APEC Police Force/ Geomatic Technologies

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—Justin Waters, Senior Sergeant, NSW Police Force

INDUSTRY

- Public Sector

KEY BENEFITS

- Automates manual, paper-based processes
- Synchronizes access to work schedules and up-to-date asset information
- Provides secure data transfer between command centre and police officers
- Resulted in significant time savings & improved efficiencies in high pressure situation under international scrutiny

SYBASE TECHNOLOGY

- Afaria®
- Sybase® Partner Geomatic Technologies Field Mobile Computing (FMC) solution

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is an inter-governmental forum facilitating economic growth and prosperity, cooperation, trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific region. From January to September 2007, Australia hosted a series of APEC meetings focusing on areas of interest to the nation, with over 100 days of ministerial, officials-level and business-group meetings held across the country, culminating in the APEC Summit in early September, the most significant international gathering of an economic kind that Australia has hosted. To maintain security throughout the duration of this conference, teams of police and government personnel used a mobile reporting solution created with Afaria.

APEC PUTS SYDNEY ON RED ALERT

Major events are memorable moments in the collective memory of a nation and the world. The flip side of fame is a dramatic increase in security requirements.

In 2000, the Sydney Olympic Games attracted hundreds of athletes, media and thousands of international and inter-state visitors. Seven years later, Australia's biggest city was once again the focus of international attention. The APEC Summit in September 2007, the annual forum of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, was by far the most significant political conference in Australian history.

To protect the world's most high profile leaders, including the presidents of the USA, China, Russia, Canada and Japan from security threats, 635 Operations Support Group personnel and 200 Australian Defense Force personnel were deployed in Sydney to conduct the security search operation. These officers were responsible for searching Sydney's inner city district for improvised explosive devices and other hazards.

Justin Waters, a Senior Sergeant with the NSW Police Force, joined the APEC 2007 NSW Police Security Command (APSC) in 2006. At APSC he was responsible for planning, coordinating and implementing the security searches of venues, vehicles and routes and providing electronic documentation on the findings. From the 2000 Olympic Games, Justin knew the pressures a large event would impose on the Search Advisers and search teams during the operation.

Checking every possible location for hazards, and keeping accountable records of the search results, had been a cumbersome undertaking during the Olympics. The reporting system in place then was paper-based, and required an officer to physically return the findings to the Search Adviser in the command post. Once the search operation was completed, the paperwork would then be archived making data retrieval difficult. For the APEC summit, Justin Waters was looking for a more efficient and reliable solution that would fulfill the strict security requirements of this most prestigious event.

"We were looking for a technology solution that would bring our reporting procedures into the 21st century—self-evidently without compromising liability or running the risk that the system itself could become a security hazard," Justin recalls. "With the Pope's visit in 2008 in mind, we knew that APEC wasn't the last major event to stage in Sydney. We wanted to have a reliable reporting system in place when our security squads were to search venues, vehicles and routes."

The mobile solution needed to be managed and monitored remotely; allow police officers to submit their findings over the air, and store electronic documentation of the search results. The brief for the APEC operation also required the mobile devices to be locked and shielded from external intrusion, to prevent virus and spyware attacks.

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In a competitive tender process, a wireless solution by Geomatic Technologies was selected, as it fulfilled the extensive security criteria within the budget. Based on Sybase Afaria, a mobile data management platform with extensive security capabilities including server-gated cryptography and data wiping in the case of loss of a device, Geomatic provided a complete field mobile computing system (FMC) to the APSC.

MAPPING SYDNEY'S CBD FOR MOBILE COORDINATION

Viewing the floor plan of each building, many of them renowned hotels at Sydney's famous Opera Quay, the solution enabled the Search Adviser to create work orders from his desktop for the individual search sectors.

The team leader received the instructions for search tasks on a Motorola Symbol MC 70 rugged numeric type device, and reported back to the command post using the same. The Search Adviser had a clear visualization on cleared areas, and could assign extra staff to investigate suspicious findings.

ENCRYPTION GUARANTEES DATA SECURITY

Geomatic Technologies' FMC solution was based on Sybase Afaria, a state-of-the-art mobile device management platform with extensive security capabilities. Geomatic Technologies used Afaria to transfer data between the mobile devices of the search teams, and the Search Advisor in the command centre.

All over-the-air communication was encrypted using Sybase partner Verisign's server-gated cryptography SSL certificate and sent over Telstra's 3G network to the NSW Police's intranet. The Verisign solution is the most powerful SSL encryption commercially available today.

Afaria also encrypts sensitive data on the device and enables the IT administrator to immediately fade classified information if a mobile device is lost or stolen, and automatically wipes out data upon entry of an invalid password.

FIT FOR THE POPE

The security force screened the designated search areas with up to 12 teams with five members of staff in each, depending on location. As some of the search locations had 30 floors or more, the time savings from not having to return a paper report physically after each mission were clearly significant.

All reports were saved on the Parramatta-based server of the NSW Police Force and will provide reference points for future operations in Sydney's CBD.

Justin Waters said, "Our hazard-detection operations during APEC were more efficient than ever, and we saved hours of valuable time."

"We see APEC as the successful trial for future operations, and want to expand the functionality of the system for the next major event in Sydney, World Youth Day in July 2008."

Due to the electronic documentation of the geographic conditions and findings during APEC, the NSW Police Force will be able to access data for specific areas in the search zone when Pope Benedict XVI visits Sydney, and with him, up to a million Australian and overseas pilgrims.

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