

GSN'S ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO HOMELAND SECURITY COMMUNICATIONS

# New mobile technology frees security officers from their desks and provides better data



By Len Schalkwyk

When you pick up your cell phone to make an important business call while headed out the door to another appointment, you can appreciate the freedom that mobile technology affords you in your job. Now, the security industry is beginning to reap the benefits of mobile technology with new advancements that similarly free security officers from their desks while providing them all the tools and data they need to do their jobs -- wherever they are in a facility, campus or secured area.

Historically, security officers have been tethered to their desks, monitoring a bay of computer screens and video surveillance monitors in a command center. If an incident was observed on a computer or video screen, an officer could be sent to investigate, armed with a radio for communications and little else to enhance situational awareness. And, if only one guard was on duty, he'd need to stop monitoring the situation on video to investigate it "live," potentially leaving the facility vulnerable to further incidents or intrusions.

Advances in mobile technology are changing that. Mobile technology can untether security officers, border agents or other security personnel from their desk or command center by providing them access to all the information in the command center on a handheld mobile computer. On a small device, ideally weighing about a pound and ergonomically designed, they can view live video feeds, access con-

trol systems, alarm alerts, photos, personnel information, text data and more. That means the officer has up-to-the minute communications and real-time information. And if only one officer is on duty, he or she can investigate an incident while continuing to monitor the facility, resulting in more efficient use of resources.



While in the field or responding to an incident, officers can access or "pull" all the data they need from the command center. Some new devices, such as DAP Technologies' Guard System, also allow officers to "push" information to the command center. For example, an officer could capture an individual's fingerprints and run them against a database, take photos or video and send them to the command center, and swipe IDs and transmit the information back.

Imagine how this "push" technology could save time and resources during an evolving situation. An eyewitness could potentially identify suspects by photo. Someone illegally crossing the border could

be fingerprinted and photographed in the field. The driver's license of a person exhibiting suspicious behavior could be scanned and checked on the spot against any number of databases. Video of a crime in progress could be sent in real-time to headquarters, along with a call for backup, and that video could be recorded as evidence in the command center. Safety issues could be documented, logged and routed to the correct department, where they could be addressed.

Security details, homeland security and border agents, port security and first responders are just some of the groups that could realize drastic improvements in their work by integrating new mobile technology into their operations. Better communications and situational awareness enables them to respond more quickly and efficiently to incidents.

What's more, many of today's mobile handhelds are built to be rugged. With varying degrees of success, they can be dropped on concrete and stand up to inclement weather, salt spray, intense heat and extreme cold.

In today's economic and security climate, everyone is looking for ways to streamline operations, protect assets, stay a step ahead of increasingly sophisticated criminals, and shave costs. Now is the time to reassess security operations and investigate new technology that can save time, money and lives. ■

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