



Essex Police Implements OpenText Business Intelligence to Help Catch the Crooks

OpenText Business Intelligence serves to build a safer environment for information, police, and residents alike

Industry

Law Enforcement

Customer



Business Challenges

- Laborious process to search, identify, and access critical information
- Inadequate security access and electronic information sharing
- Inefficient processes and systems
- Need for increased depth in crime analysis

Business Solution

- OpenText Business Intelligence

Business Benefits

- Real-time access to service information requests
- Improved secure, shared access to information
- Enhanced crime analysis capabilities
- Greater ability to allocate police officers, investigate crimes, and prevent crimes within designated wards

Essex Police prides itself on being at the forefront of innovative policing and is constantly looking at new technologies that can help support the services it provides to residents, businesses, and visitors, as well as its own officers.

With a need to more efficiently and effectively search its internal databases for crime figures, hotspots, and any information that could help improve crime reduction initiatives, Essex Police turned to the OpenText Business Intelligence (BI) solution.

Business need

Essex Police wanted to reduce the time it took officers and others in the force to search for, identify, and access critical information. The force wanted a solution that would allow them to query and report centrally on data from its Crime Recording System.

Essex Police was deploying an OpenText BI solution, including BI Administration and BI Query. However, their needs had developed beyond the capabilities of the existing solution, which didn't allow for the data to be managed centrally. The force's critical information was dispersed across a number of shared servers and split into different data levels. This meant that updates to the system had to be carried out on each individual server, which resulted in officers spending vital hours managing the system instead of focussing on core policing duties.

Its current BI system did not lend itself well to operation via the intranet, either. It was only available on a limited number of computers that had the software installed. This meant officers had to wait to retrieve critical information from the database, restricting their access to crime figures and hindering their ability to identify crime hotspots.

Following discussions with OpenText and then a series of demonstrations and evaluations, Essex Police decided to upgrade to the latest version of OpenText Business Intelligence.

Solving crime by securing information

Essex Police originally implemented Business Intelligence in 2004 and started using the BI Query tool to search and report on data from its Crime Recording System. Following this initial implementation, they soon realized the potential of the solution and started to create data models for other systems, allowing them to gather management information and provide data quality checks across systems.

More importantly, and critical for crime prevention, the solution enabled analysts and researchers to perform crime analysis that could help both prevent and detect crime, as well as provide information to assist in the deployment of resources for operational policing.





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Sarah Rundell, IT – Application Administrator, Essex Police, comments, “Analysts constantly use BI Query as a method to interrogate the different information systems that exist in the force. It allows us to ask questions of the system in a way that cannot be asked through the normal search parameters in the individual systems.”

Sarah continues, “It gives us the ability to search and retrieve any combination of data fields from within the systems, extract the answers to a common platform, such as Excel®, for further manipulation, and to import the data to other analysis programs, such as mapping or i2®.”

The solution has also allowed the police force to set qualifications on any of the data fields, in any and various combinations, giving them more in-depth and precise analysis of crime trends and figures. This has proven to be particularly useful; the force was unable to perform this task on the previous system.

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Sarah continues, “The BI solution also has the facility to bring back counts across the whole range of data, again in user-defined combinations. This allows for identifications of changing crime trends and seasonal trend analysis, both of which are key to effective policing.”

Lastly, the police force has found that gathering detailed information via BI is so much easier, quicker, and more efficient than trying to extract it from core systems. It has allowed for quick and effective export to other systems, thus freeing up analyst time that can be better spent solving crimes as opposed to data extraction.

Connecting sources for improved resource allocation

Once the police were fully competent in using the solution, they created a data model called GOCART that connects to two source systems: the Crime Recording System and the Command and Control System. Essentially, this enables operational officers to research specific wards, and the specific crimes that are occurring in these wards, to then allocate staff and officers accordingly.

Chief Inspector Jonathan Baldwin says, “GOCART was developed by Essex Police in response to an acute need to be able to search on a wide variety of data variables and present them in an easily comprehensible format. This is most clearly expressed in the middle tier of police management, primarily in the operational policing environment.”

Jonathan continues: “Understanding historical data is always subject to interpretation, personal inflection, and unseen influences that can often be as anecdotal as they are accurate. GOCART removes the ambiguity from this data interrogation and allows for the display of information according to a number of pre-determined criteria—location, crime type, frequency, and time period. The data is updated continually from live systems, with officers able to access GOCART from any terminal once access permissions have been granted.”

The GOCART data model, with Business Intelligence as its foundation, successfully improved critical information management at Essex Police. As Jonathan explains, “Through a number of formulae and data-slicing techniques, officers perform queries through GOCART that are timely, relevant, and geo-coded. They are presented in a user-defined format in relation to officer group, beat code, or other descriptive headings. GOCART has become accepted as part of the Essex Police suite of performance management tools, and its value continues to increase as the flexibility of the system allows user-defined queries to be added.”





Business Intelligence an integral tool in police investigation

Since implementing the system, Essex Police has seen a significant decrease in the time it takes to access critical data. This has had a knock-on effect in the time it takes to allocate police officers, investigate crimes, and prevent crimes within designated wards.

Sarah Rundell says, "From an IT viewpoint, the software is very easy to use. Most of our staff uses the application without any formal training, which is just not possible with other reporting tools. We have pushed the use of BI with the GOCART data model and have plans to utilise the software further. With a high dependency on the software, we have had to introduce resiliency to the system and create a replicated server. We worked with OpenText to set this up, over only a matter of days, and have real-time resiliency to a failover server."

Sarah adds, "We've been able to fully customise the software and create attributes based on fields within the source system, complicated calculations, multiple queries in one report, and have come up with solutions for users' requests."

In addition to the obvious crime prevention benefits, the system has also helped the force collate and report national statistics. Previously, a member of staff would have collated certain national statistics manually, counting all the categories by hand on the source system. Since the implementation of the BI suite, and a



specific BI model being developed for this particular task, it has saved this employee a whole day to concentrate on other, more serious, crime prevention duties.

Sarah concludes, "The OpenText system has really helped improve efficiency within the police force. We can now access and analyse critical information with ease at the touch of button. This, partnered with the fact that all of our officers can now access the system through the intranet, has made it a significant tool in helping us combat crime."

www.opentext.com

sales@opentext.com

800 499 6544

