

Interconnected technologies: License plate recognition and photo speed enforcement

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As part of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Law Enforcement Training Management (LEIM) 2009 conference, two technologies, both of which are not new, seem to be at the forefront of crime prevention and saving lives.

License plate recognition (LPR) or Automatic License plate recognition (ALPR) is becoming more prevalent across the country, however, because it can be a **large undertaking for a big city** or county, agencies must be cautious in moving to implement too quickly. With multiple options for cameras, fixed or mobile units, and also different means of implementation, the road to ALPR is not easy.

Several representatives from the **Cincinnati** Police Department presented their system at IACP/LEIM, which included mention of ways in which the system can assist in crime investigations. Implementing an ALPR system can also be integrated into state systems and even further to national databases. Using ALPR may become an essential tool for major cities and states to utilize in crime monitoring, gang violence as well as terrorism.

Another technology that is not new, as it was first implemented in New York in 1991, but also can be utilized similarly, is **photo red light and speed enforcement**. In fact, ALPR programs can be developed using existing cameras for photo enforcement. However, agencies must be cautious in that cameras developed specifically for ALPR utilize different algorithms and therefore vendors must seek to cater to the agency's needs and specific desires.

One major aspect of both of these programs, but specifically the red light and speed cameras is the local community's interest. Various local sectors, including business owners, community centers, and parent-teacher associations, all may be an integral part of the process. These groups seek various ways to make the community safer, and bringing red light cameras to prevent crashes and speed cameras to keep motorists at a safe speed. The ALPR ties into this as well, specifically due its ability to provide law enforcement with more tools to keep the community safe.

While the two programs may serve different purposes, both are meant to save lives and to improve the public safety within the community. The vendor community must work with agencies that are looking to develop camera systems and provide ways in which they can help sell the programs to the community, specifically red light and speed cameras. The use of ALPR is starting to become widespread as more agencies see it as a technology which can be used to prevent crime. GovWin considers this budding technology something to be on the lookout for, especially as agencies look to formulate their 2010 budgets and future year planning.