CAPITA
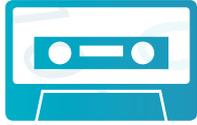
Choosing the right technology to capture and manage evidential interviews

Technology advances, ageing first generation DVD burning equipment and changing operational practices are leading to forces considering technology refresh programmes for their digital interview recording solutions. This paper outlines three stages of maturity and how forces can maximise the return on investment in this critical technology as part of these programmes.

Change driven by commercial technology development

In the early 2000's DVD technology became increasingly available and original interview tape recorders became less serviceable leading to the procurement of first generation digital interview recording solutions by many forces. Interviews were still recorded with 2 or 3 DVD copies requiring transport, cataloguing and storage. It is remarkable that this still happens in many forces across the world when commercial digital recording technology has moved on with yet another step change into the Cloud.

Given the concerns on the evidential security of interviews and the overhead of moving audio and video files around networks it is understandable that there remains a level of nervousness about moving away from physical copies. There are, however, many benefits to accrue from making such a move.

Live Monitoring

For many years standalone recording units, either analogue (tape) or digital, have enabled interviews to be monitored from an adjoining room. Adding recording devices to the force network (allowing live monitoring over the network) can significantly support operations given the distributed nature of organisations and collaboration in investigations.

Facilitated by the addition of a centralised, secure repository any interview can be viewed from the store without the need to produce copies that require transport, storage and security management.

Secure interview repository

Taking the decision to migrate from a standalone to a networked solution will deliver significant benefits from removing physical media, increasing efficiencies in operations and from opening collaborative possibilities.

The benefits of removing physical media include reducing the risk of data loss, increasing quality and enhancing the security and auditability of data. Removing the cost of procurement, transportation and storage as well as reducing the handling time of interviews delivers immediate tangible cost savings.

However this is about more than just a simple file upload to a shared folder on a network. Using a dedicated repository, with an integrated enterprise security model to manage access provides a full audit trail of access, playback of interviews at the desktop for officers and investigation teams without having to retrieve or copy media.

A dedicated, specialist repository for all digital evidence, including interviews, doesn't rely on the force's Records Management System (RMS) to be extended to include features and functions for media management that impinge on its core operational requirements. With all the media management tools such as redaction, clipping, stills extract being provided in the repository the necessary files can be linked to the RMS to support investigations whilst providing full security and access control and the ability to overlay Review, Retention and Deletion compliance.

▶ Digital Case Files and data sharing

Interviews, as an element of any investigation, need to be shared, in part or in full, as part of the digital case file. Key to this is the ability to integrate the digital media with the force's Records Management System (RMS). This enables unique references, for example the RMS Custody URN or Case Number, to be associated with the recording through the use of the metadata thus maintaining the evidential link from the original source through any extracts to the final media provided as part of the case file.

The Home Office Digital 1st programme is developing a Digital Evidential Transfer Service (DETS) for forces in England and Wales. DETS will provide a national capability to securely share evidential multimedia (video, audio, still imagery and PDF evidential documentation) between the police (providers) and Crown Prosecution Service - CPS (primary consumers).

DETS will only host copies of evidential material with the originals maintained by the force under current procedures. The material will only be held within DETS for the duration of the prosecution activities, including appeal periods, or up to the point where the CPS decides the material is no longer relevant.

With improved management, security and integration of data will come the ability to more effectively manage Disclosure and Subject Access Requests; two critical processes in any successful criminal justice system.

A single repository that uses metadata to effectively manage data, integrated to the force's Records Management System, will make the identification and packaging of every piece of data in a case much more straightforward thus avoiding accidental errors that can prove crucial in prosecutions.

In the world of ever-increasing volumes of digital media a single, integrated repository of data will help the organisation retrieve this data much more effectively and thoroughly than if held in numerous different systems.

▶ Changing operational practices

Portable recording units, either on laptops or tablet devices, should be considered as part of any implementation but, importantly, that these can be easily connected to the force network when returned to a suitable location such that, as with the fixed units, the interview recordings can be uploaded to the network repository and become subject to the exact same security and process controls.

The same management processes should also be applied to 'street interviews' conducted using body worn cameras to ensure consistency in operational procedures and therefore accountability and evidential management.

| STAGE 1 **DVD Burning**	STAGE 2 **File Share Upload**	STAGE 3 **Full Repository**
Offline recordings requiring disk management, storage, transport Copies and edits required for transcription and case files	Simple file store with little or no security and access control Relies on RMS to provide all the file management	Fully integrated with RMS for case file preparation MoPI compliance Suite of tools for redaction, clipping, still extracts etc DETS interface Data sharing Option to extend to a full DEM to incorporate other media sources

Summary

The current state in the technology lifecycle for many police forces, Stage 1 in our Maturity Model, is leading to the development of refresh programmes. A simple like-for-like replacement wouldn't make the most of the latest available technology and a small incremental move to Stage 2, whilst releasing some cost saving, really doesn't support the operational change required to deliver a digital investigation capability fit for integration with regional and national programmes. Moving to Stage 3 unlocks the future, with solutions readily available on the market, that will enable a step-change for forces and working with partners across the Criminal Justice System.
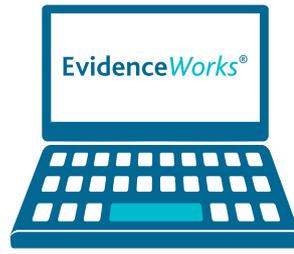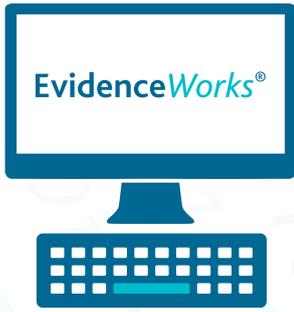
About Capita's EvidenceWorks®

Over recent years Capita has become a leading provider of digital interview recorders in the UK and with a growing market overseas. The current client base includes a number have gone further than a direct replacement of legacy recorders and adopted a network-based storage configuration and in one case has a regional shared model.

Alongside the development of the wider Digital Evidence Management suite in EvidenceWorks® the team have continued to support the development of the Interview Recording Solution including the ability to deploy the same recording capabilities on laptops or tablets as well as the fixed custody unit.

All configurations are network-enabled, with the laptop and tablet variants capable of 'offline' recording and subsequent synchronisation, and can be used with either the EvidenceWorks® repository or integrated with a third party fileshare solution.

EvidenceWorks® provides an end to end interview management solution, one of the most comprehensive available, including:

- a modern intuitive web based UI supporting live monitoring, replay and editing
- redaction, clipping, snapshots
- role and team based access controls
- MoPI management
- auditing
- DETS interface
- secure data sharing

More detail on the solution can be found on our website or through direct contact via email:

www.capita-sss.com/digital-interview-recording

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