

## International

# North Wales Police expand BlackBerry use

**A pilot project equipping North Wales Police officers with BlackBerry mobile devices has proven so successful that its deployment is being increased. The devices are networked to North Wales Police's Niche Records Management System (RMS), allowing officers to swiftly access crucial information and identify and apprehend criminals. Test results from the initiative show that using BlackBerries to access Niche RMS resulted in officers spending almost one hour more per shift out of the police station and in the community, as well as significant reductions in "dead time," in which officers might be required to escort suspects to the station.**

In 2002, North Wales Police in North Wales, UK implemented Niche RMS, the police information management system that brings together all aspects of operational policing in one unified system. One of the key rea-

sons the force chose Niche RMS was for the ability to combine the system with portable technology, such as the BlackBerry. Earlier this year, 300 BlackBerries were distributed to a mix of users. Based on the pilot's success, additional BlackBerries are being deployed.

Sergeant Aled Eynon, quality assurance officer on the BlackBerry project, said, "Experience of trying to mobilize our information over the past few years leads us to believe that with BlackBerry, we are now able to provide officers in North Wales with a first class product, and clearly, RMS is at the heart of this."

The 10 crime car officers who already have BlackBerries will have 3,300 more productive hours at their disposal, or the equivalent of two officers. Based on the time saved by community beat officers being able to



access Niche RMS while on the streets, the introduction of the devices will save the force an estimated 29,000 productive hours.

"Niche RMS is unique in giving operational officers access to all the information they need to more effectively do their job—preventing and detecting crime," said John James, director of operations and business development for Niche Technology Inc. "Combining it with mobile data solutions such as BlackBerries pro-

vides enhanced access to that information and delivers information where operational staff need it most—on the street."

The North Wales Police have three main goals with their mobile data access initiative: getting officers out of the office and onto the street; a reduction in travel time because police no longer have to trek back to the office to search records or to enter reports; and more effective, information-led policing.

Already a pioneer as the first UK force to implement Niche RMS, North Wales has one of the widest deployments of the system in the UK, covering intelligence, criminal and non-criminal incidents, warrants, child protection, case file preparation and custody, as well as electronic transmission of data to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). ■