



U.S. COAST GUARD INVESTIGATIVE SERVICE

Washington, D.C.

▶ Coast Guard Aids Investigations with Records Management Solution

The Coast Guard Investigative Service (CGIS) is the premier maritime investigative arm of the United States Coast Guard, with nearly 500 agents based in the U.S., and others deployed overseas in countries as diverse as Panama and Bahrain. CGIS is responsible for crimes such as drug smuggling, human trafficking, and illegal pollution caused by ships, as well as criminal internal affairs investigations of Coast Guard personnel.

Previously, CGIS and its agents relied on paper-based records management that was inefficient, time-consuming, and cumbersome to navigate. Agents reported case findings in password-protected Microsoft® Word documents that were e-mailed to central headquarters. There, a case management specialist would review the cases and re-enter a limited set of information about each case into a Microsoft Access database.

The original reports were printed and then placed in hardcopy files. The process for both the redundant entry and extraction of information from these sources served as an information bottleneck. Only limited data was collected, so data mining required an analyst to physically look through each report to garner information like crime type, victim, and location. A typical report on crime metrics would take up to a week to research and prepare. The review and approval process was also challenging; it took agents days to document their actions again in Microsoft Word and forward to their supervisors for review and approval.



ACCESSIBLE, EFFECTIVE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

CGIS decided to improve this process through the deployment of an enterprise records management system, which could improve productivity, cut down on redundant data entry, and provide key metrics to guide decision-making. CGIS contracted with Hexagon to configure, install, and certify InPursuit WebRMS, Hexagon Safety & Infrastructure's web-based enterprise information management system.

The first agency in the U.S. to fully deploy the system, CGIS replaced all paper reports and streamlined the process of tracking cases through the investigative process. Easy to deploy and use, WebRMS has ensured critical information is extended to CGIS personnel and supervisors through a secure, tablet-compatible platform.

Hexagon's InPursuit Field-Based Reporting (FBR) was selected to allow agents to file and upload reports in a disconnected mode in the field. Business Intelligence Direct for WebRMS, included with the records management system, reports key metrics in the form of custom dashboards and pre-configured or ad hoc reports that provide valuable insight into investigative data.

Using WebRMS to manage records electronically has dramatically improved the overall efficiency and effectiveness of CGIS and its agents. For example, the case inception-to-approval process used to take up to three days to complete – now it is completed in less than one business day. The system eliminates the process of re-entering records in the database, further reducing inefficiencies and the incidence of costly errors that can be challenged in subsequent court proceedings.

PROACTIVE INVESTIGATIONS YIELD RESULTS

Because CGIS has a wide investigative footprint, the new records management system allows easy sharing of investigative tasks whenever and wherever agents are posted. A homicide of a Coast Guard member and the wounding of a police officer in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, demonstrated the power of this information sharing, as agents tracking leads around the country were able to access all reports and provide updates in real time.

And as persons, vehicles, vessels, and aircraft are added to the WebRMS database, agents can establish patterns and links. With the relational database elements of the system, agents can now see relationships between current suspects and other known criminal offenders,

AT A GLANCE

» The Challenge

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» The Solution

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as well as criminal movement from area to area. This intelligence enables easier identification of possible suspects, locations, and criminal activity, allowing CGIS to be proactive, instead of reactive, to criminal behavior.

The system's flexibility has allowed CGIS to configure agency-specific fields, creating a huge set of data for mining and analysis.

PROTECTING INVESTMENTS, SECURING THE FUTURE

A commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) solution, WebRMS can expand to accommodate future upgrades and technology enhancements with minimal investments needed. This means CGIS can easily stay current with Department of Homeland Security (DHS) technology requirements, even as security measures and technology evolve.

The system also greatly enhances management oversight within CGIS, both in terms of the agency and individual agents. Thus, CGIS now has access to actionable

information for deciding office and staffing needs. CGIS can identify which agents are busy with investigations, which ones are initiating cases, and which ones are reacting to calls. CGIS can even map the hours spent in investigative functions versus responding to calls – a significant issue in a program where one office may cover as many as seven or eight states.

At a time of budget constraints placed on U.S federal government agencies, the investment in WebRMS has been a cost-effective force multiplier, helping CGIS make the U.S. a safer place to live and work.

About Hexagon Safety & Infrastructure

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