

Saukville Police Department Case Study – Public Safety

COLUMBITECH

SUMMARY

Saukville Police Department in southeast Wisconsin teamed up with DCS Netlink for a citywide implementation of its LEAP (Law Enforcement Application Program) based on Columbitech Mobile VPN, providing police officers on patrol real-time access to mission-critical applications and data.

THE CHALLENGE

- Limited access to applications and data from the field
- Slow and unstable connectivity from laptops in the cars
- Too much paper-based work

The police department was using IBM laptops connected to the police cars' 800MHz radio system. This system was slow and provided only limited access to records and applications from the cars. Police officers often relied on a dispatcher to get records information and spent a lot of time manually filling out paperwork that later had to be typed into a computer in the office.

"The old radio system limited access to our records systems from the field, and we couldn't connect with other databases that the state of Wisconsin has, like criminal record databases," said Chief of Police, Bill Meloy, a 40-year veteran of law enforcement. "When the number of users on the 800MHz system increased, the response time to inquiries slowed down with negative impact on productivity."

THE EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Support for a reliable and persistent cellular connection
- FIPS 140-2 certified and two-factor authentication
- Affordable to purchase and own



Today Saukville Police Department has full access to applications from the cars.



Bill Meloy, Chief of Police and Steve Newman from Columbitech's partner, DCS Netlink, have worked closely together to provide police officers remote access from the laptops in the cars.

Saukville Police Department was looking for a solution that provided secure remote access to all mission-critical applications and records from the laptops used in the squad cars. It was important that the solution offered strong security and was FIPS 140-2 certified. Additionally, it was critical that the connection was reliable and provided session persistence and seamless roaming among various networks.

"We were looking for an affordable, reliable cellular-based solution," explained Chief Meloy. "The goal was to reduce paperwork and move toward an efficient electronic system."

THE SOLUTION

Saukville Police Department worked with Columbitech's partner and integrator, DCS Netlink, which installed the FIPS 140-2 certified Columbitech Mobile VPN as part of its LEAP solution. The LEAP framework is a thin-client solution that allows mobile users to access any of their office applications (including Windows applications) in real-time, using limited-bandwidth connections. LEAP users can even access applications with heavy graphics and they have the flexibility to print in the office or in the squad car. Saukville's squad car laptops are refurbished, more than five years old computers, but still more than adequate to use thanks to the efficient thin-client architecture. The laptops use 3G Verizon Aircards instead of being linked through the vehicle's radio system.

Columbitech Mobile VPN offers strong data encryption and

Saukville Police Department

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Bill Meloy, Police Chief of Saukville Police Department

two-factor authentication, allowing Saukville police officers to obtain fast, secure, and uninterrupted access to applications and records. Support for seamless roaming and session resume ensures continuous access to applications when laptops roam or lose the cellular coverage. More applications can easily be added for wireless access from the squad cars in the future.

Columbitech Mobile VPN is application transparent and protects any application without any software changes. The VPN software runs in the background and is completely seamless to the user. Additionally, Columbitech Mobile VPN uses advanced data compression for higher data speed, granting improved performance for web applications that otherwise can be slow over 3G networks.

The new system has eliminated the time spent in the office filling out paperwork and significantly improved the overall efficiency of the police department. It allows patrolling officers to access the same desktop applications they use in the office and to enter new data in real-time, rather than waiting to return to their desks.

“Our police officers can access important records system from anywhere, said Chief Meloy. “With wireless access to our local and the county sheriffs’ records as well as Wisconsin state records, weather radar information, and federal databases, we can be much more effective and respond faster.”

THE IMPLEMENTATION

DCS Netlink evaluated several different VPN solutions before teaming up with Columbitech. The Columbitech Mobile VPN met all Saukville’s requirements on security and session persistence. Additionally, this software was the fastest and most efficient when running on the server, and was capable of sharing the server with other applications. This is a critical feature as most other VPNs require dedicated hardware,

resulting in higher costs – which are not practical for smaller organizations with limited resources.

“We are very pleased with the fast results achieved using Columbitech Mobile VPN and LEAP. It is important that we are able to access critical information quickly, and we were not achieving this with our past solution or the other solutions we considered,” said Chief Meloy. “This new solution is high-quality yet cost-efficient and it addresses all of our needs, from session persistence to strong security authentication and improved productivity.”

The Columbitech Mobile VPN is software based and consists of client and server software. Saukville Police Department installed the server software on an existing Windows 2003 server, and the client software was deployed via USB. The deployment took only a few hours to complete. Future software updates can be handled using Columbitech’s tool for remote update over the wireless network.

Columbitech’s partner, DCS Netlink, has many years of experience from development and implementation of law enforcement applications and played instrumental role in the success of this project. DCS Netlink installed the LEAP solution and the mobile VPN, and provides IT support on an ongoing basis so that Saukville Police Department does not need to have an in-house IT specialist to maintain their systems.

THE ROI

- Shortened response time for first responders
- Increased situational awareness
- Improved productivity
- Better application performance and speed
- Extended lifetime of existing laptops reduces costs
- Ease of use and ability to add more applications
- No lost transactions
- Significantly lower monthly cost

Columbitech Mobile VPN and DCS Netlink LEAP solution increase productivity thanks to continuous, reliable remote access to police applications and records from the cars without replacing any hardware. The new system increases the safety of the police officers and allows them to respond faster. Furthermore, it reduces the amount of paperwork and helps the police department to increase revenue by expediting the ticketing process, resulting in less time spent per incident.

For more information, visit our web site, www.columbitech.com.