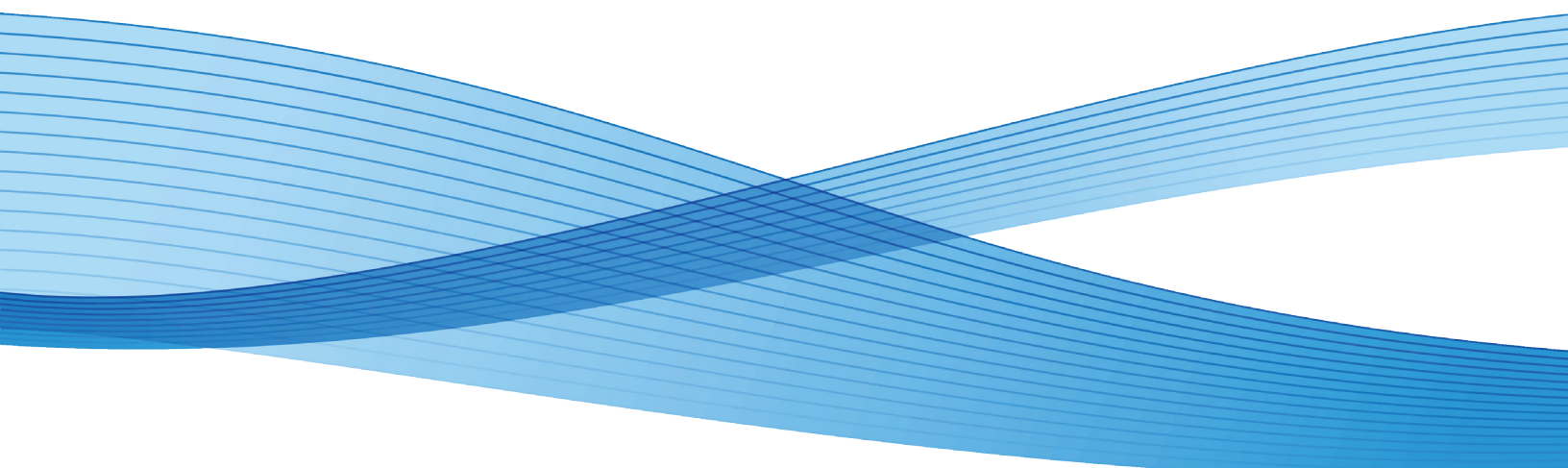


Nottingham City Council

Helping to provide a digital CCTV image capture and enforcement solution for Nottingham's traffic management team.



Spur – part of ACS, A Xerox Company



Local authorities are placing an increasing emphasis on the operation of bus lanes, box junctions and, where appropriate, vehicle/tram interfaces to help make sure that traffic flows freely.

Consequently, councils have been evaluating competing enforcement options, including the use of CCTV image data.

But as Caroline Stylianou, Service Manager for Traffic Management and development control at Nottingham City Council highlights, this is not necessarily an easy task. “Much of the early technology is based on video taping the traffic flows. Notwithstanding issues concerning the quality of the images, a major concern for us was the storage, archiving and management of such a system. In short, we thought that this was an archaic option, which would be laborious to use.”

It was at this point that Nottingham’s back office service provider, Spur – now part of ACS, a Xerox Company - worked with enforcement system software provider Zenco Systems Ltd and CCTV system integrator Tyco Traffic & Transportation to develop a seamless image capture, processing and ticket issuing solution.

A powerful system

ZenGrab Capture is a video management system that dual-stream records contraventions directly from CCTV video into a digital recording unit. Operators are then able to play back and pause the video to capture the three images that will be used on the PCN sent to the vehicle keeper.

A static image of the contravention and a compressed video of the contravention – all to e-Gov standard - can be added to the case. This evidence can then be made available to the driver to minimise speculative appeals. The use of dual-stream recording technology also eliminates the need for a second recording on removable media, saving valuable storage and retrieval space, and significant administrative operations in retrieval and playback. Nottingham uses one recording as its main evidence copy, with the second recording used as its working copy.

As Nottingham’s Team Leader of its Traffic Management, Ian Nash, says, this is an important benefit of a digital solution. “There are none of the problems associated with moving, storing and accounting for back-up tapes, which all enhances the efficacy of our custody chain process.”

An integrated solution

While the capabilities of the solution are key, it was also vitally important that it could be fully integrated into the back office application and functionality of ACS’s Si-Dem and Si-Log software suite.

An interface was created to ensure that Nottingham’s Traffic Management team could operate a single solution seamlessly. Because the ZenGrab Capture system is driven from the main Si-Dem database, says Adrian Farrell, ACS’s Technical Director, errors are minimised. “The drop down menus of the system are only populated by correct possible answers, so for example, choosing a camera will only bring up roads that it can see, and choosing a road will only then bring up contraventions associated with that street. Because the information from Si-Dem and Si-Log is fully integrated within the system, Nottingham’s Traffic Management team is able to process contraventions smoothly and efficiently.”



Flexibility and simplicity

Sunil Budhdeo, team leader of Nottingham's Traffic Control Centre, believes that a core strength of the system is in its flexibility. "The needs and priorities of councils seeking a CCTV capture system are bound to vary from one authority to another. Zenco were able to enhance ZenGrab Capture to meet our needs precisely."

According to Ian Nash, a further valuable characteristic of ZenGrab Capture is its simplicity. "We've found the system to be extremely easy and intuitive for our operators to work with. So much so, that we only required a fraction of the training time allocated to us by Zenco at installation."

Management and development

Because ZenGrab is fully integrated into Si-Dem, the production of reports to track the system and its use is made much easier. We're able to generate usage feedback in a variety of ways, including bar and pie charts, to give Nottingham's Traffic Management team clear and easy to understand reporting tools", says Adrian Farrell.

"This gives them the facility to manage the overall deployment of their CCTV function in a simpler and more effective way – maximising the opportunity to make continuous improvements in its effectiveness and efficiency."

Expansion planning

ACS is working with Nottingham and Zenco to expand the network of Zenco's LaneWatch unattended enforcement cameras in the city, which is integrated into the Si-Dem system. Cameras already installed at key locations have produced significant improvements in driver behaviour. Ian Nash highlights a typical example of success: "LaneWatch cameras placed to monitor traffic using a tram gate as a cut through initially recorded over 150 contraventions each day. However, driver behaviour is quickly changing and we have seen that figure start to drop."

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