

Axis covert cameras help police cut crime by 25%.



Organization:
Regional Police force

Location:
United Kingdom

Industry segment:
Government

Application:
Fight against repeat
crime, burglary and
vandalism

Axis partner:
Globe Microsystems

Mission

A regional police force in the UK needed to find a way to cut repeat and opportunistic crime such as burglary and vandalism without committing extra manpower.

Cutting repeat burglary and vandalism is currently one of the Home Office's* main priorities. Police forces across the country have been tasked with implementing new initiatives to tackle this type of crime.

Solution

A senior officer approached IT solutions expert, Globe Microsystems, with a request to develop a portable, covert surveillance solution which would be easy to install and required little or no end user technical knowledge.

Globe Microsystems outlined the cost of the project which enabled the police force to request funding from the Home Office. Once the force had secured the funding, Globe Microsystems was chosen to develop the solution which became the Detectacam.

Result

The Detectacam gives the police the ability to remotely monitor as an opportunist burglar enters a property and make an appropriate response, even as the offence is taking place. The units can be installed almost anywhere within minutes and relocated at the police force's discretion.

The Detectacam is a covert GSM video monitoring system which sends real time images back to a central monitoring station using Orange's high speed GSM data network. GSM was chosen because even if the phone lines to the building have been cut the Detectacam will still continue to record images and provide alerts. It provides a cable free installation, making it quick and easy to deploy and re-deploy. The Detectacam is concealed within everyday household items such as fan heaters, Hi-Fi speakers, A4 lever arch files or waste paper bins. The images are captured by AXIS 2100 Network Cameras which are also housed within this covert solution.

"We looked at a number of possible cameras but the network cameras from Axis Communications had the right web server technology to meet our requirements. And, since we began working on the project with Axis, they have provided excellent technical support to help us make this solution a reality."

Simon Peel, Managing director of Globe Microsystems

Triggered by movement

The Detectacam can be placed in a residential or commercial property and is activated by a 'key fob' similar to that used to activate a car alarm. When triggered - by movement - the Detectacam transmits a predetermined number of digital images to a local police incident room via GSM. Proprietary software developed by Globe Microsystems links the alert data to a SQL database which recognises its origin. Once the origin of the alert has been identified officers can view the images to verify whether or not it is a false alarm, before dispatching a response unit to the site.

Simon Peel, managing director of Globe Microsystems said: "Responding to false intruder alarms can take up a significant amount of valuable police time and quite often it is the same sites that are responsible for the false alarms. Enabling the force to filter out these false alerts was a priority for the final solution."

Images provide evidence

The Detectacam provides police forces with the capability to record any images linked to an alert, onto two separate 'write-once read-many' CDs. A force is free to use one recording for analysis purposes and maintain the integrity of the second recording so that it can be used to provide evidence as part of criminal proceedings. This enables the force to comply with the guidelines set out in the digital imaging procedure (March 2002), which has been developed by the Police Scientific Development Branch to ensure digital images can be used as evidence in criminal proceedings.

Total cost kept to a minimum

The Detectacam is an initiative from Operation Safe Homes, a force-wide operation set up to reduce burglary. Since its launch in October 2001, there has been a fall of 25% in the number of burglaries. The total cost of ownership for the police is kept to a minimum because it already has the back office technology in place to support the Detectacam.

Several other UK police forces keen to tackle repeat crime such as burglary are looking closely at the Detectacam initiative.

*The Home Office is the Government department responsible for internal affairs in England and Wales.



Above: The Detectacam is concealed within everyday house-hold items such as fan heaters

