

Seagull Software Gives City of Portland Police Bureau a New Weapon to Catch Offenders



The City of Portland Police Bureau is the largest police agency in Oregon. The agency consists of five precincts, employing over 1,000 sworn personnel and 350 professional staff.



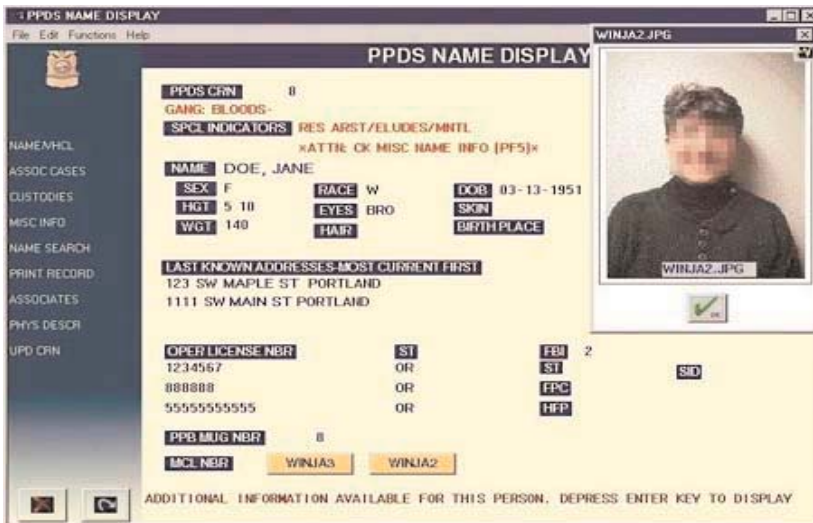
Challenge

When police officers are in the field, accurate information can be their most critical weapon. The ability to confirm a person's identity and any criminal record quickly is key to making a safe and appropriate arrest. While most law enforcement agencies equip their squad cars with computer terminals to access police data systems, many use older technologies that prohibit officers from acquiring essential data—such as mug shots to help identify suspects and arrest warrants from outside states or jurisdictions.

The City of Portland, Oregon Police Bureau needed to upgrade technology in police vehicles to enable mobile data communication, so police officers could access mug shots and criminal records quickly, right from their patrol cars. Their previous system provided only green screens with no way to view a picture, forcing them to drive back to the central precinct with the individual in question to make a proper identification. The inefficient information system was causing unnecessary trips back to the police station, costing the Portland Police Bureau time and money, while threatening the safety of their officers and the public.

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— Bill Wesslund
Senior IS Manager
City of Portland Police Bureau



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Solution

To solve the problem, the department selected Seagull Software's LegaSuite GUI® technology, a component of LegaSuite®, to enhance its mainframe application with touch-screen technology and imaging software in a Windows-based PC environment. LegaSuite GUI provides industry-leading tools and infrastructure software for Web-to-host and Windows-to-host access to mainframe applications.



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The new system gives police officers direct access to the bureau's internal Portland Police Data System (PPDS) from patrol vehicles via a wireless LAN and allows for immediate look-up of criminal records and images to verify identities. Officers are able to access photos in real time at a crime scene and prepare shift reports in their vehicles, reducing the administration time involved with street-to-office updates.

The Portland Police Bureau selected Seagull Software, because only LegaSuite GUI could provide them with superior flexibility, dynamic imaging capabilities and quick implementation. "Officer safety and public safety are primary concerns. The ability to identify individuals at the scene of a crime eliminates the time spent bringing suspects into the central booking location, and we keep more officers on the streets," said Bill Wesslund, senior IS manager for the City of Portland Police Bureau. "We evaluated several technologies for this initiative and Seagull Software's LegaSuite GUI best served our needs in terms of scalability, strong image processing capabilities and fast deployment."

Results

The flexibility of LegaSuite GUI has and will continue to provide opportunities to share data with other law enforcement agencies. In addition to supporting the bureau's patrol vehicle project, the bureau has implemented enhanced graphical desktop access for its administrators and officers.

The Web-enabling features of LegaSuite GUI make it possible for the bureau to contract PPDS to eight separate police agencies in neighboring cities, providing network access to its records department for the Beaverton Police Department, the Tigard Police Department, the Milwaukie Police Department, the St. Helens Police Department, the Scappoose Police Department, the Hillsboro Police Department, and the Multnomah County and Washington County Sheriff's Departments.

By implementing LegaSuite GUI technology, the Portland Police Bureau has reduced costs and become more efficient. The touch-screens help police officers work faster, so they can focus on police-related duties rather than wasting time searching through complex green screens. And, because Portland police officers now have immediate access to accurate information about suspects, they can perform their jobs with confidence.



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