Police Force Increases Visibility to Reduce Crime and Fear of Crime

North Wales Police adopted a unified videoconferencing and unified messaging solution on smartphones so that officers can spend less time traveling and more in the community.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
NORTH WALES POLICE
• Public Safety
• North Wales, United Kingdom
• 2600 employees
CHALLENGE
• Decrease crime and fear of crime
• Reduce costs
• Support green initiatives
SOLUTION
• Substituted virtual video meetings for meetings requiring travel
• Enabled officers on the street to access voicemail messages from their smartphones
RESULTS
• Saved US$173,162 (£100,000) annually on system lease and maintenance
• Eliminated 30 hours weekly in travel time in one district, for US$68,000 (£39,913) savings in six months
• Reduced carbon emissions by 2.8 tons in six months

Challenge

The North Wales Police force serves more than 660,000 residents with a team of 1600 police officers and 850 support personnel. The district's unique geography, 5600 square miles within which lies the highest mountain range in England and Wales, poses unusual challenges for everyday business processes. For example, driving a 140 mile round trip to the Crown Prosecution Service in Dolgellau to determine if a case is prosecutable can take up to four hours. "That's time that officers are not providing a visible police presence in the community," says Ian Davies, Head of Projects, North Wales Police. "And the cost of a trip is generally double the officer's salary because it includes fuel, tire wear, and more."

North Wales Police seeks innovative ways to keep officers on the streets because police visibility reduces crime — and fear of crime. Since 2007, North Wales Police officers have been able to access the police records management system (RMS) from their smartphones, saving trips to the office. But they still had to return to their home station to use their office phone number and manage their voicemail. "We wanted truly mobile communications that untied our officers and staff from their desktop phones," says Davies.

"We knew that solutions were available," says Keith Williams, IT development manager, North Wales Police. "The challenge was finding a solution that would not increase our overall communications costs."

Solution

North Wales Police engaged Affiniti, a Cisco® Gold Certified Partner, to implement a Cisco Unified Communications solution. "We already had a Cisco network and it made sense to use it as the platform for communications, as well," says Williams. "We don't have internal Information and Communication Technology (ICT) staff or engineers, so Cisco's reputation for reliability was important."

At the force Headquarters in the county of Conwy, Affiniti deployed Cisco Unified Communications Manager. The centralized system provides voice services over the network to all 75 police stations.

Affiniti made sure that even the smallest sites have 10 Mbps of bandwidth, which is ample to carry voice, video, and data traffic. The largest sites have 100 Mbps of bandwidth.

North Wales Police uses its Cisco Unified Communications solution not only for voice calls and voicemail, but also to transform everyday business processes to increase police visibility in the community. Examples of processes that have been transformed are consultations with the Crown Prosecution Service and citizen communications.

> "Seeing the other person [with videoconferencing] instead of just hearing their voice helps to increase trust and leads to a more productive conversation."
> —Ian Davies, Head of Projects, North Wales Police

Video Consultations

North Wales Police officers consult with solicitors at the Crown Prosecution Service in Dolgellau to determine if criminal charges will stand up in court. Previously, officers drove to the Crown Prosecution Service offices, a round trip of up to four hours. Now officers meet face to face with solicitors without the time and expense of travel, using Cisco Unified Video Advantage and Cisco Unified Videoconferencing. "Seeing the other person instead of just hearing their voice helps to increase trust and leads to a more productive conversation," says Davies. During the conference, the solicitor and police officer can also share and edit documents over the web, saving Crown Prosecution Service employees from having to learn to use North Wales Police's applications.

North Wales Police is also implementing Cisco Unified Communications video solutions for:

- **One-to-one communications:** Personnel in different stations use Cisco Unified Video Advantage and a webcam on their PCs to initiate video calls as easily as they would initiate phone calls, just by dialing a five-digit extension. "The ease of use is revolutionary," says Davies.
- **Team briefings:** Inspectors and their teams of three or four sergeants use Cisco Unified IP Phone 7985G devices, equipped with video, for weekly briefings about performance and priorities.
- **Senior management meetings:** High-level managers use Cisco Unified Videoconferencing for larger meetings with division personnel or other public safety agencies, such as the fire brigade. "The ability to convene quickly to plan crisis response helps us ensure continuity of service," says Davies.

> "Visual voicemail enables our officers to spend more time on the street while still responding promptly to citizen calls. We are engaging with citizens in their community instead of waiting for calls in the station."
> —Ian Davies, Head of Projects, North Wales Police

Citizen Communications

When a citizen leaves a voicemail message for an officer, Cisco Unity immediately sends an alert to the officer's BlackBerry. The alert includes the message sender's phone number, name (if available), and a link to the message. Officers just click to listen to messages in any order. "Visual

voicemail enables our officers to spend more time on the street while still responding promptly to citizen calls," says Davies. "We are engaging with citizens in their community instead of waiting for calls in the station."

In the office, officers and staff spend less time checking messages because Cisco Unity lets them listen to and manage both email and voicemail messages from their email inbox.

Command and Control

North Wales Police previously had three command and control centers, which increased costs and prevented available agents in one center from answering calls to other centers that had long queues. With Cisco Unified Communications and solutions from Cisco partners Intergraph and Frequentis, North Wales Police consolidated the three sites into one intelligent command and control center that supports up to 160 dispatchers. The environment handles 999 emergency calls as well as some non-emergency calls. It also allows North Wales Police to provide control services for fire and ambulance calls when needed, helping to ensure continuity of service.

Results

More Visible Police Presence

The Cisco Unified Communications solution supports the United Kingdom's citizen-focused policing initiative by enabling each officer to spend approximately two additional hours on the street each week. Officers who can listen to citizen voicemail messages on smartphones do not need to return to the office to check voicemail, and meeting with the Crown Prosecution Service through videoconferencing saves hours of driving time. "A more visible police presence helps to reduce crime and fear of crime," says Williams.

> "Personnel in our western divisional headquarters have eliminated 30 hours in weekly travel time by meeting remotely using Cisco Unified Communications video solutions, saving US$68,000 [UK £39,913] annually. The savings could potentially triple when we introduce the solution to our other two divisions."
>
> **—Keith Williams, IT Development Manager, North Wales Police**

Cost Savings

Replacing PBX systems with a Cisco Unified Communications solution is saving more than US$173,000 (£100,000) annually. About $100,000 (£58,695) of the savings comes from lower maintenance costs and favourable terms from Cisco Capital. North Wales Police is introducing applications that employees can use from their Cisco Unified IP Phones, touching buttons to issue commands. Examples include querying the RMS database, logging in and out of shifts, and receiving missing person alerts and other time-sensitive communications.

The district expects additional cost savings from travel reduction. "Personnel in our western divisional headquarters have eliminated 30 hours in weekly travel time by meeting remotely using Cisco Unified Communications video solutions, saving US$68,000 [£39,913] annually," says Williams. "The savings could potentially triple when we introduce the solution to our other two divisions."

Faster Dissemination of Critical Messages

Distributing messages to employees' Cisco Unified IP Phones accelerates awareness of critical situations and enhances public safety. "The first two hours after a child is reported missing are critical," says Davies. "Currently we distribute alerts by email, but employees don't see them until they check email. Now we can distribute missing-person alerts and other time-sensitive communications to the built-in displays on 2500 Cisco Unified IP Phones, where everyone sees them."

Business Continuity

When the headquarters roof caught fire on April 1, 2008, North Wales Police was able to continue providing police services without interruption. The next day, many employees just drove to the nearest police station and logged on to an available Cisco Unified IP Phone to personalize it with their own phone number, speed-dial numbers, and other preferences. "With extension mobility, citizens and coworkers could reach employees without knowing they were in a different office, and employees were able to work productively because they had all of their usual communications services," says Davies.

Support for Green Program

Using Cisco Unified Videoconferencing to replace long car trips is helping North Wales Police meet its goal to be carbon neutral by 2015. The western district reduced carbon emissions by 2.8 tons in the first six months of the pilot program.

Next Steps

North Wales Police plans to use its Cisco Unified Communications platform for other applications that will decrease costs and improve citizen service:

- **Presence:** Employees will be able to see if their coworkers are available and how they prefer to be reached, saving time and improving responsiveness.
- **Cisco Unified IP Phones for citizens:** Citizens who visit a station after hours will be able to push a button on the phone to speak to a police officer in another station, possibly with video. This program would help provide service parity for citizens who live in more rural areas of the district.
- **Cisco TelePresence:** North Wales Police is considering Cisco TelePresence for high-level meetings, such as those between the chief constable and the Welsh Assembly in Cardiff, South Wales.
- **Cisco physical security solutions:** The same Cisco network used for data applications and unified communications can also be used for video surveillance of police stations and adjoining areas.

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco Unified Communications solutions, go to:
http://www.cisco.com/go/unifiedcommunications.

PRODUCT LIST

Routing and Switching
- Cisco Catalyst 6513 and 6509 Switches
- Cisco Catalyst 3750 Series Switches

Unified Communications
- Cisco Unified Communications Manager
- Cisco Unified IP Phones 7985G, 7970, and 7940
- Cisco Unity Unified Messaging
- Cisco Unified Videoconferencing
- Cisco Unified Video Advantage
- Cisco IP Communicator
- Cisco Unified Survivable Remote Site Telephony

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