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VICTORIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

PROOF OF CONCEPT STUDY

Body Worn Video & In Vehicle Video



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Body Worn Video & In Vehicle Video

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- Project Manager BWV, who dedicated hours of his own time to write and piece together the report in its entirety. Without Brendon's commitment to this project, this report would never have been completed.

Cst. Trevor Stephen

- Project Manager IVV, who oversaw everything to do with IVV and the recommendations found in this report.

Cst. Peter Lane

- Patrol member who conducted the officer statistical survey on BWV and IVV, wrote the section on "Project Objectives" and "History of Use of Video by Police", and helped write the "Executive Summary" and the "Results and Summary of Recommendations" that form part of this report.

Debra Taylor

- Legal Services Manager, who prepared the entire FOI section of this report.

Collette Mahon

- Executive Assistant to the Chief Constable, who helped format the report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From July 1, 2009 to October 30, 2009 the Victoria Police Department conducted testing of video and audio recording equipment for use by front line officers. There were two types of equipment tested: Body Worn Video (BWV) sometimes referred to as “head cameras”, and In Vehicle Video (IVV). Officers assigned to either foot or bicycle patrols were responsible for testing BWV equipment and officers from the traffic section were primarily responsible for testing IVV equipment. There were four sets of BWV available to officers and IVV cameras were installed in three police cars and on one police motorcycle.

All data from the cameras was saved in a secure format that prevented alteration or editing of any kind. In other words, once a recording was made it was downloaded to a server in a format that prevented it from being modified or deleted. Some of the recordings formed part of the evidence submitted to Crown Counsel for charge approval. There were 39 Reports to Crown Counsel (RCC) submitted during the testing period for offences including Assault, Assault Causing Bodily Harm, Theft, Drug Possession, Obstructing a Police Officer, Impaired Driving, and Robbery. The charges are all in various stages within the court system and are summarized as follows:

- 85 charges were submitted to the court system
- 79 charges were approved
- 11 convictions to date
- 59 charges are currently pending
- 9 charges were stayed or withdrawn

No complaints against police officers using the equipment were received during the testing period. This is consistent with the findings of a major UK study of BWV, where no complaints were lodged against officers wearing head cameras. However, unlike the UK study, this research found that officers in Victoria reported spending more time completing files involving video than files without video.

80% of officers who used the equipment and responded to a survey felt that video equipment provided them with a more accurate account of an incident, and 87% felt that the quality of evidence they could submit to Crown Counsel was improved with the video.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of this research was to examine the use of BWV and IVV, to test new equipment, and to attempt to compare results with those found in BWV research from the UK. Further, the report attempts to provide some policy and training direction for police departments in the event the equipment is purchased and utilized.

The UK research found that there was a reduction in public complaints against police, an increase in arrests and charges, a decrease in time officers spent on files, and that the public response to the use of BWV was positive. It was a goal of this research to determine if similar results were evident in Victoria. It was also theorized that aggressive behaviour may be reduced when individuals were informed about being recorded.

The final objective of this research was to determine if this technology would be of significant benefit to the citizens of the Greater Victoria area, the police officers who enforce the laws and to the court systems when prosecuting offenses. A survey containing several questions and statements was made available to the 20 officers who participated in testing the equipment to document their experiences while using the technology during the course of their duties.

RESULTS & SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, this technology was well received by police officers, members of the public and Crown Counsel.

The following concepts and results were observed throughout the trial:

- This technology provides the best evidence possible.
- The information captured can be used for court purposes.
- The information captured needs to be kept in a secure area network.
- The police department must maintain the integrity of public information and any video via policy and software/security measures.
- Effective use of this technology to achieve court convictions will require liaison with Provincial and Federal Crown Counsel.
- Officer awareness of their surroundings increased.
- Public hostility/aggressiveness decreased.
- Public complaints were reduced to zero during the test period.



- Charge approval rate during the test period was 93% (compared to 84% of charges submitted by Victoria Police in 2009).
- Of convictions to date on BWV cases, 91% were by way of guilty plea.

This report concludes the study which greatly supports the use of IVV and BWV for policing in the Greater Victoria area. While the quality of IVV was of a high standard, the portability of BWV increased the video capture area beyond the front and rear of the vehicle to the following police areas:

- Foot Patrol
- K9 Deployment
- Bike Patrol
- Primary Response (patrol in vehicle)
- Traffic (motorcycle)
- Marine Response
- Emergency Response

Cost played a significant factor in determining suitability as IVV is expensive while BWV is very affordable. It was the feeling of the Project Coordinator and Project Manager of both IVV and BWV that each has its use and can be used in conjunction with one another. The success of each system is dependent on the skill of the user, the back office support, and cooperation of the court system. Due to the affordability and portability of BWV, this report concludes that it is the most viable option for the Victoria Police Department at this time.

This study found that BWV can be easily deployed while maintaining security of the video footage for later retrieval. By placing security passwords on equipment which officers cannot access, data can be kept secure until it is downloaded into a secure Storage Area Network (SAN). The report found that management of the video data can be consuming and as such, establishing a one person management system (with data management software in the SAN) will reduce officer preparation time for court while maintaining security of the video data. This position should also be responsible for maintenance of equipment, training, maintenance of police policy to meet the needs of the department/public, and court liaison.

It is the findings of this study that BWV will contribute greatly to providing "best evidence" for court/inquiry purposes and as such, be of benefit to the public and the police officers of the Victoria Police Department.



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