ARJIS PDA Mobile Project: Keeping Identification Potential in Your Hands

*U*nlike their patrol counterparts, most law enforcement investigators are not issued laptops. They spend the majority of a shift outside the vehicle, resulting in delays in obtaining suspect and vehicle responses over the radio from dispatchers who have higher priorities. Too often, this results in potential suspects being misidentified or released before positive identification can be confirmed.

The Automated Regional Justice Information System (ARJIS) is a complex criminal justice enterprise network of 75 local, State, and Federal member agencies in California's San Diego and Imperial counties. ARJIS has worked closely with the Office of Justice Programs' National Institute of Justice and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to implement a very successful Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) Mobile Project. This PDA deployment attempts to address the issues surrounding positive identification while enhancing the response to and prevention of criminal activities.

ARJIS initially deployed 100 PDAs to determine:

- Best hardware devices (battery life, keyboard, screen size, and so on).

- Most suitable applications for field access.

- Best candidates for the PDAs.

- Security and network access and compliance.

- Contract arrangements with wireless carriers.

More than 600 PDAs have been deployed, resulting in hundreds of positive identifications, arrests, and case cancellations. The ARJIS PDA project has become the cornerstone for several regional information sharing task forces in areas such as gangs, narcotics, and terrorism, as well as Downtown Walking Teams and Beach Teams.

Using the PDAs, investigators rely heavily on booking, driver's license, and gang photos for positive identification. Investigators' autonomy in performing data queries

has proven extremely effective, allowing them to run different variations on names and license plates and get responses back much more quickly, resulting in more hits and more confirmed warrants.

Currently, participants use four different PDA models, all equipped with the Windows Mobile 6 operating system. ARJIS executes an annual refresh plan with the carriers to ensure continuous upgrade to the most current devices. Each PDA user has access to 13 applications through secure private line connections, including the following:

- Global Query (a single query to 12 federated databases).

- Coplink Mobile.

- California Department of Motor Vehicles and booking photos (Cal-Photo Mobile).

- Cal-Gang Mobile.

- Nlets (the International Justice and Public Safety Network).

- Local warrants and wanted persons.

- Mapping.

- Access to Mexican driver's licenses and vehicles.

Cal-Gang Mobile, for example, provides a means for investigators in the field to identify documented gang members throughout California. Investigators have many flexible search parameters such as subject name or description, gang membership, scars/marks/tattoos (a favorite of gang investigators), and address/location. Every PDA has a built-in camera, so Cal-Gang quickly returns photos from the database with possible matches to photos taken in the field.

ARJIS is currently working on a proposal called Smart Tattoo, which would enable users of facial recognition-type applications to identify and classify tattoos. Also, ARJIS

and Pacific Northwest National Laboratories, a research laboratory under the U.S. Department of Energy, are currently collaborating to design and test additional enhancements, such as:

- Tabbed browser search.

- NotesText, an application to accept exchanges of photos, videos, locations, and sketches.

- Maps with geo-based services.

- FormsField Interviews, which will include shared notes with a geo-stamped feature.

- Creation of ad hoc groups.

- Messaging between groups.

For more information, visit the ARJIS website at http://www.arjis.org/.

WITNESS LOCATION

On April 22, 2008, a gang homicide occurred in Chula Vista, California. The victim, a gang member, was shot in the head and pronounced dead at the scene. While at the scene, the investigator immediately began using an ARJIS PDA to identify the victim's companions, who had fled the scene and were among the only witnesses. Using the ARJIS PDA, the officer immediately identified two companions based on "monikers" provided by the victim's family. This fast, reliable information helped with the investigation.

—Chula Vista Police Department