

# ICT introduces team to 21<sup>st</sup> Century

## Case Study: Peacock Control System

Unity ICT has developed a system for Oldham Council's Emergency Control Centre. The Peacock Control System is a major contributor to improving Control Room and First Response Officer' efficiency, by taking the tedium out of heavy paper based administrative tasks to record security incidents therefore leading the team into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### Background

Oldham Council's Civil Resilience Service covers the 24-hour Emergency Control Centre including the CCTV Control Room, Alarm Receiving Centre, Emergency Planning and the Council's first response facility to incidents and emergencies. Council First Response Officers deal with anything: road accidents, insecure buildings, youth incidents and assisting the emergency services and partner agencies.

Oldham Council owns in the region of 500+ properties in and around the Borough and among the multiple proactive and reactive activities they perform, it is the duty of the Council's First Response Officers to patrol and check the security in each of these on a daily basis, working complex shift patterns to cover 24 x 7 x 365 day security. Security problems generally arise as a result of buildings having:

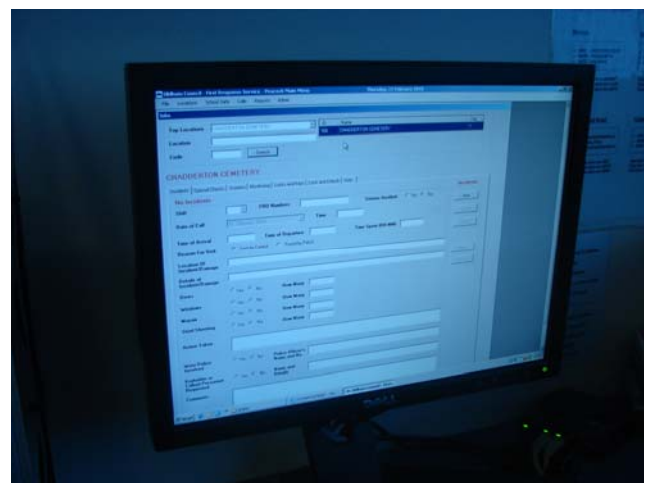
- Open sites with long perimeters
- Multiple entrances
- Isolated buildings
- Independent buildings spread out over a wide area
- Break ins
- Arson

### The Problem

First Response Officers have to manually record all findings whilst on their patrols and then on return to the Control Centre, the controllers input details into a system. The previous system was difficult to use and crashed continuously and given the nature of the function providing emergency control and having to log all events, meant that information was frequently out of date, records were not updated properly or some information was being mislaid in the process. This gave the whole service a major issue as they are obliged to provide statistics in support of KPI's (Key Performance Indicators) twice daily for audit purposes and struggled to answer all questions from audit.

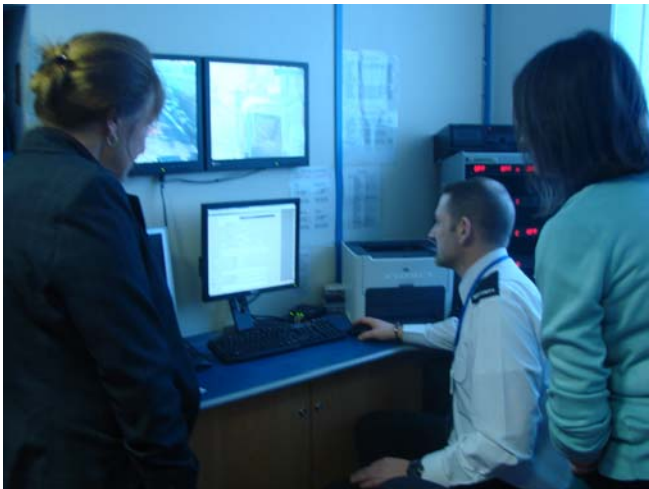
### The Solution

Unity ICT were commissioned to undertake the development of a system by Elaine Mayers, Operations Manager for the First Response Team (Oldham Council) that would introduce a robust, resilient and easy to use system with simplified processes and procedures.



Unity ICT worked in collaboration with Elaine and her team of Control Room Officers and First Response Officers at the control centre to understand what they did on a daily basis in order to develop the requirements and processes.

The new development, designed and programmed by Joanne Thackeray (Unity ICT) is a networked application and has been developed in VB.NET and SQL Server 2005. By utilising a Joint Applications Development (JAD) technique, the iterative development process and close working with the security control team has resulted in a comprehensive system consisting of numerous screens and reports. Joanne is pictured (below right) with Elaine Mayers (below left) as they discuss how the Peacock system is functioning in the live environment.



Following a trial period of 4 weeks where officers in the Control Room have been gradually trained up, the system is now live with 25 users and the benefits are already being realised.

### The Benefits

The Peacock System provides a robust means of recording all details of security breaches and the corrective actions and costs associated and incurred in resolution of incidents. The system has extensive analysis features and is a major step forward in alleviating the effort and tedium encountered with the

old system. The key benefits that Peacock is now bringing are as follows:

- Reduced manual and paper processes
- Reduced administration time
- Improved audit ability and reporting
- Improved financial control
- Control of damage claims preventing financial loss
- Automated Invoicing eliminating manual process
- Automated KPI reports
- Improved Information to ease parts ordering
- Quick compilation of budgets
- User friendly and intuitive system interface

By improving efficiencies throughout, the team is now in a stronger position to take on more partnership contracts. Elaine Mayers has realised her vision for a new system to simplify the daily procedures and has brought improved control and efficiencies into the department. She already has ideas on how this system could be developed and is working with Unity ICT on ideas to exploit it further and has the following recommendation:

**“Joanne Thackeray’s down to earth approach has helped make this possible.....this new system is leading the team into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”**

- Elaine Mayers  
(Operations Manager – First Response team)

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**‘.....The ICT division has made many improvements, and we plan to continue to improve the services we deliver in Oldham and for other customers.’  
- Trevor Slade (Unity ICT Services Director)**

***In Partnership with Oldham Council***