

GO-North East provide leadership in inter-agency intelligence sharing

The recent crises surrounding the tragic events at Soham, and with Victoria Climbié, have refocused peoples' minds on the need to share information.

The Bichard Inquiry highlighted the need for Police bodies to share intelligence. Government Office North East (GONE) has been developing their mandate in this area for a number of years, encouraging cross-agency operations to be undertaken. Their success to date has been nationally recognised.

Put simply, getting an overview of street-level issues is a vital strategic asset for local communities if Agencies are to work together to prevent, reduce or diffuse the incident of crime.

The GONE has been developing the inter-agency approach against crime for a number of years. The Office's approach now includes the majority of national agencies, as well as voluntary groups. Working closely with the Regional Crime Directorate within the Home Office, and Sunderland City Council, GONE developed and deployed an innovative solution known as North-East Regional Information Sharing System (NERISS).

Alan Brown, Regional Director with special responsibilities for Crime Reduction and Drug Intelligence, is a former Deputy Chief Constable of Northumbria Police. He has maintained a close involvement with NERISS as a key part of his role.

"For me, this is the most exciting exploitation of multi-agency intelligence to help the effort against crime that I have been involved in." says Alan, "We have

literally been able to demonstrate to agencies in real time how they can benefit from the sharing of information in a secure and controlled manner. I have been delighted that the agencies involved have shared in our vision and helped make NERISS and our other initiatives such a success"

It is hoped that NERISS will now be rolled out as a concept across more areas of the UK. "This is such a straightforward system, with robust architecture and a common sense approach by all the parties involved" said Mike Nelsey, Managing Director of Enline plc. "We have enabled NERISS to be delivered in a secure and scaleable manner, and ensured that we understood the drivers and issues of secure data sharing."

NERISS has been hosted on behalf of GONE by City of Sunderland Council. It uses GIS software which quite literally "graphically illustrates" the impact of crime on specific neighbourhoods and has been a key pathfinder for a wider national initiative to tackle the complexities of crime and disorder.

The problem – ensuring full security with fast-authorized access.

The NERISS solution is designed to allow fully secure multi-agency GIS datashare between different government organisations such as the police authority, the health authority, the fire service, social services and a range of other council and voluntary sector teams. All of these have a clear interest in rapid access to information about crime, not only to respond to incidents but also to plan resources and activities to

reduce the risk and incidence of crime.

NERISS is all about joined up government and coordinated services. However, this smarter way of working puts a considerable premium on secure, controlled usage of sensitive information, without compromising fast access when and where it is needed.

GONE wanted a way to support the sharing of GIS based information such as census data and crime trends between a number of organisations, and across any web browser, whilst ensuring the highest level of appropriate security. Without that assurance, none of this project would have been possible.

The solution – ease of use plus secure operation

From the start, City of Sunderland Council saw security planning was a vital component of the project. Towards the end of the pilot phase as the solution was linked to the internet, Enline plc, a reseller partner of Netegrity in the UK, were asked to do an audit and present recommendations for the security changes and architecture enhancements required for safe internet operation.

Enline proposed Netegrity's industry leading identity and access management product SiteMinder. This draws together the diverse range of existing components such as Apache Webserver, Esri GIS server, RSA ACE Server and Cisco PIX Firewall to achieve a unified security framework.

The most important factors in selecting SiteMinder were its native integration with RSA ACE Server and the core capability to centrally define and co-ordinate individual user web entitlements with fine levels of detail and granularity. Another benefit is the comprehensive logging and user tracking features, which allows administrators to extensively audit user activity. In other words, it ensures highly discriminated control of who sees what, where when and how, and it tracks, traces and reports all usage.

As the initiative draws in more personnel from the various partners, user administration can be delegated to the individual organisations' administrators, thereby increasing flexibility and reducing central administrative overheads.

Benefits – a sure route map to the future

SiteMinder user, administrator and strategic benefits include:

- Simple installation – ensuring minimum disruption.
- Easy to configure – enabling all user interests to be rapidly accommodated.
- Ease of use – ensuring fast uptake and instant impact across the organisation and beyond.
- Security and confidence – the number one priority.
- Complete user authentication and personalisation of systems – freeing users and teams to customise access to and utilisation of information for a wide variety of purposes.

- Full traceability and monitoring of usage.
- Enhanced management control – allows detailed specification of the level of information that a verified user is allowed to access within the application.
- Flexibility in provisioning – future proofed and scalable.
- Compatibility with any new standards – the system can change and develop without major new configuration.
- Integration with existing systems and with partner systems – essential to joined up e-Government.

About Crime Reduction Units

There are 10 Crime Reduction Directors; nine are based in the Government Offices for the Regions and one in the National Assembly for Wales Their main objective is to reduce crime and disorder in their area. In particular they support and monitor the 376 local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships established by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 so as to improve their effectiveness. They also work closely with the police, local authorities, voluntary sector and others who are involved in the partnerships. They:

- manage funding awarded under the Government's Crime Reduction Programme
- manage Partnership Development Funding to accelerate cross-cutting work on new information systems, to promote good practice and effective working arrangements;
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build links with Youth Offending Teams, Drug Action Teams, the Courts and the Prison Service and others to encourage a co-ordinated approach to crime reduction

The Crime Reduction Directors and their teams are committed to the effective promotion of race equality and more active communities in all the English Regions and Wales. Their work is helping to facilitate the fullest involvement of the voluntary sector and within communities towards regeneration, renewal and social inclusion.

In 2003 the teams integrated with the Government Offices to enable closer working with 'Other Government Departments' teams that are also based in the Government Offices.

About Enline plc

Enline plc provide security consultancy, design, implementation and support services to organisations throughout Europe. It is the NSPIS® Framework Agreement holder with the Police Information Technology Organisation. Consultants employed are CLAS, CISSP and SC certified.



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