



A new way of doing business

Earlier in the year the NPIA announced the award of a contract to improve national information sharing in the police service. With the national roll out of the project due to begin January 2010, Jose Maria Sanchez de Muniain talks to Project Manager Graham Dunn at the NPIA about an implementation that lies at the heart of a genuine joined-up approach to policing.

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The contract – placed with Siemens Enterprise Communications Group – is to create a national infrastructure called Identity and Access Management Central Services (IAM CS – pronounced "I am CS").

The new architecture is an essential building block for the new Police National Database that is currently also being built. In simplistic terms, the PND will become a central repository of information for all England and Wales' forces, to avoid a repeat of the Soham murders situation, where a crucial piece of intelligence may be held at local force level only. IAM CS is an integral part of this because it sets out a national standard set of access control policies, standards and guidance that each force will implement at local level. In essence, it verifies the identity of each individual accessing shared information.

Graham Dunn goes on to explain that there are two levels of implementation, local and enterprise.

At local level IAM CS can be used to allow a select number of users to access the new PND. Going to the other side of the spectrum, the solution can be implemented enterprise-wide within a force so all officers have access, in this case not only to the appropriate databases but also police buildings and resources.

"The idea of IAM CS is that it will enable us to give access to the right people at the right time to the information they need. We are going to share the information securely, and it will not be a case of giving officers carte blanche."

Access to information will be set according to each officer's roles and appropriate to their duties. For example an officer in a road policing environment will typically only be able to access information related to road policing, explains Dunn. If another sort of

information is required, then it would be provided on a case-by-case basis.

Crucially, Dunn highlights that IAM CS is not about providing access to systems that were not accessible before. He emphasises that local forces' systems will instead be feeding into the Police National Database, and it is the access to national applications such as the PND that IAM CS will be regulating. But it is a flexible system. "If there is a specific data source that a force wants to share with a colleague in another force, for instance during a joint operation, then IAM CS will allow access by guest officers." There will be three levels of use for officers; home force accessibility; secondment and home force accessibility; and joint operations.

As regards how this information will be accessed, Dunn is quick to point towards the ACPO mission statement, which states: "The police service security architecture is to enable employees (and systems) to access the services, when needed, that they require under their basis of employment, whether access is via fixed, mobile or remote device, from either their 'home force', 'other force' systems or elsewhere, within security constraints."

Dunn explains that if an employee required access to day-to-day data sources, then a simple security approach like name and password could be used. If there were a need for regular access to sensitive data, then a stronger approach would be used in the form of a smart card.

A central audit office will record all information access requests, and at force level various management applications will be able to display who is doing what and when.

Challenges and roll out

By all accounts IAM CS will be operational during the first quarter of 2010, and forces will be required to be

operational on the system by second quarter 2010 in order to access the PND. Dunn explains there is a rolling programme of PND so forces will have to implement IAM CS locally at least, in order to log onto national applications. "And every national application will be migrated to the IAM CS family so we have one common way of securing data."

The biggest challenge now facing forces is the funding for implementation of IAM CS. Forces are under pressure in their annual budgets and in effect, says Dunn, additional funding is required to be put into place. "But I like to say that this is 'spend to save'. It might not save anything in terms of hardware or real estate, but it will save time for officers checking on individuals, and it will mean we get officers on the front line as opposed to filling in bits of paper in the station. And the biggest benefit is it will stop cases like the Soham murders because a snippet of information from one force will be available to all."

Forces will need to decide whether to implement IAM CS just for accessing national applications, local systems or whether they want the enterprise-wide option which would also cover buildings access. "They may start with PND and then over the years migrate to a final enterprise solution. Several forces such as West Midlands and the Metropolitan Police are doing it enterprise-wide, others are using a combination of IAM CS for PND in addition

to their own building access system. But what they may do as building access systems come for a refresh is move towards using smart cards for everything. Scotland are also interested in using the NPIA's IAM CS type of approach, so it may become the UK way of doing business."

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