

# CONTROLLING INFORMATION TO REDUCE CRIME



**Tony Sumpster, Managing Director EMEA at TOWER Software discusses how electronic document and records management software can dramatically reduce the margin of error.**

Having a cohesive information management policy has never been so important. Examples such as the Soham murders, whilst tragic, illustrate very clearly why it's crucial to work in accordance with clear guidelines on records deletion and information access. The recent Bichard Report that examined this particular case observes, "Social services failed to share information effectively with the police," and that "Police officers at various levels were alarmingly ignorant of how records were created, and how the system worked."

Powerful stuff – and these incidents aren't isolated. There are dozens of government agencies across the UK frustrated by the restrictions of their operations. The front line teams are driven by a genuine desire to 'do good' and be highly effective in their work. Yet, this won't always be possible as long as each agency continues to operate as an information 'island', or while their current information management processes are not absolutely cohesive. The objective of the Bichard Report was to highlight the shortcomings of the current 'system' and its processes, in order that constructive counter measures may be deployed. Whilst throwing money and technology at the problem won't provide an instant fix to all of these issues, using technology to support a corporate information strategy is the logical step forward.

An electronic documents and records management (EDRM) system such as TRIM Context from TOWER Software can form the backbone of a corporate information management strategy. Its corporate file plan ensures consistency as the corporate policy is evoked at the point of entry. By that, I mean when the end user enters the information into the system.

The operational advantages are numerous. Using EDRM software can alleviate workload by automating repetitive tasks and accelerating processes. Bringing all of your documents and records into a single repository – whether originally electronic, paper or other media – is a highly liberating and practical strategy. It allows more efficient information retrieval saving time through a single search as opposed to multiple searches across the organization. It also ensures more reliable business decisions as information is found within a corporate information hierarchy that shows latest amendments/versions as well as other related documents. Time is not wasted re-inventing the wheel and time lags waiting for physical paper to land on your desk are removed as it is immediately available electronically to everyone at the click of a button.

## Making A Difference

By implementing an EDRM system, organizations can not only address legal compliance issues related to data protection and freedom of information, but may also take a giant step towards achieving e-government targets.

It also creates a complete audit trail to track exactly what information has been altered and by whom. This ensures complete accountability of decisions and outcomes that is paramount to any criminal justice organization.



## AT THE INDEPENDENT POLICE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION

TRIM Context software forms backbone of case tracking system

The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) is using TOWER Software's TRIM Context solution to manage its electronic documents and record system. It is designed to ensure optimum public services by managing case file enclosures such as Word applications, email, images, CCTV footage, sound and will eventually support up to 300 users.

For the IPCC, TRIM Context provides an integrated document management system. It forms part of an efficient case tracking system that monitors the progress of all complaints registered through the IPCC. For heightened security the system will include audit trails of previous cases and secure back-up documentation. It is also compatible with current software applications and enhances a more customer-focused and streamlined service.

"The ability of TRIM Context is a big advantage," said John Alden, IPCC interim IT Director. "By providing the right service our investigation teams will be able to process their workloads more efficiently. This will be of benefit to both complainants and those serving in the police force."

Tony Sumpster, Managing Director, EMEA at TOWER Software added, "The fact that the IPCC has specified and installed such leading-edge systems and processes speaks volumes about its positive attitude to serving the public. They will be very well equipped to meet their own exacting standards."

To learn more about managing information with technology, visit TOWER Software at CJM2004 - Confidence in Justice on 21st October at the QEII Conference Centre in London. Or, call TOWER Software now on 0118 977 1212, email [info@towersoft.co.uk](mailto:info@towersoft.co.uk) or visit [www.towersoft.co.uk](http://www.towersoft.co.uk).

### About TOWER Software

TOWER Software is a leading enterprise content management (ECM) provider, delivering electronic document and records management (EDRM) solutions. TOWER Software's award winning solutions empower organizations to manage and secure their vital information assets. The TRIM Context<sup>®</sup> solution is a single, integrated platform that manages business information throughout its complete lifecycle. By relying on its proven domain expertise, strong strategic partnerships, and powerful solutions, TOWER Software enables organizations to improve the accuracy of information on which business decisions are made; maximize efficiency by finding business critical information more quickly and easily; and achieve and maintain standards compliance across industries, resulting in sustained competitive advantage. TOWER Software is a privately held company with operations in Europe, North America and Asia-Pacific. For more information, log on to [www.towersoft.com](http://www.towersoft.com).

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