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REALLY TOUGH ON CRIME

LEICESTERSHIRE CONSTABULARY TAKES POLICE COMMUNICATIONS INTO
THE 21ST CENTURY WITH PANASONIC TOUGHBOOK

Law enforcement organisations across the UK have eagerly embraced mobile technologies as part of a world-class law enforcement strategy. In fact, the UK government has set a target for 10,000 mobile data devices to be in use throughout the country's police forces by October 2009. As a result, mobile phones, Blackberries and PDAs have already begun playing a more visible role.



TOUGHBOOK



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TOUGHBOOK IN ACTION A WELCOME ADDITION TO THE FORCE



Yet as useful as smartphones are for bobbies on the beat, they can only run up to six software applications. Police have long admired the greater functionality of laptop computers. But until recently, notebooks were not considered to be tough or durable enough for the field. So when Leicestershire's Chief Superintendent Jason Masters saw how organisations like the fire brigade had successfully deployed in-vehicle laptops with available government funding, he decided to implement a similar solution for his force's fleet of nearly 300 vehicles. "Our vision was to empower our officers in the field with the very same resources back at base," remembers Masters. "We wanted to give our officers – and our communities – the most reliable, rugged tools available."

After an exhaustive evaluation of several notebooks, Leicestershire Constabulary chose the Panasonic Toughbook CF-19 for its broad functionality, versatility and durability. "The Panasonic CF-19 allowed us to replicate the entire suite of about 70 software applications available back at base," remembers Inspector Sanjiv Pattani, Leicestershire's Mobile Information Project Manager. "We could essentially extend our

entire set of IT tools to officers where they need it most – out in the field." Leicestershire's force took delivery of its first laptop in April 2008, and began installing them throughout the fleet after a short but instantly successful trial. By March 2009, a majority of the force's vehicles will be equipped with a unit.

TAKING IT TO THE STREET

Today, patrol officers can use the Toughbook's 3G mobile broadband connection to access a rich set of databases and resources in real time with very little computer training, including internal websites, crime records, intelligence logs, and command and control logs. Now officers at the scene have as much information as their colleagues back at base. They can update and deliver information in real time directly from the field, and they can instantly check a point of law in the Police National Legal Database (PNLD). Live links into databases like the automatic number plate recognition system put yet another powerful tool in officers' hands. Now they can instantly see every detail about a vehicle's history and ownership; tax and insurance information; if the car is on the road illegally – even if the driver is telling the truth.

IN THE DOCK

One vitally important factor behind the Leicestershire force's decision to choose the CF-19 was because it works so well with the Tempus ruggedized vehicle dock. This allows the laptop to be mounted vertically against the dashboard, making it easy to read the screen and operate the keyboard. It protects the CF-19, and allows for quick undocking and re-docking via a simple recessed release catch that can be locked if desired.

THE IDEAL PATROL PARTNER

Thanks to the Panasonic CF-19 and the Tempus vehicle dock, the Leicestershire Constabulary is the first police force in the UK that can produce crime reports at the scene. Patrol officers can demount the ruggedized notebook, run applications, and quickly complete all paperwork without clerical support or returning to base. And unlike PDAs that must be issued to individual officers, Toughbooks can be assigned to a specific vehicle and used continuously by four times as many users. "Extending the force's advanced set of information tools into the field represents a significant savings in time and resources," says Inspector Sanjiv Pattani, Leicestershire's Mobile Information Project Manager.

BUILDING A VISION

Leicestershire Constabulary's officers overwhelmingly recommend the CF-19. The Toughbook has already saved thousands of man-hours, and has allowed force members to focus greater attention on protecting citizens. In fact, a recent Leicestershire Constabulary independent work study shows that officers now spend, on average, only 30% of their time back at the station on paperwork – the visibility equivalent of 200 extra officers. Yet for Masters, this is only the beginning. The chief superintendent's growing vision for the Panasonic CF-19 also includes integrating voice recognition and onscreen signature functionality to automate the process of taking statements. "The CF-19 is really giving us a scalable platform that will allow us to continue to build out additional services in the future," he says. "We're limited only by our imaginations."

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