

Crime Recording with Nottinghamshire Police

Nottinghamshire Police Crime Recording

Crime data is vital to the work of the police service, police authorities and the Home Office, but there has been considerable concern over the accuracy of this data for some time.

Improving the standard of crime recording

To combat this issue, the NCRS, implemented in April 2002, aims to improve the overall standard of crime recording in England and Wales, promoting greater consistency between police forces in the recording of crime. This new standard means all reports of incidents must be recorded, ultimately ensuring forces have all the information relating to a crime in their area, while also allowing an audit trail to be created.

Essential turnaround time

One of the biggest issues of crime recording is turnaround times. It is essential that once a crime is recorded, the data is available as soon as possible. This allows new crime data to be searched, and allows a much quicker response to crime patterns.

Traditionally, once a crime report has been completed at the scene of the crime, officers will then return to their stations where they, or other skilled administration staff, will manually key the crime data into the crime database. This is a time-consuming, error prone and expensive process which inhibits officers from focusing on what they do best - 'real policing'. DRS is working in partnership with a number of police forces in reducing the need for manual data entry through developing simple to complete, multi-purpose forms designed to be scanned using electronic data capture equipment technology, such forces include Nottinghamshire Police.

Reducing the administrative burden

Nottinghamshire Police has around 44 Police Stations spread across its geographical area, where a variety of forms are returned daily – all containing critical crime data.

Nottinghamshire Police worked with DRS in finding a solution to reduce its data capture burden and help to deliver data fast and accurately.

The result

The force chose the DRS solution which utilises Intelligent Character Recognition (ICR) technology to meet its objectives of improving the standard of crime recording. The DRS ICR solution significantly

reduces the administrative burden of entering crime data and helps tackle the key issue of immediacy and availability of information.

In fact it has been proved to dramatically reduce time and costs associated with data entry by up to 90%, with the added benefits of automatically cleansing and confirming data within the business and validation rules and delivering accessing to data faster than other methods.

Nottinghamshire Police beating the bureaucracy associated with crime recording

Fast, accurate data capture

Nottinghamshire police officers now use simple to complete multi-page crime forms. When they return to the station they simply scan the form either using a fax machine, a scanner or a digital sender. The images of the forms are transmitted to the centralised data capture system at the force HQ. When received, the DRS ICR software locks onto the form image identifying what form type it is, and therefore how to read and recognise the data.

This data can include hand printed and machine printed characters, barcodes and tick-boxes. A series of validation routines are applied to key fields including validation against code tables and lists. Any fields that fail the validation routines or are unrecognisable by the software are flagged on-screen to the central trained administrators for key correction.

Any freeform areas such as notes, comments, sketches or diagrams are either keyed from image, or the image itself is simply clipped as a digital image for storage with the data. Once validated, the form data is output to the forces main crime recording system, directly populating the database fields and storing the valuable images against the crime record.

To further streamline and assist the data capture process, some forms are available electronically. Officers can open PDF versions of forms from the force intranet for completion and submission online.

These forms are received and processed in an identical way by the DRS solution. This is particularly useful for updates or amendments.

Beating bureaucracy

DRS is working with forces across the country in providing automated data capture solutions for a wide range of applications. Solutions include software and hardware through to installation, training and support.

For more complex data capture requirements, DRS offers a specialist forms design and print service, particularly useful in the cases of large volumes or complex multi-purpose forms.

To find out how DRS can help solve your force's data capture requirements, whether it be street encounters, timesheets, crime reporting & recording, citizen surveys, accident & incident reports or in fact, any other data capture requirement, contact us today.