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Final Technical Report

for

2007-IJ-CX-K011 ADPS# 7ICV

In-Car Video Project

Submitted to

The National Institute of Justice

by

The Alabama Department of Public Safety

July 10, 2009

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Project Abstract

The following describes the project and research for the in-car video program.

The Alabama Department of Public Safety (ADPS) is comprised of six divisions: the Alabama Bureau of Investigation, Administrative Division, Driver License Division, Highway Patrol Division, Protective Services Division, and the Service Division. The ADPS is currently staffed with over 1400 employees, both arresting officers and civilian support staff.

The Highway Patrol Division is charged with patrolling all rural roadways of the State of Alabama, enforcing traffic laws and ensuring the safety of the citizens of Alabama.

The ADPS received 2007 funding through the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Office of Science & Technology (OST) to expand the pilot program which implemented the initial digital ICV system currently used in the Montgomery and Dothan State Trooper Posts. The ADPS purchased the equipment, including the digital in-car video (ICV) system, along with installation in the State Trooper patrol vehicles assigned to the Quad Cities and Jacksonville Trooper Posts. Funding in the amount of $375,000.00 was awarded for the project, and the purchase order was approved December 17, 2007 to purchase the equipment from the vendor currently on state contract.

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The goals of this program were to:

1. Increase safety for citizens and officers
2. Insure officer integrity
3. Increase conviction rates for Driving Under the Influence (DUI) by 10 percent

Statistics were analyzed to determine if the project successfully accomplished the objective. Statistics from the project analysis are compiled in an attached Excel spreadsheet.

The project has been plagued with malfunctions as a result of defective equipment. The original vendor company was sold, and while it appeared initially that the new owners would stand behind the product, that has not been the case. At present, 30 (more than half) of the cameras are non-functional; therefore, analysis of statistical data does not yield valid results. However, ADPS has attempted analysis of statistical data in an effort to comply with grant award requirements.

Officer safety was expected to be achieved through the monitoring capability that the digital video provides when operating at peak efficiency, because supervisors have the ability to observe new officers and target training to specific areas, thus enabling recruits to gain proficiency in less time than was previously required and to build a reserve of good discretionary tactics and integrity. Due to the unreliability of the systems, there was no way to collect a sufficient amount of observational data regarding officer integrity and usage for targeting training.

No previous research data was found that analyzed conviction rates in relation to the presence or absence of digital video evidence.

Initially, ADPS planned to compare the issuances and convictions for the post-installation period from May, 2008 to October, 2009 with the pre-installation dates in 2007. The malfunctions of the equipment caused a shortage of data and the timeframe was extended. All cameras were

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never fully functional at the same time. The number of cameras in operation fluctuated to the extent that significant numbers above 50 percent were often inoperable. The vendor's service was unsatisfactory.

Method: Data collection involved obtaining statistical data from ADPS Information Services which stores Trooper Posts' electronic citations.

Troopers involved in the project followed the policy and procedure manual of ADPS.

Attachment A shows population, square miles and persons per square mile for the Trooper Posts outlined below.
DUI issuances by Troopers were compared monthly for the studied Posts, pre-installation from May, 2007 to February, 2008 and post-installation of ICVs from May, 2008 to February, 2009 to show annual change. Please see Attachment B.

1. Posts equipped with ICVs
    a. Quad Cities-Hamilton
    b. Jacksonville
2. Posts NOT equipped with ICVs
    a. Evergreen
    b. Tuscaloosa
3. Driving under the Influence (DUI) conviction rates for 2007 are compared to 2008 to see if there are changes in the outcomes in cases involving DUI that can be attributed to the use of ICVs. Please see Attachment C.

Results

Both ICV Troops showed decreases in "Guilty" findings for DUI. Findings of "Not Guilty" decreased also and may be attributed to the general declining numbers of DUI citations. Additionally, other programs are in use such as a pre-trial diversion program by the Alabama courts that may affect outcomes. The pre-trial diversion program provides defendants with no

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prior record the option to complete a pre-trial diversion program and have the DUI thrown out. While ADPS does not support the use of these programs, they were implemented by the judges who have such discretion.

Additionally, ADPS has implemented the Zero-Tolerance Task Force, which has reduced the number of alcohol and drug impaired drivers on the road. Department members have received verbal feedback during these details from individuals who state that they were aware of the program and therefore, chose to have a designated driver.

The ICV Project Director is Sergeant Jessie Peoples, who can be contacted at (334) 353-8300 or via email at jessie.peoples@dps.alabama.gov. The Grants Administration Manager, Rosemary Perdue, can be contacted at (334) 353-1999 or via email at rosemary.perdue@dps.alabama.gov . The physical location of the ADPS Headquarters Building is RSA Criminal Justice Complex, 301 South Ripley Street, Montgomery, Alabama. Mail can be transmitted at the Alabama Department of Public Safety, Driver License Division, P. O. Box 1511, Montgomery, Alabama 36102-1511.

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2007-IJ-CX-K011, ADPS# 7ICV, Technical Report DRAFT Executive Summary

Introduction

This is a report on the In-Car Digital Camera Project, in which Alabama Department of Public Safety (ADPS) sought to increase convictions by ten-percent due to the clarity and irrefutable proof provided.

Problem

ADPS always seeks to increase traffic safety for travelers on Alabama roadways. Though Alabama's fatalities decreased in recent years, efforts are continually underway to cut them even further.

Purpose

The purpose of the ICV project is to increase conviction rates for DUI citations. Guilty DUI convictions and/or driver license revocations take perpetrators off the roads for given periods of time and increase traffic safety for the general public.

Research Design

The plan was to install ICVs into patrol units in Jacksonville and Quad Cities (includes Hamilton) Troop Posts. The ICVs are installed to activate with the unit's lights and siren, so that each traffic stop is recorded and stored. Supervisors may monitor from the station to plan targeted training for officers and also to ensure officers' integrity in dealing with the general public. The recordings are expected to affect conviction rates.

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1. Recordings are entered as proof at trials
2. Recordings may be used to encourage perpetrators to plead guilty when they see irrefutable evidence of their condition when stopped, positive effect
3. Recordings may exonerate individuals who are wrongly accused, negative effect

ADPS planned to take statistics from the Electronic Citation records for May 1, 2008 through September 30, 2008 and compare them with the statistics from the same period in 2007 for the studied posts. The plan was revised when the ICV systems malfunctioned and the period was extended due to the lack of statistical information during downtimes of the systems. The ICV systems never performed satisfactorily in concert, and it is unlikely that the number of resulting pertinent cases significantly affected conviction rates. At the present time, fewer than half the ICVs are operational and the State of Alabama is pursuing a resolution.

Findings

The findings are included in Attachments A, B and C. As expected, they are inconclusive for the purposes of the study. There were several factors that may account for the changes from 2007 to 2008. One is the Pre-Trial Diversion Program through the court system as explained below. Other pilot programs may have also affected the numbers, but there is no way to account for the effect of each.

Results

The results are that the ICV systems did not function properly during the initial timeframe; nor did they perform adequately in the extension period. September 24, 2008, it appeared the vendor would work with ADPS to resolve the problems, but the repairs did not hold and the malfunctions recurred. The State of Alabama is taking action for resolution.

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ADPS believes the ICV systems will never perform adequately. Grants Administration has created a log for recording malfunctions and keeping track of service actions by vendors for equipment, so that future failures will be documented for future reference and planning purposes.

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Main Report

Project Dates 7/21/07 – 6/30/09

Problem

The problem is traffic safety. Wrecks that cause personal injuries and fatalities and property damage cause Alabama's highways to be dangerous. ADPS always seeks to increase traffic safety for travelers on Alabama roadways. Though Alabama's fatalities decreased in recent years, efforts are continually underway to cut them and other types of traffic safety issues even further.

Purpose

The purpose of the In-Car Video (ICV) Project is to conduct a study employing in-car digital cameras to record criminal incidents to see if it affects conviction rates.

Literature

No literature was found in which ICVs affect on convictions rates was studied.

Rationale

The hypothesis is that the precision and accuracy of evidence gained through the use of digital in-car camera systems will yield evidentiary data that will increase conviction rates.

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Goals and Objectives

The goals of the project are to increase citizen and officer safety, ensure officer integrity and to increase convictions by ten percent.

Due to the short duration of the project, conviction rates will be limited to incidents of driving under the influence of controlled substances (DUI), because they are more likely to be completed in the project timeframe. Conviction data is provided by the Administrative Office of the Courts of the State of Alabama.

The objectives of the project are:

1. Purchase and install three (3) in-car digital camera system servers at the Quad Cities Troop which includes the Hamilton Post and at the Jacksonville Troop
2. Purchase and install 57 digital in-car camera systems in patrol units at the three named locations
3. Complete a timely evaluation report to finalize the project, to include full analysis of conviction rates pre- and post-installation of the digital media

Methods and Procedures

The ADPS Policy and Procedure Manual was followed.

Purchases and installations were completed May 9, 2008. Due to numerous malfunctions, the project was extended to June 30, 2009, because of down time for the ICVs resulting in a lack of statistical data. Without functioning cameras, there was no data to analyze. ADPS does not have logs of the exact dates of malfunctions, downtime and repairs; however, at the present Time, 30 ICVs are inoperable due to malfunctions. Many issues were resolved; however, recurring breakdowns and the vendor's services and vendor personnel no-shows resulted in major unreliability of the equipment. The ADPS Legal Unit is currently pursuing resolution with the vendor.

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The timeline for the project follows:

March 3, 2008	Installation began
March 25, 2008	ICV Servers moved to ADPS domain after software compliance determined
April 4, 2008	Vendor assigned new project director
May 9, 2008	Installations completed
September 15, 2008	Survey of existing malfunctions
September 24, 2008	Issues resolved
February 27, 2009	Recurring malfunctions render 30 ICVs of the 57 ICVS inoperable
May 14, 2009	More than 40 percent of the in-car camera systems are malfunctioning. ADPS Legal Unit is in negotiations for a new contract with the new vendor (who purchased the seller's company) for repairs and maintenance.

Statistical Data

The technical report is completed based upon statistical data for Driving Under the Influence (DUI) from the E-Citation program:

1. For 2007 and 2008 to determine average increases in issuances. The statistical baseline data for this comparison is from May 1, 2007 to February 28, 2008, pre-installation of ICVs. The comparative data is from May 1, 2008 to February 28, 2009, post-installation of ICVs. The data show a reduction in 2008 in issuances ranging from 5.66 percent to 12.5 percent in all but the Quad Cities-Hamilton Troop, which increased by 6.56 percent.

However, other variables combined with public awareness of the ICVs and other programs targeting the arrest and prosecution of impaired drivers could be the cause of the noted decrease in issuances.

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2. Troops are compared based upon the number of Troopers assigned to the studied Posts. Troopers are assigned based upon past activity in the area.

    a. Jacksonville Troop Post received ICVs and is compared to the Tuscaloosa Troop Post which does not have ICVs
    b. The Quad Cities Troop which includes the Hamilton Post received ICVs and is compared to the Evergreen Troop which does not have ICVs

3. Size and population of the counties, including cities, in each Troop is noted on Attachment A, compiled from information on the Census Bureau website, http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/01000.html , "County Data for Studied Posts."

        i. Jacksonville covers 5 counties and 2 cities and has a population of 395,939 and 3,094.32 square miles compared to Tuscaloosa with 5 counties and once city with a population of 406,475 and 4,379.63 square miles. Jacksonville has 127.96 persons per square mile compared to the less densely populated Tuscaloosa at 92.81 persons per square mile.

        ii. Quad Cities-Hamilton covers 7 counties and 4 cities and has a population of 266,289 with 4,487.99 square miles compared to Evergreen with 5 counties and 4 cities with a population of 159,070 and 4,634.71 square miles. Quad Cities-Hamilton has 59.33 persons per square mile and less densely populated Evergreen has 34.32 persons per square mile.

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Conviction statistics for 2007 and 2008 by Troop-Post are provided by Senior Analyst Missy Moore, ADPS Information Services, based upon conviction data entered by the Troopers upon citation issuance with the court system providing conviction info. Monthly data is not available at this time; therefore, comparisons are done annually. In 2007, none of the Troop-Posts had digital ICVs, and ICVs were not completely installed until May, 2008, giving 6.75 months of ICV usage. Please see Attachment B for "Convictions Comparison."

Results

The studied Troop Posts showed a decrease in "Guilty" findings in all but Evergreen, which showed an increase of 8.76 percent. Evergreen also showed a decrease in "Not Guilty" pleas of 25.9 percent. Evergreen does not have ICVs.

1. Jacksonville "Guilty" findings decreased by 42 percent compared to Tuscaloosa's 14.7 percent decline.
2. Jacksonville "Not Guilty" findings decreased by 50 percent compared to Tuscaloosa's 34.5 percent.
3. Jacksonville's declining issuance figures overall are believed to account for the accompanying decline in convictions.
4. Quad Cities-Hamilton "Guilty" findings decreased by 28.8 percent compared to Evergreen's increase of 8.76 percent.
5. Quad Cities-Hamilton "Not Guilty" findings remained the same as 2007 compared to Evergreen's which decreased by 25.9 percent.

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Conclusion

Analyzing the data is difficult. The figures for 2008 convictions will be studied by command staff. For the purposes of this report, the ICVs were not proven to increase the conviction rate, but due to the malfunctions of the ICV systems, the data is not considered to be valid.

Another ICV project is anticipated with:

1. More documentation on the operation of the systems
2. Identification of specific cases that use the ICV systems and their outcomes
3. A longer timeframe allowing for collection of statistical data over a one-year period and aiming for a conviction rate of 90 percent on the cases in which the ICV systems are used

Additionally, the Malfunction Log will be implemented for grant-funded equipment purchases to document dates, times, services for all equipment failures.

Dissemination of Research Findings

At this time, research findings have not been disseminated.

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