

# Crime Stoppers

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department continues a tradition of innovative thinking with cutting edge applications.



“Our goal is not just to lock the bad guys up, but to build problem-solving partnerships with our citizens to prevent the next crime.”

— Ron Horton, Information Services Manager, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department



# The CMPD uses a variety of HP equipment, including more than 600 HP notebooks in offices and police cruisers...

Charlotte, N.C. and surrounding Mecklenburg County have been known as hot spots of free and forward thinking, independent innovation and downright rebellion.

In fact, a full year before the Founding Fathers jumped on the revolution bandwagon by issuing the Declaration of Independence, colonists in the city of Charlotte were busy penning furious missives deriding British loyalists and virtually declaring themselves free of English rule.

Today, innovation and foresight continue to be guiding factors in the region, with the latest revolution coming in the form of technology.

At the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD), that technological revolution is working to help safeguard the same principals and ideals that inspired city leaders in 1775.

"The force is very big on community policing and preventing crime," said Ron Horton, information services manager for CMPD. "Our goal is not just to lock the bad guys up, but to build problem-solving partnerships with our citizens to prevent the next crime."

## **Mechanizing modernization**

The department's proactive stance a few years ago led to a Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grant in order to finance public safety improvements. A portion of the grant funds were dedicated to developing methods to store a wide variety of incident data for use in analyzing, anticipating and solving crimes.

"We are mechanizing more of our investigative data collection," explained Horton.

Common incident reporting forms are now being formatted for the department's Web-based information system, and eventually will provide a quick and easy

template for officers to complete during common types of investigations and traffic stops.

## **HP support**

These reports - along with other criminal activity records - now are being entered into the department's databases where, through a Briyante Corp. justice integration server, law enforcement officials will soon not only access, but compare and analyze stored data in order to prevent and solve crimes.

To support these goals, the CMPD uses a variety of HP equipment, including more than 600 HP notebooks in offices and police cruisers, nearly 40 HP ProLiant servers, and an HP Storage Area Network (SAN).

Given CMPD's cutting edge technology today, it's hard to believe that only a decade ago the department - which now includes close to 2,000 employees - relied on a technical infrastructure that was composed of an unwieldy mainframe and various workstations.

The department currently boasts a staff of 30 people who deal exclusively in "computer technology solutions," according to Horton.

"We do not have a hired-out help desk - we do all that ourselves," Horton explained. "We do our own application development, and have a technical writer on staff."

Over the years, the department's IT team has installed a computer aided dispatch (CAD) system, a records management system (RMS) accessible from patrol cars, a property management system and an application that delivers information to field officers via a wireless wide area network.

## **Analyze this**

Now the department is moving away from simple input and organization of information, to utilizing that stored data in ways that will benefit both officers and the community.

Throughout their progressions and upgrades, Horton said his team continues to depend on HP for reliable, cutting edge equipment.



HP notebooks in officer's vehicles allow access to a plethora of stored information on suspects' backgrounds and prior incidents. Mug shots soon will be available for officers on the street to view instantly from their vehicles.

But the implications of having such a vast amount of data literally at the fingertips of officers and investigators go far beyond simply knowing if an arrest warrant has been issued for a certain person. Several years ago, according to Horton, a serial killer terrorized the Charlotte area - ending the lives of nine women. At the time of the investigation, no common thread linking the victims could be found.

After the perpetrator had been caught, however, officers discovered the man had met each of his victims while working at fast-food restaurants.

"What we are looking for is building a way that would help us pick up on things we don't really know about yet," said Horton. "What we've put in our database could, as a new case comes in, help us notice similarities - even similarities in, for example, victim's occupations."

#### **Protecting the protectors**

Using new HP equipment and IT staff know-how, officers will soon be safer as they perform their mission of protecting the citizens of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area.

An anticipated "deconfliction" application will let officers on the street know if other law enforcement personnel are in the area, or if other department operations are in progress near their location.

"If I tell the system where I am going, it might let me know that the vice squad has an undercover operation going on, so I can check with them before entering the

area," explained Horton. "It prevents officers from facing each other in an untenable situation where one is undercover and the other is not."

Such broad-based security for both the citizens of Charlotte-Mecklenburg and the officers who serve them is what the CMPD's technological advancements are all about.

#### **Charlotte's web**

Web-based tools even allow Charlotte area residents to take part in their own protection through an online non-emergency crime reporting system that went live in February.

Nonemergency crimes, such as property damage or auto theft, typically comprise a large part of an average officer's workload. Now citizens can log on to the system, file certain types of reports and officers can respond as necessary.

Furthermore, drivers involved in car accidents can now access accident reports online, saving a tremendous amount of CMPD staff time that would normally be spent providing such reports to citizens.

Because CMPD operations are so large and diverse - with auto patrol, bicycle and foot patrols, motorcycle officers, lake patrol, and even two helicopters - enhanced wireless operations also are a part of the future picture of the department.

Naturally officers in cruisers already are operating wirelessly, but other officers will likely sport handheld computing devices in the near future. High-speed wireless connectivity for officers in autos also is in the works.

### Service with a smile

Horton said his IT department works diligently to provide technology that supports members of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department in the most innovative and effective way possible.

Throughout their progressions and upgrades, Horton said his team continues to depend on HP for reliable, cutting edge equipment.

"Our users are our best source of new ideas," explained Horton. "And there's a great deal of enthusiasm out there."

If enthusiasm and effective applications are an indication of the support Horton and his team will receive for implementing even more cutting edge improvements, then they are likely to remain busy for a very long time. And if all the hard work means a safer community and better protected officers, Horton said his team is more than willing to put in the effort.

"We've already seen success. And success just breeds more success," Horton said. "That's a good thing."

## Challenge

- Implementing technology that effectively and efficiently supports the requirements of officers and other personnel.

## Solution

- HP technology enables the department's IT team and provides officers in the field with instant access to records management and property management systems.
- A variety of HP equipment, including more than 600 HP notebooks in police cruisers, nearly 40 HP ProLiant servers and an HP Storage Area Network.

## Results

- Law enforcement personnel receive better information, improving officer safety and providing better protection for citizens.

For the latest contract and pricing information, see [www.hp.com/go/govcatalog](http://www.hp.com/go/govcatalog) or call 888/887-2081.

© 2004 Hewlett-Packard Development Company, L.P. The information contained herein is subject to change without notice. The only warranties for HP products and services are set forth in the express warranty statements accompanying such products and services. Nothing herein should be construed as constituting an additional warranty. HP shall not be liable for technical or editorial errors or omissions contained herein.

5982-3800EN, 01/2004

