

SURVEILLANCE

Large Metro Police Department Gets Control of Digital Surveillance Evidence

Customer

Digital Forensics

A Metropolitan Police Department

Challenge

- Switch from VHS tapes and paper to digital storage.
- Streamline process for efficient analysis, copying and archiving of data

Solution

Rimage Evidence Disc System

A detective within a large Metro Police Department performs a valuable and unique service: the processing and storing of video and other forms of surveillance. “My role is to provide technical surveillance, whether it is video surveillance, photography, or other forms of information,” he said. “We usually have 15 to 35 active investigations that are using surveillance gear to obtain intelligence or obtain evidence to assist a prosecution.”



The detective faces many of the same challenges as other law enforcement agencies: switching from antiquated VHS tapes and paper records to digital storage like DVDs and Blu-ray Discs™. The increased workload led him to seek out a more efficient solution for the department.

The Challenge

The detective’s specialized surveillance role brought him into contact with a wide variety of data and evidence gathering hardware, forcing him to use multiple systems to catalog and distribute the valuable information. Safeguarding the data was mandatory because of the vital role that the evidence played in eventual arrests and prosecutions.

The workflow process included VHS tapes downloaded onto a DVD and reproduced with a duplicator. He then had to write information about the data on top of the disc with a black marker. For each case, he made five discs for evidence: the original disc, one for the case file, the prosecutor, defense attorney and the archive. The process was clearly inefficient.

The Solution

Rimage was introduced to the detective by a West Coast colleague. The department purchased a Rimage EDS system to handle its technical surveillance data archiving and distribution. The detective praised the technical support. “Rimage’s on-site setup is great. They came in and explained everything,” he said.

“Being able to get a device like this... and have one consistent evidence producer is a big deal for us.”

The EDS is a networked device accessible to a large number of operators. Full-color CD, DVD, and Blu-ray Discs are simple, fast and easy to create. The integrated, state-of-the-art Rimage Everest™ thermal retransfer printer permanently fuses waterproof, scratch-proof, photo-realistic images to the surface of the disc. The system's speed and lower cost-per-disc compared to inkjet printers were important to the detective.

"We're restricted by funds, so it's hard for us to keep up with the latest technology," he said. "Being able to purchase a device like this to manage our digital evidence and have one consistent evidence producer was a big deal for us."

The Results

Simplified Workflow

The Rimage EDS was able to handle all of the department's data needs in one unit, instead of the three time-consuming platforms he previously required. "Everything is downloaded to the Rimage system, which can read it all," he said. "To be able to download data from the surveillance device and have it permanently archived is fantastic. We've gone literally from VHS tape to Blu-ray and haven't even messed with DVD."

Surveillance hardware, such as a specialized button camera on undercover officers, interfaced and integrated seamlessly with the EDS. "Multiple media functions are met with Rimage," he said. "There's nothing that's going to stop us from using it, whether it's an SD card or anything else. And the ability to coexist with other types of software is a big deal."

Image Is Everything

With its high-end Everest™ thermal retransfer printer, the department's image has been enhanced in the courtroom. "The Rimage system made the department look more professional," said the detective. "When you're presenting evidence in front of a jury or prosecutor, sometimes presentation goes a long way." It's one of many reasons why the department considers Rimage to be a vital partner in their efforts to gather, store, and disseminate surveillance data.

"To be able to download data from the surveillance device and be able to erase the device is fantastic."

Rimage Corporation

7725 Washington Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55439 USA
Toll Free +1.800.445.8288

Rimage Europe GmbH

Albert-Einstein-Strasse 26
63128 Dietzenbach, GERMANY
Tel +49.0.6074.8521.0

Rimage Japan Co., Ltd.

2F., WIND Bldg.
7-4-8 Roppongi Minato-ku
Tokyo 106-0032 JAPAN
Tel +81.3.5771.7181

Rimage Taiwan

2F.-7, No. 508, Sec. 5,
Zhongxiao East Road., Xinyi Dist.,
Taipei City 110, TAIWAN
Tel +866.2.7720.0567

Rimage Information Technology (Shanghai) Co., Ltd.

10B & 10C, World Plaza,
855 South Pudong Road
Shanghai, 200120 CHINA
Tel +86.21.5887.8906

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