Overcoming the Police Paperwork Challenge

How speech recognition helps police officers spend less time on paperwork and more time out in the field – serving and protecting the community.
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The impact of documentation overload
Apart from responding to emergencies, police throughout Australia are encouraged to be proactive and visible – patrolling locations where high crime risk exists, reassuring the community, deterring offenders, and de-escalating risks.

However, one of the key factors which prevents frontline police officers from effective, proactive policing, is the sheer volume of mandated documentation which they are required to complete on a daily basis. According to The Age, police are “drowning in paperwork”.1

Police officers at both the state and federal level in Australia spend a considerable amount of time during each shift completing incident reports, intelligence reports, court briefs and general paperwork. With the emphasis on accuracy, timeliness and regulatory compliance, completing the various paperwork can be cumbersome, overwhelming and most definitely, time-consuming. In fact, according to the qualitative research report: From Strength to Strength: Furthering NSW Police Well-being, the “sheer amount of paperwork” that police need to do is seen as a “deterrent for staying in the job long-term”.2

Less police visibility in the field
For frontline officers, spending about three to four hours per 12-hour shift completing incident reports that sit on systems such as the Computerised Operational Police System (COPS), as well as other documents, is the norm. This is precious time that could be better spent out in the field rather than in the police station, where their visibility works to deter crime and helps ensure community safety.

This is also true for detectives and other law enforcement agents, where less time spent preparing briefs of evidence, court requisitions, and reports for Record Management Systems (RMS) or the chain of command, would allow them more time to work on cases, and protect and serve their communities.

Potential for incomplete and inaccurate reporting
The heavy demands of document creation and the need to meet deadlines also means that there is potential for details to be missed and accuracy to be compromised. An incomplete or inaccurate report can cost a reputation or a conviction, and corrections to paperwork take time that could be spent out in the field policing.

Compromised Officer safety
Beyond consuming time, compiling notes for incident reports and other documents such as witness statements, which officers often create in the field, can put them at risk. Police are constantly exposed to danger and physical harm. In NSW in 2018, and at the peak of injury rates, more than 250 officers suffered physical injury every month.3 An officer whose head is bent over a police car terminal, MobiPol, notebook or some other mobile device entering data is unaware of what is happening around them. It can blind them to threats in their environment and keep them from paying full attention to their surrounds.

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1. “How Our Police Are Pushed To The Brink – And What We Can Do” – The Age 17/8/2019
2. Qualitative Research Report: From Strength to Strength: Furthering NSW Police Well-being. ACU, Institute for Positive Psychology & Education.
3. Police Association of NSW 2018 Budget Submission Report
Increased risk of officer burnout
Completing the considerable mandatory paperwork daily can also lead to general burnout. According to a 2017 Victoria Police Mental Health and Wellbeing study, around 90% of police workers experienced work-related burnout. The need to constantly complete paperwork adds to the struggle to deliver the services police know are necessary to keep the community safe. Inevitably, the heavy reporting demands take their toll, creating officer burnout. With most law enforcement agencies already working at capacity, no agency wants to lose experienced officers to burnout.

While there is no doubt that proper documentation is vital to effective police work, typing into a computer, and cumbersome documentation processes are a drag on productivity and policing. However, today’s modern technology can deliver more efficient documentation processes that save precious time so that police officers can perform the task they signed up for – protecting and serving the community.

Introducing speech recognition
Speech is the natural way for humans to communicate. We learn to speak without the years of education required for writing and reading. Speech recognition technology recognises continuous human speech and converts it into text.

How speech recognition helps with documentation
The correct speech recognition solution can enable police officers to create documents and complete paperwork faster by using their voice rather than their fingers. Most people type about 40 words per minute. However, humans speak much faster than they type. The average number of words most people speak per minute is 130, so speech recognition can save officers valuable time by using their voice to create incident reports, log events and other mandatory documents.

The right speech recognition solution can also provide considerable accuracy so that mandatory police documents are not only created quickly, but correctly.

Accelerate police reporting and productivity with Nuance Dragon Professional Group
Today, many law enforcement institutions around the world are using Nuance Dragon. Dragon Professional Group is an enterprise-ready speech recognition solution that streamlines documentation processes by enabling police officers to create and edit all kinds of documents. Robust transcription further speeds and simplifies documentation creation, while powerful customisation capabilities automate repetitive manual tasks through simple voice commands. With a next-generation speech engine based on Nuance Deep Learning technology, Dragon Professional Group achieves high recognition accuracy during dictation—even for officers with accents or those working in open office or mobile environments.

130 is the average number of spoken words per minute by most people. 40 is the average number of words typed per minute by most people.

“With the ability to file and edit occurrence reports from wherever I need to, I can spend more time focusing on the issues that matter to the people in the neighbourhoods I patrol”

Constable Mark Vandergrindt
Chatham-Kent Police Service
Ontario, Canada
Complete and timely document creation

Nuance Dragon Professional Group lets police officers create, edit and format documents up to three times faster than typing by using their voice. Incident reports, events, witness statements, court briefs, forms, admin reports and general daily paperwork can all be completed quickly just by speaking. The spoken content can be easily reviewed and edited before the officer finalises and files the document into the appropriate RMS. Officers can also fill in forms and files that have fields in various applications, and complete formatting of documents to comply with departmental standards by using voice commands. Nuance Dragon Professional Group can help to significantly slash document backlogs and the paperwork burden for police, freeing them up for community policing.

Senior officers can also benefit from using Dragon Professional Group. Custody Sergeants can document arrests more efficiently by quickly entering personal data, and capturing details of their solicitors and family contacts - all by voice. On-duty sergeants can quickly call-up and check incident or event reports logged on COPS, and briefs on RMS, using voice entry to save more time. In addition, the software’s ‘read that’ feature lets them check reports by listening. They can also complete admin reports for the chain of command faster, boosting productivity and the station’s operational efficiency.

Apart from using Dragon for report creation, police officers can use the software for email, letters, meeting minutes and other routine administrative tasks that currently involve typing to save time and increase productivity.

Accurate document creation

Inaccurate reports and documents can jeopardise a conviction or compliance. Apart from delivering up to 99% speech recognition accuracy to ensure that documents are created correctly, Nuance Dragon Professional Group lets police officers add custom words to the vocabulary. Regardless of whether the officer is a state or federal police officer or their role within the force, the different vocabulary and acronyms specifically used by each when writing reports, logging events, or completing forms and other documents, can be easily added to the software to ensure accuracy. Custom words and acronyms – “Decamped, Cautioned, LEPRA, POI” – can also be imported and exported for sharing across specific police user groups, and departments. The ability to incorporate custom words and acronyms means that documents are not only created quicker, fewer errors creep into the paperwork, ensuring better quality reporting and documentation.

Drive police field productivity with Dragon Anywhere Group

Dragon Anywhere Group, is an enterprise-ready, cloud-based speech recognition solution for busy officers and law enforcement agents who are out in the field. By using either an iOS or Android device, Dragon Anywhere Group allows officers to quickly create detailed reports, compile notes and perform other essential functions in real-time, and all by voice to help improve their in-car documentation productivity.

Further, customisations can be synced with Dragon Professional Group, so that police officers can continue to work regardless of whether they are out in the field or in the police station. Notes for an incident report created out in the field using Dragon Anywhere Group can be quickly recalled to complete an incident report at the station using Dragon Professional Group, saving valuable time that could be spent protecting the community.

“Dragon saves our officers and our support staff significant amounts of time in the reporting process, which has increased our efficiency and is helping us meet the ever-increasing challenges of modern policing and the demands of the justice system.”

Dennis Poole
Chatham Kent’s Chief of Police
Ontario, Canada

The Rogers Police Department in Rogers, Minnesota, purchased 21 Dragon Professional licenses for its shared desktop computers. Now police officers can dictate directly into the department’s LETG Record Management System (RMS) and see their words appear on the screen—up to three times faster than typing—as they speak. Roaming user profiles allow officers to use any available computer at the station with full access to their custom vocabulary and voice shortcuts.
Increased officer safety and minimised burnout
Thanks to Dragon and the use of their voice, police officers can also keep their heads up and their eyes focused on their environment when they are out in the field, ensuring their visibility and safety.

The speed with which the software allows police officers to create mandated documents helps to reduce stress and minimise work-related burnout. Relieved of the toil of paperwork, job satisfaction among police is also likely to increase as they spend more time performing the job they signed on for rather than typing.

By using their voice, police officers are also less exposed to the physical strain and stress of repetitive typing at a desk or the physical pains experienced by those twisting and typing in their police cars. The software helps to curb on-the-job injuries and time off work so that police visibility in the community can increase.

Empower police with Nuance PowerMic III
PowerMic III is an optional, noise-cancelling, ergonomic, handheld microphone that can be used by any police officer at any level – frontline police, sergeants, detectives, inspectors, crime managers, or superintendents. The PowerMic III features simplified, thumb-control operation for dictating, editing, navigating, and reviewing documents either in the patrol car, back at the station or in a police department office. For frontline police and officers out in the field, it allows them to ergonomically and efficiently continue working while being able to observe their surroundings.

Diction can be switched on and off using a toggle button if they need to get out of the police car quickly or answer a radio call, while programmable buttons automate steps such as advance sequentially through field forms of an incident report for fast document creation. For those working in the station or police department office, it allows them to ergonomically and quickly move through paperwork to boost the efficiency of document processes and productivity.

Fast, easy deployment and management
The optional Nuance Management Center (NMC) simplifies centralised deployment and administration of Dragon. The enterprise-ready solution makes it easy for IT administrators to:

– Customise the installation and deployment to multiple computers, both in-vehicle and in-station
– Manage and maintain (modify, repair, upgrade, remove) Dragon and all associated user profiles and configurations

NMC also makes it easy for IT staff to manage licenses, track usage to measure return on investment, and manage and share customisations, including custom words, commands and auto-texts, across multiple police officers.

Dragon Professional Group and Dragon Anywhere Group, which scale easily to meet growing requirements, are available through flexible volume licensing programs designed to help police departments realise improved documentation productivity and compliance at an affordable price.

“Seeing content on the screen as they dictate is helping the officers produce more thorough and accurate reports. They’re able to review, edit and fill in missing details as they go, which makes a big difference.”

Jeffrey Beahen
Chief of Policy & Agency Administrator
Rogers Police Department
Rogers, Minnesota, USA

“These days everyone is used to interacting with devices by voice—whether it’s their phone, tablet or in-car systems—so incorporating Dragon into our workflow was easy and painless. After just a couple of hours of training, our officers were off and running with the software, and getting great results.”

Jeffrey Beahen
Chief of Policy & Agency Administrator
Rogers Police Department
Rogers, Minnesota, USA
Conclusion

Dragon Professional Group can help police officers, stations and departments overcome the challenges associated with the high levels of documentation they are required to produce daily. By empowering officers to create documents quickly, completely and accurately, as well as streamlining documentation processes and automating routine administrative tasks – all by voice - police will be able to increase their visibility in the community, and do what they do best, protect and serve.

Benefits of Nuance Dragon at a Glance

- Proven and highly reliable voice recognition solution
- Fast incident and event reporting
- Fast creation of documents and completion of daily paperwork
- Meeting compliance deadlines
- Increased officer productivity through custom vocabularies and commands
- Saves officers valuable time
- Promotes police visibility on the streets and in the community
- Promotes proactive policing
- Increased dictation accuracy and overall quality reporting
- Enhanced on the go officer productivity
- Improves officer safety
- Helps minimise officer burnout
- Ergonomic solution
- Easy to use
- Easy to deploy and manage
- Affordable and cost-effective solution
- Promotes proactive policing
- Increased dictation accuracy and overall quality reporting
- Enhanced on the go officer productivity
- Improves officer safety
- Helps minimise officer burnout
- Ergonomic solution
- Easy to use
- Easy to deploy and manage
- Affordable and cost-effective solution

About Nuance Communications, Inc.

Nuance Communications is reinventing the relationship between people and technology. Through its voice and language offerings, the company is creating a more human conversation with the many systems, devices, electronics, apps and services around us. Every day, millions of people and thousands of businesses experience Nuance through intelligent systems that can listen, understand, learn and adapt to your life and your work. For more information, please visit australia.nuance.com.