

## iPhone APLS app in Home Office trials

A SMARTPHONE application that uses the benefits of augmented reality to provide police officers with in-the-field updates from the control room is being developed by Frequentis.

The demonstration technology is a mobile interface to the automatic personal location system (APLS) or equivalent used by police forces to support their officers via global positioning systems.

During an incident, officers could use the iAPLS to view the location and status of officers or firearms teams in their vicinity and maintain a voice link to the control room.

The application could also be used as a covert surveillance tool to track suspects or objects. If a suspect has a mobile phone that police have a fix on, or they are being closely followed by a covert officer, the system can track them. The application could also be used to tag the location of a suspect package.

The APLS data is packaged so that it can be sent via a standard 3G link to an iPhone, making location information available to all officers on duty.

The demonstration technology is part of a Home Office sponsored trial of different types of augmented reality (AR) technology being carried out at the University of Nottingham. The trials, co-ordinated by technology company Logica, are being measured against a variety of security threats.

The AR technologies include visors that overlay data on an officer's field of view. BAE Systems is re-engineering a visor that it makes for use by military helicopter pilots.

The visors project a green glow around human targets via infrared cameras. They are being adapted to show the iAPLS data generated by the Frequentis smartphone application.

## Force witnesses mobile benefits

Leicestershire mobile system slashes the time taken to identify suspects

LEICESTERSHIRE Constabulary has reduced suspect identification preparation times from six weeks down to 15 minutes, by using mobile data technology.

To provide a mobile, enhanced service to victims and witnesses, the force has combined virtual witness albums of suspects' likenesses, using the Custody Image Management (CIM) system developed by Northgate IT. It runs on the force's Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) tablets installed in patrol cars. Officers can dismount the MDT and access CIM from the home of the victim.

Officers in any police station can build a witness album from the station computer, which can be accessed via MDT in the home of the victim.

This considerably shortens the time for a witness album showing, from an average of six weeks for a traditional paper-based solution, to just 15 minutes shown on the screen of the MDT, according to the force.



**MARK OF DISTINCTION:** Officers are recording more than mugshots

Insp Tony Price, MDT project lead, said: 'We are realising the benefits of mobile technology with the ability to action a witness album showing in minutes, not days or weeks.'

'Once identified, the suspect's likeness can be circulated as a "person of interest" the same day, through our force tasking systems which can be viewed by other officers with MDTs and BlackBerry devices.'

Leicestershire Constabulary has evolved its use of CIM. Detention officers are now cataloguing tattoos, scars and distinguishing marks as well as head-and-shoulders arrest images, to identify suspects swiftly.

Andy Ramsay, a retired officer leading quality and development of custody management in the Euston Street custody centre, said: 'Officers on the front line have embraced the new development.'

## Headset device designed to cut damage to officers' hearing, with clarity of sound

A device that protects officers' hearing while using Airwave radio headsets but allows clear voice communication has been developed for the UK police service.

A 2010 survey by *Police Review* (PR, 21 April 2010) revealed that in the previous five years there had been 813 reports of hearing damage in 44 out of 55 forces that responded to the survey. Of those, 615 cases were associated with police-issue radios and headsets.

Stephen Wheatley, whose company developed the new device, says the response to the problem has been to limit the volume in officers' headsets but that this could prevent clear communication.

Mr Wheatley said: 'The police service has taken steps to limit



**SAFE SOUND:** The device will be part of standard headsets

the volume of headsets used with TETRA radios to protect their officers.

'The two most common methods, resistive or software setting,

both restrict the maximum volume level to around 93 decibels.

'Whilst this volume limit may provide some hearing protection, it is an average and does not accurately reflect the control of noise at work regulations or the noise exposure of an individual officer.'

The new device, called LimitEar, protects the officer's hearing in line with the control of noise at work regulations while providing them with the clearest communication possible, the company claims.

The device will not be supplied as a separate product to the police services, but will be incorporated into earpieces or headsets during the manufacturing process and will be available later this year from a number of the larger suppliers.