

CASE STUDY

London Police Service - Canada



ForTheRecord
a Melbourne IT company



OVERVIEW

Industry:
Law Enforcement

Organization Info:
London Police Service, Ontario,
Canada

Established in 1885

580+ officers

Problem:
Poor recording & transcript
quality

Unreliable equipment that was
getting harder to repair & service

Cumbersome to review
pre-recorded interviews

Goals for new solution:
High quality recording

Streamlined process

Rapid, easy access to content

Minimal learning curve

“We are now recording
around 40% more
interviews than in the past
because it is so easy to
use and manage the
recordings.”

- Sgt. Gary Brown

Organizational Overview

The London Police Service was established in 1855 and has served the city of London in Canada for over 150 years. Today, the Service has an authorised strength of 586 officers, 191 civilians, and 22 cadets. Over the years, the face and function of the London Police Service have changed dramatically. However, the organization’s philosophy, to enhance the safety and security of the citizens of London, Canada, has remained the same.

The Challenge

For many years the London Police Service relied on VHS tapes for their recording needs. Although considered state-of-the-art technology - according to Police Information and Technology Liaison, Sergeant Gary Brown and his partner, Sr. Business Systems Analyst, Andy Hunter - this method proved to have a lot of drawbacks.

The London Police Service records 50-100 criminal interviews every week. Labelling and filing such a large volume of tapes was time-consuming and labor-intensive; retrieving records at short notice was also difficult. In addition to occupying much-needed physical space, the tapes deteriorated over time and were not a reliable record. Problems also arose when transcripts needed to be prepared to submit to the Courts and Crown Attorney’s office as, more often than not, the sound quality was poor and transcribers would need to listen to the same recording multiple times. Transcript production was delayed and the end result was not the best quality.

To overcome these challenges, the London Police Service was seeking a simple yet secure digital solution. Their primary goals were to streamline the recording process, capture a high-quality audio-video recording, minimize the learning curve for staff and be able to quickly and easily retrieve desired recorded segments for review and transcript creation.

The Solution

The London Police Service realised it needed to change its recording and storage methods to increase staff productivity as well as improve the efficiency of its investigations process. They reviewed several options that ran the gamut from off-the-shelf DVD recorders to surveillance systems to high-end, customized solutions but nothing seemed to meet their needs. When Gary Brown came across FTR Interrogator™, he realised it was the complete audio/video digital and content management solution they needed to fulfil the Service’s functional and business goals. “We first piloted the product in June 2008 within our interview rooms. The criminal investigators who tested the product were very impressed by the advanced nature of the technology and the efficiency and simplicity it lent to the recording and disclosure process,” Sgt. Brown said.

The FTR Interrogator solution includes three main components: A software recorder with push-button controls, an electronic, note-taking tool, based on FTR’s patented ThinkLink™ technology, to aid in the navigation and retrieval of specific segments of pre-recorded content, and a replication service that enables the interview recording to be simultaneously archived to a network (or other secondary) location.

By utilising FTR’s free player, any authorized person is also able to access and play back the recorded interview directly from the network, either live or afterwards.

The London Police Service is now using the FTR Interrogator solution across the entire investigation process including four Interview Rooms, a Polygraph suite, a Cell Booking station, a Breath Testing suite and a Portable Interview Kit. All recordings are stored at a pre-determined network location from where they can be accessed directly by authorized personnel. No more dealing with VHS tapes!

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Using the FTR Interrogator solution, the Service is able to quickly and easily share the recordings and associated notes with the Crown Attorney’s office. They do this by placing a link to the recordings relevant to a particular case as part of that case file in their Records Management System. This information is then supplied electronically to the Crown Attorney as part of their electronic disclosure process and the Crown Attorney is able to access the digital evidence directly from their office. According to Gary Brown, “being able to do this has saved [the London Police Service] a tremendous amount of time and effort.” “The Crown office gets everything they need quickly and easily and only contacts us for very specific requests.”

As further testimony to their success with the FTR Interrogator solution, the London Police Service is in the process of outfitting their new, state-of-the-art mobile command centre with this solution too, thus enabling the instant capture of video recordings on the road. They are also going to purchase two more licenses for new interview rooms currently under construction, which is expected to be completed soon.

“This solution has worked out really well for us,” said Gary Brown. “Our users love it and we have only heard positive comments,” he says.

The Benefits

The FTR Interrogator solution was a perfect fit for the London Police Service, addressing its key challenges and requirements, in a simple and effective manner.

After deploying FTR interrogator, the Service has enjoyed several tangible benefits, such as:

- Eliminating the time-consuming process associated with managing VHS recordings.
- Rapid access to pre-recorded content from any location – no need to rely on obtaining copies of VHS tapes.
- Significantly reducing the workload for frontline officers – all they have to do is push a button to record and take notes, if they wish; everything else is managed by the system.
- Top quality recordings, resulting in rapid, more accurate and complete transcripts.
- Collaborating more effectively with the Crown Attorney’s office, further increasing process efficiencies.

Gary Brown, his staff and users are all very pleased with FTR Interrogator. “The product saves us time and has definitely streamlined our recording process. We are recording around 40% more interviews now than in the past because it is so easy to use and manage the recordings,” Sgt. Brown says. “The audio and video components are of superior quality, and the nature of the technology enables us to easily collaborate with external entities such as the Crown office in a timely manner.”

“FTR Interrogator has vastly improved the way the London Police Service operates on a daily basis, streamlining the investigation process through the efficient recording, storage and delivery of our video recordings. We are secure in the knowledge that we have access to the very latest technology in the area of digital recording, backed by an industry leader.”