Case Study
Mobile Solution for Local Council

The Client

The City of Belmont is a vibrant community located 6 kilometres from Perth CBD with a population of around 31,000. The City aims to provide an environment that is attractive, safe, healthy and prosperous by working closely with the local Police service and the Office of Crime Prevention to ensure a collaborative and coordinated approach to crime prevention. Part of this initiative includes operating a security patrol service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The Challenge

Preventing graffiti and vandalism, detect and prosecuting offenders are key tasks for the City of Belmont. During 2008, 15,295 incidents of graffiti were reported in Belmont, up from 9955 the previous year, at a clean-up cost of $212,779 (Source: The West Australian).

Shaun Nancarrow, Coordinator of the City's Crime Prevention and Ranger Services, recognised that current resources were ineffective and set about looking for a cost effective, flexible solution which would allow capture of high quality mobile video data and sharing of this information quickly and effectively.

The Journey

City of Belmont, like most local authorities, had used traditional CCTV systems to combat crime, but fixed cameras only allow monitoring of a small area and are not flexible. The city's vehicles were fitted with analogue cameras and a DVR to record incidents but had no way of quickly sharing data. One of the major problems is that crime doesn't always occur in the same area at the same time as human behaviour is unpredictable so monitoring systems need to be flexible in order to be able to respond effectively.

A system that allowed both internal and external users remote access to the vehicle cameras would allow the Belmont security patrols to work effectively with government agencies and security services alike, enable crucial real-time data to be shared immediately cutting response times.

The Discovery

In looking for a suitable solution Shaun was introduced to the ETCorp GPAC System™ by the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) officer, Ken Raine. DEC was already successfully using the GPAC System™ to stream live data from cameras and chemical sensors allowing online environmental monitoring. After seeing the GPAC System™ in action Shaun was impressed by the functionality of the system, particularly the internet connection which allowed the DEC to remotely access high quality images and decide on the appropriate level of risk management.

State of the Art Solution

ETCorp's GPAC System™ is a unique software platform that allows remote monitoring and control of any fixed or mobile camera or device. Real time video and data can be securely accessed from a standard web browser either on a computer or mobile phone, from any chosen location. The GPAC System™ is completely flexible, enabling ETCorp to develop a cost effective monitoring system based on the City of Belmont's requirements.

The in-vehicle GPAC System™ installed in the "Eyes on the Street" vehicles features:

* The ability to browse directly into the vehicle from any PC or a PDA
* Open standards/vendor neutral operating platform
* Rugged compact Car PC and wireless 3G Modem
* High resolution Day/Night IP Axis camera to provide real time video
* Secure logins & data audit trails
* Automatic data quality and compliance checks
* SMS for critical data alarms
* Scalability to quickly and easily expand the system
* Option to connect to other IP based cameras at will

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When the Belmont rangers are on patrol the GPAC System™ enables them to record real time video of incidents and share the footage instantaneously with internal and external stakeholders such as the police, allowing fast response and capture of quality evidence. Monitoring can be controlled remotely as well as from within the vehicle and personnel can be notified via SMS or email of any trigger, event or system failure.

Simple Implementation

The City of Belmont operates "Eyes on the Street" vehicles, which were retro fitted with a GPAC System™ and an additional camera was added to bring the total to four per vehicle. An Axis converter was installed to allow conversion of the existing analogue video to digital output. ETCorp completed the installation in just two days, enabling the operators to continue to serve the people of Belmont with minimal disruption.

Effective Results

Shaun Nancarrow believes the GPAC System™ has been a wise investment of City resources. "We were going to invest $1 Million in CCTV infrastructure; however now with the GPAC System™ we can achieve so much more because of the networking capability, less cabling and less engineering".

The City of Belmont's installation of the GPAC System™ has resulted in better graffiti prevention and more successful prosecutions. Cameras can be set to record only upon sensing activity; "The GPAC System™ has removed the need for continual videoing or stake outs, meaning we can obtain data from areas previously not covered by CCTV and capture quality evidence."

Shaun cites ease of connectivity and configuration as key new capacities offered by the GPAC System™. The system is easily extended to adapt to future changes; new cameras and devices can be added and configured within minutes using simple web browser software. The City now has the option to connect into other digital security cameras, add GPS duress alarms and head-cams and is currently looking to extend the GPAC System™ to cover fixed CCTV installations. The communications provided with the GPAC System™ will allow for integration between the fixed and mobile solutions.

Speaking in the West Australian Newspaper recently, Mayor Glenys Godfrey recognised the advantages of systems able to directly respond to events as they occurred, with no need for operators.

“When an event is triggered, (the software) will notify our Neighbourhood Watch security guards by SMS, email the last few minutes of footage to our security control room, while also allowing police and security to log directly into the triggered camera,” she said.

The GPAC System™ has provided the City of Belmont with a fast, reliable and cost effective solution to the problem of monitoring wide areas for criminal damage. The benefits are being felt by all who live and work in Belmont and now enjoy a cleaner, safer environment. Other local authorities are currently in discussions to discover how ETCorp can bring them the same benefits.