

Brand Case Study

Northamptonshire Police

Making Mobile Data a Reality



Northamptonshire Police gets even Smarter with Mobile Data Solutions

Increasingly Police forces throughout the UK are implementing mobile technology to deliver critical information to patrol officers in the field. With Government initiatives targeted at improving public services and decreasing incidents of crime - Mobile data is proving to be an essential tool in helping police officers achieve these targets.

By implementing real-time data access it is ensuring instant, up-to-date and accurate information is available on the front line where it is needed. This is improving productivity throughout the police force by enhancing communications allowing real time access to live systems and data from out in the field. As a consequence this reduces office based activities allowing the officer to spend more time out on the street with the public.

Northamptonshire Police is a growing force which is committed to adopting and implementing new technology solutions within the force that help improve public service and allow them to stay one step ahead of the criminals.

In 2005, Northamptonshire Police embarked on an initiative of simplifying identity verification for their officers and staff out in the field by using smart card technology in conjunction with GPRS and Brand Communications 'Apollo' solutions.

The project was instigated by Northamptonshire Police's need to equip 130 Police Vehicles with fully fitted mobile data terminals. In the past, mobile data devices were issued on an individual basis and officers were expected to synchronise network security passwords before leaving the station.

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It would be impractical and unusable for officers to keep returning to the station to synchronise their own individual security settings on the independent mobile data devices. Therefore Northamptonshire Police needed to address accessibility for officers while still maintaining the high level of security to the force network. Northamptonshire also wanted to overcome the cumbersome logging on process, which could involve using four different passwords, at various stages, to gain access to the force network.

To solve the problem, Northamptonshire Police enlisted the help of Brand Communications to develop a system incorporating smart card technology. The system would enable Northamptonshire Police to share the mobile devices between users, and still retain full security of the force network. Officers would be able to logon and off the force network without needing any individual security setting on any particular machine.



Northamptonshire Police are using Smart Cards as a multi-function ID / Photo card for police officers and support staff across the force. The card is made up of a number of certificates and keys, which contain information required to access the force IT network and systems. To ensure data confidentiality, all information on the card can only be accessed by a pin-code. The smart card user undergoes security checks to determine that they are the owner of the card before access is granted. This authentication process brings an added level of security to Northamptonshire Police, securing both access to the device and subsequent connection to the IT network. If the card were lost or stolen it would be unusable without the user's pin, or should the pin be disclosed or the smart card compromised then ICT staff could simply revoke the user's certificates.

Brand's technology enhances the security of identity by using certificates to enable a two stage login. Brand Apollo makes use of multiple certificates by firstly allowing officers to log into the Windows desktop as a common user on any mobile data laptop. Then, by using a second certificate which is personal/unique to

the officer, encrypted access to the force network is established. Finally the Brand Apollo Server and Application Servers then authenticate the officers' details against Northamptonshire Police's certificate server.

Chris Wright, Systems Support Manager at Northamptonshire Police explains "Brand Communications VPN Client has significantly simplified the user logon process and enables Northamptonshire Police Officers to concentrate on the job in hand, rather than what the IT equipment is doing in the background."

The benefit of this new system is that a high level of security for Northamptonshire Police forces LAN is assured and this level of security is extended to the mobile work force. Smart cards are an integral component in the infrastructure solution developed by Brand Communications, which through advanced authentication mechanisms enable police officers to access network files and applications via GPRS in a secure and effective manner on any mobile data terminal.

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