

# INCREASED DEPLOYMENT OF INNOVATIVE DIGITAL STRATEGIES IN POLICING

Digital evidence is rapidly becoming an invaluable tool for today's law enforcement agencies across all crime investigations and forensic processes as they increasingly face a variety of complex issues in dealing with the sheer growth in the volume of digital content, writes Ove Evensen, Key Account Manager of the Police and Defence Division at FotoWare.

**E**nsuring that evidence data is handled securely and efficiently is more critical than ever before, as today's police forces and law enforcement agencies continue to adopt new tools for surveillance to gather vital evidence.

Increasingly this data is being gathered from CCTV, forensics, biometrics, wearables, IoT, GIS and even social media. The proper and efficient handling of evidence files (from capturing and transferring to managing to sharing) is therefore key in forensic investigation processes.

Since almost everyone has the capacity to capture photos and videos using mobile phones, crowdsourced evidence has also had a significant impact on crime investigations. In addition, more police forces have started to digitalise records in order to make information more

searchable, auditable, and reliable, while reducing the administrative burden and cutting the workload on officers.

## FROM CAMERA TO COURT

Technology can help law enforcement and police officers spend more time on investigating crimes and handling evidence, by equipping them with powerful tools to handle their digital evidence from camera to court.

Digital Evidence Management (DEM) solutions can be used to streamline digital evidence workflows capturing the evidence, transferring it to a central repository, managing it by enriching evidence with metadata and collaborating with parties involved in the investigation, and finally sharing the evidence with other parties, for instance, the courts.

Crime scene investigators often need to work together with various departments. A study by the EU stated that stakeholders who participate in judicial criminal investigations need to securely communicate and exchange information via digital means.

This requires solutions to allow all stakeholders to communicate in a secure way, including sending and receiving sensitive and confidential data.

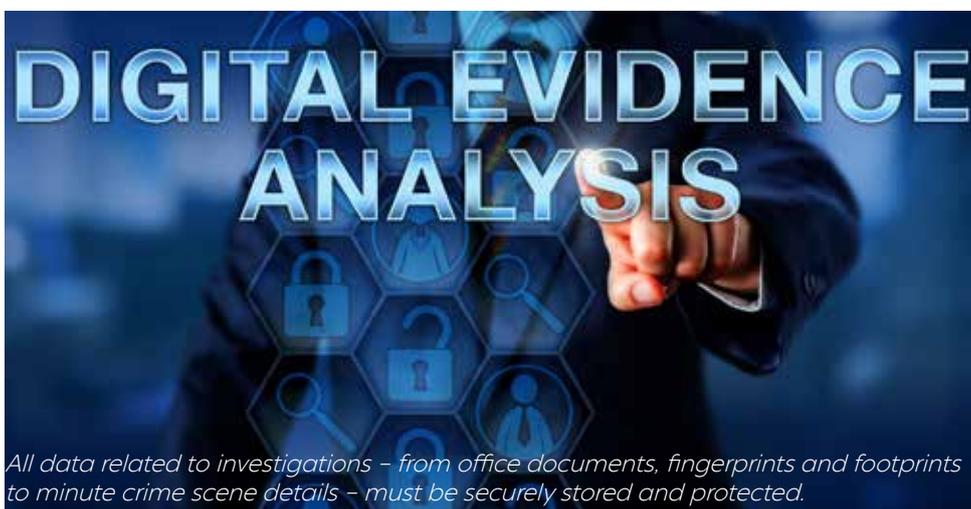
## SECURE STORAGE OF EVIDENCE

All the data related to investigations – from office documents, fingerprints and footprints to minute crime scene details – must be securely stored and protected. Evidence files should never be removed from storage since they can be used to track down vital information that may have been missed. They can also be used as a reference, or for related cases in the future.

Successful investigations rely on an investigator's ability to connect the dots between many different types of digital evidence.

A DEM solution enables law enforcement to manage a large volume of media files in one place and process these files from initial capture and documentation to presenting the evidence in court.

Police systems are very complex, and a DEM system brings together all the input sources for evidence into a common place where it can be shared with other evidence gathering systems. Metadata-



*All data related to investigations – from office documents, fingerprints and footprints to minute crime scene details – must be securely stored and protected.*

driven workflows allow forces to automatically make digital assets available to other systems.

When selecting a DEM system, police forces should look for a flexible, versatile and hardware neutral solution available both on the cloud and on-premises. The solution should enable a police force to build a digital evidence eco-system by connecting various third-party systems using APIs (an Application Programming Interface is a software intermediary that allows two applications to talk to each other).

Integrations with other mission-critical systems such as Case Management and Records Management systems aid the investigation and subsequent prosecution by ensuring the relevant parties receive the evidence on time.

### MOBILE TECHNOLOGY IN POLICING

Moreover, with police officers needing to quickly and securely upload files into a central system for processing, simply having a system to store evidence is never enough. They need to be able to access, find and process files directly during an investigation, as well as share it with the relevant staff, both internally and externally.

Time is of the essence when solving and preventing crime, and officers should not have to waste this time on searching for information that is already gathered. Therefore, the use of mobile technology in policing is growing rapidly.

For example, mobile apps, such as the FotoWare Digital Evidence Management app, are now helping police officers to capture and record evidence at their fingertips in the field directly. Officers do not have to wait until they are logged onto a computer to upload any pictures and videos.

Instead of storing important files on their devices, they upload all files immediately, add them to the correct archive, and have them safely stored within the department's DEM system. All information can be added and edited on the go.

Apps also enable officers to find any file they may need, wherever they are. It is now possible for officers to find the right files within seconds, either by using smart folders or by searching keywords, from their mobile devices.

Evidence from the crime scene reaches investigators at a faster rate, as police officers can assign metadata that

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

With an extensive background in IT, Ove Evensen has worked for some of the largest vendors in the industry from Microsoft, IBM, Verizon and Symantec. At FotoWare, he has experience as an IT and Project Manager from the customer side.

He has worked with cloud services – in the public, private and hybrid sectors for many years and has a strong passion in enabling IT solutions to increase productivity, efficiency and profit for police and defence customers.



links photographed evidence to cases straight from their mobiles. Collaboration and speed are both critical in the journey to solve more crimes.

### FOTOWARE'S DEM SOLUTION

FotoWare has assisted in crime-solving by providing more efficient ways of handling digital evidence since the first police customer came on board in 1998. Today, police forces around the world – including more than 80% of forces in the UK – benefit from the FotoWare DEM solution.

In early June, FotoWare held the virtual conference entitled 'Digital Innovation in Policing' to share best practices and perspectives on digital transformation initiatives and technology in the police industry.

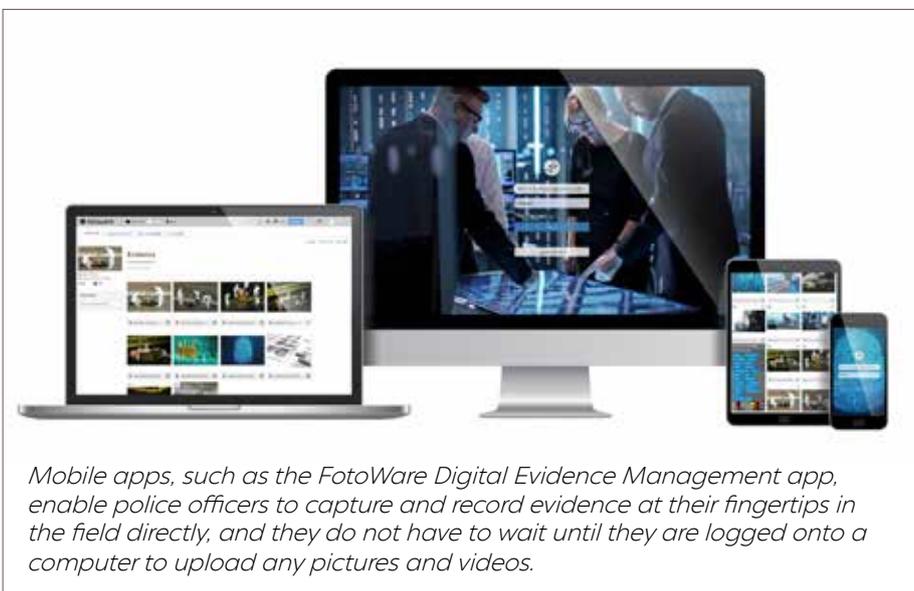
Nearly 400 participants from over 250 organisations and 60 countries took part, which featured speakers from various organisations, including Microsoft, KPMG,

DNB Bank and UAS Norway, in addition to experts in first response and drone technology.

The two-day event brought the international policing community together to learn from each other and discuss how technology can be used to assist in crime-solving.

This included a variety of sessions on best practices for using Digital Evidence Management solutions to handle forensic files securely and speeding up digital investigations.

For more information visit: [www.fotoware.com/digital-innovation-in-policing-presentations](http://www.fotoware.com/digital-innovation-in-policing-presentations)



Mobile apps, such as the FotoWare Digital Evidence Management app, enable police officers to capture and record evidence at their fingertips in the field directly, and they do not have to wait until they are logged onto a computer to upload any pictures and videos.