

Case Study 005

Application: City Surveillance
Company: Metropolitan Police
Country: UK

SONY
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Mobile CCTV surveillance helps police move into the future.



The increasing value of images produced by CCTV cameras as admissible evidence by police forces in court was a driving factor in the Metropolitan Police's decision to deploy a mobile CCTV van around its Westminster constituency. Capturing high-definition images of any incidents, as well as proving a deterrent to any would-be criminals, the van can be deployed to cover any eventuality the police come across.



Background

The Metropolitan Police Service is the largest of the police services that operate in greater London. Founded by Sir Robert Peel in 1829, the original establishment of 1,000 officers policed a seven-mile radius from Charing Cross and a population of less than 2 million.

The Metropolitan Police Service now employs 31,000 officers, 14,000 police staff, 414 traffic wardens and 4,000 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) as well as being supported by over 2,500 volunteer police officers in the Metropolitan Special Constabulary (MSC) and its Employer Supported Policing (ESP) programmed. The Metropolitan Police Service covers an area of 620 square miles and a population of 7.2 million.

Challenges

Police in London manage a variety of different threats from protests, to crowd control to fights in busy nightlife areas. However, they often face difficulties monitoring and collecting video evidence in CCTV 'black spots' - areas of the city that are not effectively monitored by CCTV.

Additionally, conditions in London's busy, winding streets further complicate the monitoring process further. Yet police in Westminster recognized the value of effective CCTV surveillance, especially when targeting repeat offenders. CCTV had been instrumental in the successful prosecution of criminals in a number of London cases. The lack of decent CCTV images and, in some cases, any images at all, was limiting the ability to prosecute offenders in the city.

Solution

Sony Solution

Keen to use the latest technology to improve surveillance in central London, police in Westminster decided that a mobile unit would be most effective for rapid deployment and issue response. Not only would it be a powerful tool for responding to emergencies and for gathering the evidence needed for effective prosecution, it would act as a visual deterrent for would-be criminals and a reassuring police presence for the public.

Partnering with Sony, Westminster Police sought to create a tailored mobile CCTV unit. Sony's industry expertise was critical when reviewing the products on the market and integration opportunities with key players in the space. Sony also provided post sales support for the adoption and effective use of the van. Sony proposed a megapixel camera infrastructure based on an IP network. By using extremely high quality, megapixel cameras police in Westminster would be able to obtain the images that they required for effective prosecution, while an IP network would make it simple for the police to store and access the images.

Flexibility was a key differentiator. As the van can operate in two modes – manned or unmanned – it can be parked up in an area with crime problems and left to collect data for up to 12 hours for review at a later date. While acting as a visual deterrent, this helps to address staffing pressures particularly during peak times in the evenings and at weekends, but it can easily be switched to manned mode when required.

The implementation/results

A combination of cameras was selected to monitor both the perimeter of the van and areas further away. Significantly, the use of Sony's SNC-RX570P/Outdoor PTZ camera allows CCTV operators to monitor activity around the van and zoom in on specific areas of interest using the x36 zoom with wide-angled view. The van can then travel towards any areas that need closer inspection, while the perimeter of the van is monitored using one of the six fixed SNC-DM160 Mega Pixel Mini Dome cameras, all of which are protected by a waterproof casing.

To meet the precise recording requirements of police in Westminster, specialist Sony technicians installed the cameras and the supporting Realshot Manager (RSM) software critical for the content management.

Why Sony were selected

It is ultimately the camera quality that has enabled Westminster Police to dramatically improve surveillance. The six megapixel cameras provide a superior resolution at 1280 X 960 pixels that make it much easier to identify and successfully prosecute criminals, while the IP format enables the police to record data directly to the servers in the van. By using Sony's RSM software, the police can record evidential quality content that can be easily downloaded to USB or DVD and passed onto the relevant department for closer examination and, ultimately, prosecution.

The van has already proven its worth, stopping a series of attacks on jewelry shops in central London and it is a security solution that Sony hopes to expand.

Quotes

John Dale, Officer, Metropolitan Police

'It can be difficult to obtain the necessary evidence for prosecution, particularly when monitoring crowded areas or at night. The superior image quality of the Sony cameras combined with the instant retrieval mechanism will help police in Westminster target offenders more effectively.'



Product List

- SNC-RX570
- SNC-DM160

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