



Sussex Police's Operation Crackdown

The Need

Abandoned vehicles are a national problem. They represent significant economic, social and environmental costs. It is estimated that last year 350,000 vehicles were illegally dumped in the UK costing the Government hundreds of millions of pounds.

The longer vehicles remain abandoned the more the costs escalate. Thieves strip parts from cars, they become targets for vandals and arsonists and many are taken and re-abandoned elsewhere.

Commenting on a recent initiative to track down and prosecute owners and offenders Environment Minister, Michael Meacher said:

"The recent rapid increase in abandoned cars, due to the sharp fall in scrap metal prices, is now emerging as one of the biggest menaces facing our towns and cities. They are not only an eyesore, but can become a potential firebomb. With these tough new measures we are determined to stamp out the problem."

Local Problem

The situation in Sussex reflects the national picture. Last year 32,000 vehicles were abandoned in the county costing the taxpayer £10million. In almost all cases inadequacies in records prevent the authorities from tracing owners and recovering these costs.

On the 3rd September 2001 Sussex Police began a pioneering project using new technology to provide a solution. 'Operation Crackdown' is a multi-agency pilot study

designed to save significant costs by reducing the time a vehicle remains abandoned from an average 28 days to just 48 hours. The project brought together Sussex Police, Arun District Council, Chichester District Council, West Sussex County Council and West Sussex Fire Brigade with the DVLA, several recovery companies and Enline plc.

Manchester Business School were asked to investigate the true cost of the problem in Sussex. Their report concluded that the average cost of £300 to deal with each vehicle could be reduced by 70% if it could be removed within the new target response time, netting a saving of £7million a year.

The Solution

"The idea was to use the Internet to provide a way for abandoned vehicles to be reported and to co-ordinate a rapid response form the various agencies", explained Inspector Ali Darge of Sussex Police. "But the system obviously had to be secure and provide differing levels of access depending on who it was using it."

The system also had to work across a variety of different technology platforms and provide a simple uniform user interface. Ali Darge went on to explain: "The Abandoned Vehicles system will use a standard browser to make information available over the Force's Intranet, a Partnership Extranet as well as providing access to the public via the Internet."

To ensure a robust and highly secure system Sussex Police turned to Enline plc, a company

that has been supplying IT solutions to the public sector for over 15 years. Enline recently secured a National Framework Agreement with PITO (Police Information Technology Organisation) for the supply of the SiteMinder Browser Access Control product that is now being used by five police forces to control access to web based services.

"SiteMinder is the obvious choice for this kind of system", claimed Richard Mardling, Business Development Manager at Enline. "It is the only product that combines the highest levels of security - essential in a police system - with the flexibility necessary to accommodate many users and potential applications."

The main benefits of SiteMinder are:

- Ensuring only the right people see the right information
- Enabling single sign-on across both intranet web based services and across multi-agency web based services
- Utilising existing authentication schemes from username/password (NT, LDAP etc.), token based, PKI, biometrics and smart cards
- Increases security whilst reducing management costs through the provision of a single point to manage the web services security
- Detailed multi-server audit trail provides simple traceability



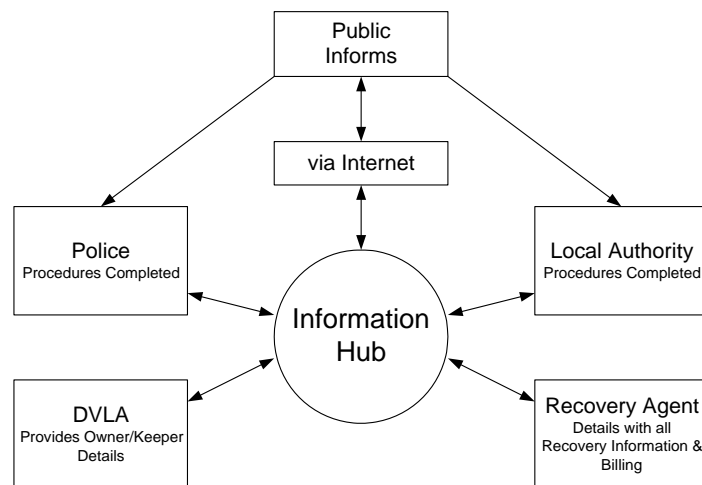
Operation Crackdown in Operation

The Abandoned Vehicles System (AVS) will allow anyone in the pilot area to report an abandoned vehicle either by telephone to Sussex Police or the Partner Local Authorities and via the world-wide web, for example using www.sussex.police.uk. Members of the general public reporting abandoned vehicles via the Internet will be presented with an easy to use online form to record information about the vehicle, location and when it was abandoned. Sussex Police also recently completed the development of an innovative online map reporting tool with MultiMap.com which allows users of the system to indicate the specific location of an abandoned vehicle by clicking on a map rather than relying on a description of street names, numbers or other landmarks. Local Authority Inspectors, Police Officers and Traffic Wardens will have a different set of User Forms that can be used to enter more detail about a vehicle's condition, location and whether where it has been abandoned presents a hazard to other road users.

One of the most significant costs associated with abandoned vehicles is the requirement to inspect them before authorising removal. The AVS will make extensive use of digital images uploaded to the website along with vehicle and location details and it is hoped this technology will eventually obviate the need for many of the visits to scenes of abandoned vehicles.

During the pilot phase only the Police and Local Authorities will have access to the system. Full implementation is anticipated in February 2002, by which time the general public will also have secure access via SiteMinder.

The next stage of the project will also include the involvement of more local authorities, such as Crawley District Council and Horsham District Council and the DVLA.



"Our policing priorities are to reduce the level of recorded crime, reduce the number of vehicle crimes and improve the service to the public" explained Detective Inspector Merv Wyeth, who oversees Web Contact work for Sussex Police "We aim to do this by improving inter-agency working and providing a more streamlined 'One-Stop-Shop' through better call handling and the Internet."

"Enline have helped us to tackle the complex technical and security issues of establishing an extranet with our partners", said Merv Wyeth. "Their knowledge of the SiteMinder product, and expertise in this whole area, has been key to the development of the Abandoned Vehicles solution."

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