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Why Multi-Tenancy Makes Sense?

Podcast Transcript

Spawn: We're talking with Jody Weis, former Superintendent of Chicago PD and a 23-year veteran of the FBI. Mr. Weis is currently with Accenture, one of the world's leading organizations providing management consulting, technology and outsourcing services. Superintendent, welcome to APB.

Weis: Thank you, it's nice to be here.

Spawn: I know that several police agencies are using common software for CAD and Records Management, but could you explain exactly what the term multi-tenancy means?

Weis: Sure, Multi-tenant software is an application for multiple entities, which runs on the same hardware and operating system.

It has the same data storage mechanism so all entities can access the same core data while each having a customized feel. Essentially it allows different organizations to share systems while still having their own experience.

The benefits , very simply are (1), cost savings, and (2), improved information sharing.

Spawn: Why does multi-tenancy make sense for policing organizations?

Weis: We have to look at the processes. More than 75% of the processes required to track and respond to crimes are essentially the same around the world.

Multi-tenancy allows police organizations to access common functionality with common data structures.

Also, multi-tenancy drives operational efficiencies; it allows the police to spend more time doing what they want to do, which is fight crime.

It can use innovative technologies such as workflows, analytics and alerts to help police officers do their jobs better and safer. Adopting such an integrated approach empowers frontline officers to be more informed and if they are more informed, they can better serve the citizens.

Spawn: Why is it important to share information with other policing organizations?

Weis: In my experience, police love organization; they like boxes and borders where everything fits very neatly. Unfortunately, the crooks they chase don't stay confined to those jurisdictional boundaries. With the transitory nature of today's criminal, police cannot have critical information locked up in a silo - police forces need to be able to access information readily and share it across departments and jurisdictions.

Having the right technology to quickly analyze and communicate speeds up the investigative process and that puts the bad guys in jail quicker – and that's something everyone wants.

Spawn: You know, for years we have discussed the benefits of information sharing, and I think that most progressive police executives have bought into the concept and are sharing more than ever before. But I hear from colleagues that there are obstacles, not turf-related, but in our records systems.

Weis: I wouldn't call these obstacles, I'd say, perhaps challenges, but we have to overcome them. As Sir Robert Peel said in 1829, "The basic mission for which the police exist is to prevent crime and disorder." This mission cannot be achieved without solutions that break through fragmented information sharing and intelligence gathering barriers. We have to be better than that.

The United States alone has more than 17,000 state and local law enforcement agencies, most with their own core law enforcement record management systems. And the average state has more than 300 different record systems.

Having these disconnected systems is not only expensive, but forms information silos and I think most people in law enforcement would agree, sharing information is critical for them to do their jobs.

Spawn: Is multi-tenancy economical to jurisdictions?

Weis: Absolutely, multi-tenancy saves money.

Budget freezes are now the reality. Law enforcement agencies must delicately manage this fiscal reality against the increasingly high public expectations.

So, if you have one system for multiple tenants rather than each tenant buying, building and maintaining their own system, this represents a powerful opportunity to save money. Multiple tenants can band together to leverage their collective resources to purchase, implement and maintain solutions that support the collective. When smartly put in place, savings cannot only be seen upfront by consolidating the resources, but down the line from reduced maintenance requirements, and this is real savings.

Let's look in the United Kingdom, where the projected savings for a multiple-user system was 169 million pounds as a result of more than 500 collaboration projects.

So, as a result of streamlining and standardization, time and workload gains in incident reporting can be upwards of 60%. That's real savings.

Spawn: Integrity of data and systems is always a concern. Is multi-tenancy secure?

Weis: Multi-tenancy is very secure. 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 police organizations maintain autonomy and security of their proprietary data and information. Each tenant, they can customize access rights and dictate restrictions for their users.

Spawn: One of the concerns that police leaders have about information sharing is the ability to maintain control of their data.

Weis: That's a very real concern and it's one that I think a multi-tenant system really addresses. This type of system allows different tenants to access common functionality and common data structures, all managed by security and access controls to regulate who can see and update records. In addition, organizations can retain ownership and restrict what information is shared, thereby maintaining the integrity of their data, it is secure.

Spawn: Thanks Superintendent. You've been listening to Jody Weis, in charge of Strategic Development at Accenture. To learn more about multi-tenancy solutions for modern policing, visit the Accenture website at Accenture.com/uspolicingsolutions