SureView systems

Case Study: The City of Santa Ana

City of Santa Ana achieves interagency video sharing with SureView Systems Immix enterprise command center software

Customer

Located in Southern California, the City of Santa Ana is home to more than 330,000 people, making it the second largest city in Orange County and the 11th largest city in the state.

The city, which encompasses a geographic footprint of more than 27 square miles, is also home to numerous local, state and federal agencies that occupy facilities within the Santa Ana Civic Center complex, including the Ronald Regan Federal Building and Courthouse. Given the sensitive nature of these buildings and the agencies located within them, police wanted to have comprehensive surveillance coverage of the area. They decided to implement SureView Systems' Immix Command Center software as part of a video-sharing initiative that would enable police and other agencies to leverage each other's camera assets.

According to Santa Ana Police Officer Otto Laufer, who serves as logistics coordinator for the depart-

ment's Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) office, the police department's foray into video surveillance began in 2008 with the installation of 48 cameras inside the department's administration building. Shortly after seeing the success of their camera deployment, however, Santa Ana police wanted to expand the reach of the system to include other critical areas of the city, such as the aforementioned civic center. There was just one problem: The city did not own most of the buildings inside the complex, and police would have to convince the stakeholders involved to allow them to install cameras.

"We wanted to put cameras on buildings, but we knew that permanently affixing them to buildings we did not own was probably not going to happen. So, we found a solution where we were able to place our cameras on the identified critical buildings in a non-penetrating fashion," explained Laufer. "We ended up with 35 cameras in our civic center area on those various buildings."

SureView systems

But beyond just putting up cameras for their own use, Santa Ana police had a much larger goal in mind as a part of the video expansion project: to achieve video sharing between the city and the other stakeholders within the civic center. Of course, this is much easier said than done in most circumstances.

As many people involved with municipal surveillance projects can attest, getting all of the various departments and agencies within an individual city on board with sharing video can be a difficult challenge to overcome in and of itself. And once these hurdles are resolved, the technical challenge of consolidating and sharing all the disparate video systems remains.

"When we approached them about this project initially, we knew going in that these different entities likely had camera systems for their own buildings, but what they probably didn't have was an inward view toward their facility. This was something that, if we were successful in this project, we could give them," added Laufer. "In addition, if we could find a way to share that feed with them, perhaps they would be willing to share some of their camera feeds

that look out from their buildings with us. That was really the ultimate prize: a mutually-beneficial arrangement between us and all of these government or private entities."

Realizing that most of these agencies probably were using camera systems from different vendors, Santa Ana police needed a platform that could interface with various video networks and help them share their cameras feeds without the city or any of the other stakeholders having to provide access to their private, secure networks. While working with Siemens to install the rooftop cameras, one of the engineers recommended Immix as a solution to this quandary. The software would prove to be a game-changer for the city, given its ability to pull together disparate video systems and share the views from different cameras with everyone involved.

Immix overcame the technical challenge of integrating the various deployed technologies, opening up the video streams to enable concurrent, real-time sharing across agencies during a crisis. The city's disparate devices now work as one integrated system, and each stakeholder can quickly access the video he or she needs. The city benefits from true situational awareness using a common operating picture, which supports cohesive and coordinated action between the various departments.

As a result of using Immix for video sharing, the City of Santa Ana has realized a tremendous return-on-investment (ROI). In addition, the platform has already played a key role during several events. For example, Santa Ana police were able to share video with their counterparts in Fullerton, Calif., last year during a high profile case. By leveraging Immix, Santa Ana police were able to contact the watch commander in Fullerton, who sent officers to the city to provide security during the trial, and provide him with views of protests outside the courthouse. This

enabled them to reduce the amount of resources they would have normally had on the scene.

Because it is Web-based, Immix was also incorporated into the Santa Ana police's mobile command post, which essentially serves as a mobile command and control center, complete with a bevy of audio and visual equipment as well as computers for officers to use during various events. When they use this mobile command unit, they use Immix to seamlessly tap into all of their camera resources, which in the future will include helicopters and other additional city assets.

"Immix is working great and has been a very successful tool for us. It has done everything we wanted it to do," Laufer said. "The feedback has been very positive. We did a big rollout meeting where we invited all of the partners who allowed us access to their rooftops for our system and presented Immix, explaining how they benefit from it. We got nothing but praise. They were very, very impressed. The biggest benefit to them was it didn't cost them a dime. It is a system and a software we purchased, that we put together and gave them that would have otherwise been costly for them to achieve."

Because the city has proven its video-sharing concept through the implementation of Immix CC, Laufer said the possibilities for expanding their surveillance network are virtually unlimited. Police are working to broaden the scope of their own surveillance system in the civic center complex. In the coming years, the ultimate goal is to expand video sharing across Orange County and provide video verification of duress alarms to local businesses, using Immix as the backbone that ties everything together.

"If a duress alarm gets pushed in a bank and we have the capability to see their cameras via Immix, then it can alert a dispatcher who can verify if something is actually happening or not," Laufer said. "That has cascading benefits; it saves the officer that is responding a lot of time and gives him enhanced information in a shorter amount of time. We can also evaluate the situation before we even send an officer out there."

For Laufer and his team, Immix promises more than just video sharing and verification of alarms. The department is currently exploring the integration of their core access control system into Immix so they can have greater situational awareness of their secure parking areas in and around police headquarters.

"We see Immix as the enabling technology for the community of independent public and private systems to operate collaboratively and deliver real-time, city-wide situational awareness," Laufer said. "Immix allows us to use existing technology to improve our ability to respond quickly and effectively to any emergency situation."

"Our partnership with the City of Santa Ana Police has enabled us to fine-tune our Immix software into a truly unique tool that can be used by other cities and counties to bring together disparate video and other security platforms to deliver real-time situational awareness of any event, as well as enable real-time sharing of important data across the entire network of first responders," said Rob Hile, Director, Enterprise Command Centers, SureView Systems "In addition, Santa Ana paved the way for Immix to be listed as an authorized purchase under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Urban Areas Security Initiative Grant Program, and we have UASI pricing packages available to support this effort."