliability of data is paramount to increasing officer safety out in the field," he says. "That's why the WHPD relies on IBM."

Sergeant Wynosky elaborates on this, noting that the WHPD's longstanding reliance on IBM technology bucked some trends in law enforcement. "In the '90s there was a lot of pressure to move everything over to Windows," he says. "Green-screen applications were going out of favor and seen as old and clunky. But a GUI by itself is just eye candy. To us, our central system is mission-critical. Reliability, manageability, performance and above all security are all-important. That's why we initially deployed IBM servers, and why we've stayed with the System i platform—it's served us well. We've all seen how Windows has become vulnerable to security breaches, and how often you need to do system updates. To be sure, we've used some Windows applications like our old booking system—but the core technology has always been IBM and it will continue to be."

For more information

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