



HOW LONDON'S METROPOLITAN POLICE SERVICE WENT CLOUD



In 2015, the London (UK) Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) tendered for 22,000 body-worn video (BWV) cameras and supporting infrastructure for the MPS. MOPAC began with plans for hosting this infrastructure on MPS servers. Axon was awarded the tender in November 2015 on the basis that Evidence.com would be hosted on MPS servers. Discussions on implementing this project led to concerns within MPS and Axon about delivery and scalability. Following subsequent discussions, a decision was made to switch hosting to Microsoft's Azure cloud data storage centre in London. This was agreed upon mid-2016 and officially launched in December 2016.

WHAT DECISION CRITERIA MADE THE MPS MOVE TO A CLOUD BASED DIGITAL EVIDENCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM?

- **CLEAR AND STRUCTURED FINANCIAL POSITION** - Certainty of cost and ability for the MPS to plan effectively on the basis of Axon SaaS contracts was hugely vital at a time of great uncertainty over police budgets.
- **PACE OF CHANGE** - The potential of machine learning, automation and big data analysis made the case for cloud based services overwhelming.
- **PERSONNEL** - New leadership within the MPS Information Technology team recognised the capability of cloud services and created an opportunity to reconsider previous decisions.
- **POWER** - Microsoft accelerated construction of its UK-based data storage centre, resulting in their servers and their willingness to offer additional services reinforced the cloud's computing power.
- **VISION** - Axon's CEO visited the new head of IT at the MPS to emphasise Axon's commitment to its product and future partnership with UK policing.

LESSONS LEARNED

TECHNICAL

- Axon was able to show examples of cloud services to address concerns about security and location of data. For example, MPS (cloud would be hosted in UK) and City of London Police (cloud hosted in Dublin).
- Reduced organisational risk, meaning that security, maintenance, upgrades and capacity issues are all handled by the cloud service and are compliant with all EU regulations.

OPERATIONAL

- Axon's vision and future roadmap. After visits to both Seattle (Axon) and MPS facilities, Axon could demonstrate in-cloud advanced functionality. For example, making automatic crowd-blurring available to the MPS following a recent cloud upgrade at the time of review.

- Demonstrate to leadership within the MPS the power of automated crime reports, cross evidence searches, and other advanced functionality which was only possible with the cloud.

FINANCIAL

- Demonstrated the growth in data requirements and the management implications of servicing an on-prem solution.
- Emphasised flexibility, reduced management overheads, greater resilience and lower ongoing costs (Documented in Axon's whitepaper on cloud based vs on-premise costs).

OUTCOME

Ultimately, the benefits of Axon's cloud service demonstrated to the MPS the need for a change of direction. From Axon's sales perspective, the following were the key benefits:

- **SPEED** - Time scales for setting up the MPS-based cloud were ambitious and unlikely to be met. The MPS-based project was likely to run beyond a year, with the associated drift and loss of focus that long projects entail. Axon could offer a complete, working package within months, freeing the MPS from considerable risk in the project management process.
- **POWER** - Microsoft's most advanced servers could offer far greater computing power than the MPS' data centre partner. This also offered far greater potential for more powerful services in future. Microsoft was further able to enhance its offer to the MPS with its own 365 software services. The size and expertise of the team of programmers and software developers eclipsed MPS in-house capability.
- **SAVINGS** - Axon could offer considerable savings from the potential for growth, allowing storage and computing capacity to expand with need, rather than committing to capacity for an unknown demand.
- **FLEXIBILITY** - The ability to flex and scale up services, provide automatic updates and adapt to existing systems reduced risk and increased opportunities to maximise computing power. For example, Evidence.com is updated monthly, which minimises the risk that software can fall out of date.
- **RELIABILITY** - MPS was already partnering with both Axon through their less lethal device use, and significantly was also partnering with Microsoft on their office working solutions. It made a huge contribution to Axon's offer that they would be working closely with Microsoft as part of their data storage offer.
- **SECURITY** - Axon and Microsoft's combined security offer is vastly superior to that of most police forces, even the MPS. Police forces are an incredibly attractive target for hackers, given the data that they hold. But, with current financial pressures, they simply can't keep up with market rates. Microsoft who own the infrastructure however, can and do in all reality, guarantee greater security of data. They have the computing power, resources and capability to protect digital evidence data.