

# MULTI-TENANCY IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

Public safety is the cornerstone to society. The police are the entrusted guardians of the people they serve. In an advanced digital world, there is zero tolerance for information being lost in information and technology silos, unavailable to our first responders due to incompatible and disparate records and case management systems. The public expect law enforcement agencies to keep them safe—everywhere, all the time, across jurisdictions, across all boundaries.

Enter in multi-tenant policing solutions.

Multi-tenancy is the ability to support multiple agencies in a single installation of a Records Management System (RMS). This allows agencies across jurisdictions to share information, something that can't happen when law enforcement agencies keep information silos within their single application solution.

## A CASE FOR CHANGE

The United States alone has more than 17,000 state and local law enforcement agencies, most with their own core law enforcement systems. While the public safety landscape in the US is vast and complex, the challenges facing law enforcement are common.

Budget freezes and on-going requirements to go leaner are now the reality. Law enforcement must delicately manage this fiscal reality against increasingly high public expectations. In 2012, 51 percent of law enforcement agencies in the US said they are cutting back plans for technology initiatives due to budget cuts.<sup>1</sup> Law enforcement agencies can no longer afford their own system to support police operations.

With multi-tenancy, multiple law enforcement agencies can band together to leverage their collective resources to purchase, implement and maintain solutions that support the collective. Savings are seen not only upfront, but down the line from reduced maintenance and upgrade requirements.

Multi-tenancy keeps costs down by increasing the number of end-users for a single system, integrating common core functions and bringing together technologies. Shared solutions will result in more standardized and sophisticated systems at a lower cost.

Criminal activity and people's needs rarely fit neatly within organizational boundaries. Problems that require public safety interventions typically span the purview of multiple organizations. And even when the public can be well-served within organizational borders, the movement of criminals and criminal activity cannot be confined. This calls for systems that promote and support collaboration and information sharing.

Disparate systems that prohibit the sharing of information and the maintenance of accurate records are a major problem that law enforcement agencies need to address, but progress is slow. The average state has more than 300 different records management or case management systems. Disparate, disconnected systems are expensive, form information silos, create information sharing challenges and require complex integration solutions.

## WHY MULTI-TENANCY MAKES SENSE

In a multi-tenant environment, the majority of the system can be standardized across agencies—shared applications running on the same operating system, on the same hardware, with the same data-storage mechanism. Such standardization makes sense, especially when 75 percent of processes required to track and respond to crimes are essentially the same.<sup>2</sup>

## LOOKING TO MULTI-TENANT SOLUTIONS FOR THE ANSWER

Technology advancements and the onset of the digital age have brought fundamental shifts in public safety service provision. Driven by the need to use public money more efficiently and spurred by a public who have become increasingly sophisticated, law enforcement agencies are continuously re-evaluating how they deliver services to improve public value. Organizationally, these drivers are leading to the search for efficiencies through shared information and technology that transforms the way they protect and serve—making the case for 'multi-tenant' integrated solutions.

A multi-tenant system allows disparate groups of users to have access to common functionality with common data structures, all managed by security and access controls to regulate who can see and update records—in other words, one system with multiple tenants.

Multi-tenancy is secure. A single records or case management system can serve multiple law enforcement agencies, allowing them independence without jeopardizing the security and privacy of their information. The owner of the information determines the access privileges. Within these systems, police organizations maintain autonomy and security of their proprietary data and information. Each tenant can customize access rights and dictate restrictions for their users.

A large, stylized fingerprint graphic in red and white, oriented diagonally from the bottom left towards the top right, partially overlapping the text.

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## A LONG-TERM ANSWER FOR LINGERING CHALLENGES

Law enforcement agencies cannot continue to effectively enable a safe and secure nation and deliver public services for the future without solutions that break through fragmented information sharing and intelligence gathering barriers. Multi-tenant solutions will generate economies of scale, enable more effective information sharing and promote collaboration, driving mission productivity. Most importantly, it will give the police the information they need to keep their residents safe. Criminals will no longer be able to hide their true intentions from technology-challenged agencies of the past. Multi-tenant solutions are the future for modern police agencies.

While multi-tenancy breaks down information silos, paired with mobile solutions, it is even more powerful. Imagine getting information into the officers' hands in real-time, no matter where they are.

## WHY MOBILITY MATTERS

With mobility, incident, event, person and location information can be updated, an officer's workload can be managed and crime scene information can be recorded instantly. In this way, investigations can progress without delay, improving the chances of detection and conviction. Mobile technology is not for the street alone, apps and mobile devices can help manage tasks in the station, augment the custody suite system by mobilizing detainee checks, and aid property and evidence management in both property stores and forensic labs.

Key to this vision is the personalized, individual, single device that officers use for a given role. Custody officers may require a tablet device to manage prisoners; response officers may require durable hand-held mobile devices for crime reports, witness statements and intelligence, while traffic officers need ticket-printing devices.

It's apparent that the use of mobile technology is growing, and fast. We live in a world where more people have access to a mobile phone than running water<sup>3</sup> and 35 percent of people use a smartphone app before getting out of bed<sup>4</sup>,—but what does this mean for policing?

Let's be clear—mobile technology isn't new. Policing has been using mobile technology for years; more common examples include the police radio, devices for issuing traffic tickets, fingerprint identification devices, automated license plate recognition technology and terminals to query national databases. So, a level of effort and interest from policing is evident, and benefits have already been seen.

Most police officers use smartphones in their personal lives and have come to expect the same level of mobility and access to information when at work. Indeed, it is hardly surprising that officers are now regularly using their own smartphones to help them do their job. Importantly, the key point is not about automating an outdated and inefficient paper system; it is about enabling the officer to do their job with greater ease and effectiveness, using single data entry, and the seamless integration with other systems. This could be helping to send and receive the right information, regardless of format (e.g. photo, voice, text, video), quickly and intuitively, or the use of built-in "artificial intelligence" providing automatic analysis of information. Ultimately mobility can help redefine the way officers use information making them more effective; fighting crime and improving citizen satisfaction.

Police must also consider how they can use "policing apps" to engage with citizens. By deploying mobile apps, new leads regarding investigations could be delivered to officer's mobile devices directly from concerned citizens. The ability for citizens to submit photographs of suspicious behavior or people via apps could be a valuable source of real-time intelligence. In the current financial climate and given the advances in available technology, the time is right to further explore and exploit mobility and seize upon the appetite of citizens for new ways of engaging with police.

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## BUSTING THE MYTHS

MYTH: It's expensive.

FACT: One system for multiple tenants rather than each tenant buying, building and maintaining their own system represents a powerful opportunity to drive savings. Multiple tenants can band together to leverage their collective resources to procure, implement and maintain solutions that support the collective. When smartly implemented, savings can be reaped from the upfront consolidated procurement, and also downstream from reduced systems maintenance requirements.

MYTH: We'll lose control.

FACT: A multi-tenant system is a controlled environment: different tenants access common functionality with common data structures, all managed by security and access controls to regulate who can see and update records. Tenants can retain ownership and maintain integrity of their data.

MYTH: It's not secure.

FACT: A single records or case management system can serve multiple law enforcement agencies without jeopardizing the security and privacy of information. Within these systems, the tenants maintain autonomy and security of their proprietary data and information. Each tenant can further customize access rights and dictate restrictions for their users.

## JODY WEIS



Jody Weis is a senior manager for North America public safety services at Accenture. Previously, he served as Superintendent of the Chicago Police Department, the second largest police agency in the U.S. Prior to that, he spent 23 years in the Federal Bureau of Investigation, most recently as Special Agent in Charge (SAC) for the Philadelphia Field Office, overseeing one of the FBI's largest field operations.

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## REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup>Police Executive Research Forum, February 2013

<sup>2</sup>[http://acn-data.com/accenture-communities/docs/Transcript\\_Police\\_Center\\_of\\_Excellence\\_CV09092013.pdf](http://acn-data.com/accenture-communities/docs/Transcript_Police_Center_of_Excellence_CV09092013.pdf)

<sup>3</sup><http://techland.time.com/2012/08/16/your-life-is-fully-mobile/>

<sup>4</sup><http://mashable.com/2011/05/12/smartphone-apps-bed/>