

Case Study

Cape Breton Police Force Leads by Example with a BlackBerry Solution



Company: The Cape Breton Regional Police Service offers law enforcement services to residents who live on the 2,460 square miles of Cape Breton Island in the province of Nova Scotia, Canada

Industry: Public Safety/Law Enforcement

Region: Americas

Company Size: Small-Medium Enterprise -188 employees

Email Environment: Microsoft® Exchange

Type of Solution: Industry Specific Application

BlackBerry Partner Solution: OnPatrol™ by xwave- a division of Bell Aliant

Challenge: The Cape Breton Police Service wanted to offer police officers easy, highly secure access to the national police database without going to the expense of hardwiring computer terminals into police cars.

Solution: The BlackBerry® Enterprise Solution acted as the foundation for OnPatrol, a mobile application developed by xwave, which allows officers to query the CPIC (Canadian Police Information Centre) database directly from their BlackBerry® smartphones.

Results:

- Secure, mobile solution
- Cost-effective choice
- More effective, safer police activity
- More team coordination in the future



The Challenge: Cost-effectively Put Record Access into the Hands of Police Officers

Cape Breton Regional Police Service includes 188 police officers, who maintain three divisions and have a major crime unit, General Investigation Units, Identification Unit, Street Crime, K-9 units, emergency response team and underwater recovery team for support to their patrol officers. Their 2,460 square mile patrol area is Cape Breton Island, a ruggedly beautiful island in the province of Nova Scotia, on Canada's east coast.

Their police force had only been amalgamated from multiple independent units 12 years ago, but it was feeling the pressure to keep up with technology and remain competitive in the delivery of police services. One challenge for them was whether to make the move to computer terminals in their patrol cars. When officers needed to check the identity of an individual or run a license plate, it was being done over the radio with a police dispatcher.

As it turned out, being behind the times – and committed to change – has actually given Cape Breton Regional Police an edge. When it came time to update the way they access and retrieve information, they had the flexibility to consider a variety of options, options that would not have been available had they already made large technology investments.

They decided to take a more forward-thinking approach to mobilizing their force and equipped their officers with BlackBerry smartphones – a technology as mobile as their officers.

Today, Cape Breton Regional Police is the only police force in the country using the BlackBerry smartphone technology to improve officer communications and access to crime data.

Why a BlackBerry Solution?

The security features of the BlackBerry Enterprise Solution were a key factor in choosing the technology. Cape Breton Regional Police Service, like any Canadian police force, can only use technology that lives up to stringent security protocols. This applies to any force that uses technology to access the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC).

"You have to have two levels of security to get into CPIC," says Constable Wayne Pendergast, who became the unofficial IT expert on the project. "The BlackBerry Enterprise Solution offers excellent protection with the end-to-end security of the BlackBerry® Enterprise Server, but the platform was also flexible enough for our partner, xwave, to give us the extra layer of security we needed."

xwave, a BlackBerry Alliance partner, helped by providing their hosted application - OnPatrol. OnPatrol provides secure and immediate access to national crime databases as well as dispatch and records management systems.

xwave adapted their solution with another level of cryptography to meet police database access regulations. PKI (public key infrastructure), is an extra digital security check that vets and vouches for user identities. The BlackBerry Smart Card Reader (PKI device) is small, Bluetooth-enabled, and must be worn in order for anyone to gain access to specific police databases.

"Our officers wear the BlackBerry Bluetooth Smart Card Reader authentication devices as well as carry their BlackBerry smartphones," says Constable Pendergast. "When they use their BlackBerry smartphone to access CPIC, a signal is automatically sent to the wireless authentication device and it routes the request to a secure database, immediately prompting them for their security login and password. If they aren't using the PKI authentication device, they can't get into the database."

xwave also helped Cape Breton Regional Police Service understand the cost benefits of using the BlackBerry Enterprise Solution. The force quickly realized that it was financially smarter to buy BlackBerry smartphones versus installing computer terminals in every patrol car.

Partner Profile:



Company: *xwave, a division of Bell Aliant*

- xwave is one of Canada's largest business solutions providers
- Offers systems integration and infrastructure services, as well as plans and builds complete IT solutions
- 30 years experience in government, healthcare, justice, public safety and defence

Featured Product: OnPatrol

Application Type: Industry Specific Application

"There hasn't been a roadblock that's popped up that xwave didn't find a way to get around. They offer us a partnership and real understanding of our situation – which has been very important to the success of this project."

~INSPECTOR THOMAS HASTIE

For more information, visit www.xwave.com

Police Force Pioneers

Cape Breton Regional Police went from not using computers at all to being a leader in the use of wireless technology. "Unlike other police forces, which already had computers in their cars, we bypassed that stage and went straight to BlackBerry smartphones," says Inspector Thomas Hastie. "It was almost an advantage that we were so far behind."

OnPatrol on BlackBerry smartphones puts the power of immediate information in the hands of police officers so they can be more effective at their jobs. Using the application, they can run the names of suspicious people or vehicle license plates on-the-spot. This reduces their need to request busy radio dispatchers for this information.

"We've discovered that our officers are running more checks using OnPatrol on the BlackBerry smartphone," says Inspector Hastie. "And that equals more productivity."

Officers are also running more license plates in their downtime, while they're patrolling. "In the past, they wouldn't have done this as much because of the load it would place on dispatchers," says Inspector Hastie. "Now they can enter a parking lot and run a series of plates because they have the capability of doing it themselves. They're realizing that policing is like any business – it's just as important to make use of downtime."

Officer safety is also a key benefit of the solution. According to Constable Pendergast, street crime units now have the ability to hide, in the bush or an unmarked car, watching for criminal activity. Without approaching a suspected individual, they can run a license plate through CPIC and know what kind of dangerous situation they may be facing.

"A big plus is we're starting to email mug shots to our officers who might be on a stake out or on patrol," says Inspector Hastie. "They can compare the image on their BlackBerry smartphones to suspicious individuals, which means they're safer when they approach someone."



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What's Next?

Cape Breton Regional Police Service realizes they've just scratched the surface with their BlackBerry solution. OnPatrol also gives them the ability to easily dispatch information to officers, or groups of officers, without using a radio.

xwave is now in the process of creating user groups for the police force so that dispatch bulletins can be sent out to specific groups with one click. They hope this will replace the pagers that are currently used for alerting different police teams during an incident, and enabling them to report on status.

"If the emergency response team is needed, we're currently paging them, with little to no information, so they have to call in one-by-one and find out the details from the radio dispatcher," says Inspector Hastie. "We want to be able to send out one dispatch email, that contains all the pertinent details, to all the participants."

With just the sound of an alarm going off on the BlackBerry smartphone, the team would mobilize more quickly. They'd arrive at a scene more fully briefed on what they were facing. The overall impact is a team that gains a highly mobile approach to policing, collaboration and sharing information.

Furthermore, with the introduction of a computer aided dispatch system (CAD), the OnPatrol BlackBerry solution will be used to its fullest potential allowing full integration with the CAD functionality including silent electronic dispatches, messaging with dispatchers, automatic status updates performed directly from the OnPatrol BlackBerry application and query access to the CAD database.

Finally, a new interface to the Niche Record Management System (RMS) will be introduced; this interface will allow the police offices to use their BlackBerry smartphones to access police information stored in the RMS database.

"Our officers use OnPatrol on their BlackBerry smartphones to access the CPIC database from wherever they're located – under surveillance or walking a beat. They don't have to be sitting in a police car to get the information they need."

~ INSPECTOR THOMAS HASTIE



"Our officers really see the value of sharing information. They see it makes their jobs a whole lot easier. It's about being independent, working better as a team and the BlackBerry solution is helping them do that."

Inspector Thomas Hastie
Cape Breton Regional Police Service

For more information on BlackBerry solutions, visit
www.blackberry.com/go/success

Results

Leading the Way in Canadian Police Communications: Cape Breton Regional Police Service has become the force to watch as they further develop their commitment to using wireless technology to get results.

Secure, Mobile Solution: The out-of-the-box security of the BlackBerry Enterprise Solution provides the foundation for extra levels of security that meet Canadian police requirements.

Cost-effective Choice: BlackBerry smartphones, as part of the BlackBerry Enterprise Solution, are significantly more affordable than hardwiring laptop computers into police cars. The upfront capital costs are greatly reduced.

More Effective, Safer Police Activity: Having the power to look up individuals and license plates without contacting a dispatcher gives officers on-the-spot information that they can act on more quickly, safely and make better use of their downtime.

Future Potential for Even More Team Coordination: Police officers are already connected to each other and police databases via BlackBerry smartphones so they can better plan and coordinate their activities; soon they'll also receive dispatch information the same way.

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