The SmarterCities Leadership Series

Smarter Public Safety

How the NYPD is redefining crime fighting

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“Criminals are being caught a lot faster with this information. Over 18,000 cases that we’ve had since 2006 would have taken a lot longer and more personnel. Technology really is the key.”

—Kenneth Mekeel, Inspector, New York City Police Department, Commanding Officer, Real Time Crime Center, New York City

How does the NYPD harness the power of IT to stop crime in real time?

The Crime Information Warehouse (CIW), provides a single, easy-to-use point of access to data on virtually all crimes committed in New York’s five boroughs. The CIW solution provides the information foundation for the NYPD’s state-of-the-art Real Time Crime Center.

Using business intelligence software along with GIS mapping and visualization tools, officers and analysts in the center can detect crime patterns as they are forming, enabling precinct commanders to take proactive measures to keep ahead of these trends—and head off spikes in criminal activity.

How is the NYPD getting smarter?

> Transforming paper records into a searchable electronic database
> A 911 real-time dashboard with a single view of emergency needs and NYPD resources
> Accessing event notifications through a Web portal, e-mail inboxes and handheld devices
> A data wall with a two-story video screen delivering intelligence to 40 detectives and crime analysts at once
> A shift from reactive crime fighting to proactive crime prediction

How does this change how people work within the NYPD?

In the words of James Onalfo, the Chief Architect and CIO of the NYPD, “There’s no substitute for interacting with people to solve cases. Our goal is to make the process more efficient: Instead of having to talk with 10 different investigators in different part of the city, they’ll have to talk with two. That’s a lot more time available to solve cases.”

As a result of this work, investigators that once spent a huge slice of their time chasing down information can now access all of it through a single, portal-based interface, or by working with the Real Time Crime Center.

Freed from low-value data gathering, officers can now turn to the higher value, more analytical activities they are trained to do, such as formulating and testing hypotheses to solve crimes and apprehend criminals with greater efficiency and accuracy.