



UK police choose SiteMinder™ for browser access control

The Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) provides information technology and communications systems and services to the police within the UK. A major part of its remit is the implementation of the National Strategy for Police Information (NSPIS®) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The aim is to speed up the effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System, and support front-line policing, by reducing the burden of administration.

“SiteMinder™ is the obvious choice for this kind of system. It is the only product that combines the highest levels of security – essential in a police system – with the flexibility necessary to accommodate many users and potential applications.”
Richard Mardling, Enline

In developing the web-based element of NSPIS®, PITO recognised that secure browser access was a vital component.

In this case study we look at how this key element of NSPIS® is helping one particular police force address the growing problem of abandoned vehicles. Sussex Police is one of five police forces currently using the NSPIS® Browser Access Control (BAC) application based on Netegrity SiteMinder™ to support its ‘Operation Crackdown’ – an initiative that uses the internet to identify and deal with abandoned vehicles more quickly and cost effectively.

The problem – ensuring a secure route to tackle vehicle dumping. It’s estimated that 350,000 vehicles were illegally dumped in

the UK last year. It’s a costly and time consuming task to track down ownership and ensure safe removal of this increasing environmental and social blight. ‘Operation Crackdown’ has been launched to tackle some key issues.

Inspector Ali Darge, from Sussex Police explains: “The idea is to use the Internet to allow abandoned vehicles to be reported by the public, and then to co-ordinate a rapid response from the various agencies. The Abandoned Vehicles System (AVS) uses a standard browser to make information available over the Force’s intranet, and also a Partnership Extranet, as well as providing access to the public via the Internet. The system obviously has to be secure and provide differing levels of access depending on who is using it.”

The system also has to work across a variety of different technology platforms and provide a simple, common user interface, both within the Sussex Police intranet, across the partner extranet, and more widely across the web so that the general public can play its part.

The solution – based on Netegrity SiteMinder™. Using the Internet for Operation Crackdown shows how effective the nationwide strategic NSPIS approach can be. Enline plc, a reseller partner of Netegrity in the UK, has worked with PITO on the NSPIS® project since June 2000, and proposed SiteMinder™ as the best solution for Browser Access Control. PITO evaluated SiteMinder™, and having put it through its paces, recommended it

to Sussex and other police forces as part of their e-infrastructure. SiteMinder™ allows users fully audited single-sign-on to multiple web-enabled applications – whether these are force developed or provided within NSPIS®. It also gives NSPIS® the ability to centrally manage user identity and entitlement information and to share this information across all applications on a site, greatly reducing administration, cost and complexity.

SiteMinder™ controls the level of information that a verified user is allowed to access within each application and all user activity is recorded in an audit log. It facilitates the establishment of secure intranet and extranet communications, in which all the web-enabled applications are employing SiteMinder™. This common security functionality allows security policies to be established centrally whilst allowing access control decisions to be delegated to the administrators of the secured applications.

In the case of Sussex Police’s AVS, SiteMinder has to work in harness with a number of functionalities, which enable rapid response to vehicle abandonment.



AVS allows anyone to report an abandoned vehicle via the worldwide web using www.sussex.police.uk. Members of the general public reporting abandoned vehicles in this way have an easy to use online form to record information about the vehicle, location and when it was abandoned. There is also an innovative online map reporting tool with MultiMap.com which allows users of the system to indicate the specific location of an abandoned vehicle by clicking on a map rather than relying on a description of street names, numbers or other landmarks.

"We aim to cut the level of recorded crime, reduce the number of vehicle crimes and improve service to the public by improving inter-agency working and providing a more streamlined 'one-stop shop' through better call handling and the internet."
Detective Inspector Merv Wyeth,
Sussex Police.

Local Authority Inspectors, Police Officers and Traffic Wardens have a different set of user forms to enter more detail about a vehicle's condition, location and whether it presents a hazard to other road users.

The benefits – improved clear-up through one-stop-shop access
The general public has been able to use the system since February 2002. SiteMinder™ is playing a key role in ensuring it is fully secure, while supporting the ease of use which is vital to ensuring the co-operation of the public:

- Ensuring that only the right people see the right information
- Enabling single sign-on across both intranet web based services and across multi-agency web-based services
- Utilising existing authentication schemes such as username/password, token based, PKI, biometrics and smart cards
- Increasing security while reducing management costs through the provision of a centralised management of web services security
- Providing a detailed multi-server audit trail to support simple traceability

