

# / WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SAFETY

Wake County, N.C.'s Sheriff's Office enables better data sharing and reduces IT workload with Active Directory identity solution and ActiveRoles Server.

Raleigh, N.C.

“We are all on the same team” is a phrase often used in law enforcement to remind public safety personnel that the distinctions and rivalries that come with differing uniforms should not distract from the common goal of protection and enforcement.

But in today's environment, successful law enforcement requires more than just a willingness to work together. It requires the ability to effectively share data, information and intelligence across multiple jurisdictional boundaries in a secure and efficient manner.

The public safety agencies in Wake County, N.C., promote data and intelligence sharing based on the belief that doing so enhances their ability to detect, prevent and respond to public safety issues across the county and beyond. Fortunately, Wake County is utilizing technology to help them do so effectively and efficiently.

## A CRITICAL HUB

The Wake County Sheriff's Office, located in the Wake County Public Safety Center in downtown Raleigh, is the primary law enforcement agency for the unincorporated areas of Wake County. The office employs nearly 1,000 personnel working in six divisions, including Patrol, Investigative, Special Operations, Judicial Services, Detention and Administrative.

The Sheriff's Office relies on a SunGard-based public safety and justice software suite to help manage the county's criminal

justice data. It also houses the county-wide criminal justice system. As such, the office acts as the central data hub for all public safety divisions within the county. This approach has proven an effective cost-sharing model. Rather than each agency buying and maintaining their own servers, the Sheriff's Office owns and maintains all public safety-dedicated servers, which other agencies access and utilize as needed.

“Some of the agencies have no IT staff at all, so this approach has proven very successful for them,” says Christopher J. Creech, manager of Information Technology for the Wake County Sheriff's Office.

The model has also helped further the county's data-sharing goals. “Using this approach, we are able to freely share all of our criminal justice and civil process data amongst each other as a true law enforcement community,” says Creech.

## THE DOWNSIDE OF DATA SHARING

Unfortunately, Wake County's technology-sharing strategy also had a drawback. Because the Sheriff's Office acted as the main cog in the public safety data-sharing wheel, the other agencies relied on the office anytime they needed to make a change or addition to their data.

“Other agencies could not access the system to create their own user accounts, to add new employees, change someone's access privileges or even to change a title if someone was promoted,” says Creech. “The

Sheriff's Office had to devote staff time to handle all of those needs.”

As a result, resources at the Sheriff's Office were strained. The process frustrated end users as well. “Many of the agencies wanted some autonomy to be able to manage their own records without having to rely on us every time they needed to change something,” says Creech. “We have a lot of novice IT people. They did not understand how the system worked — they just wanted to be able to go to one place and update their department information.”

Ultimately, the cumbersome processes affected the entire public safety community. When the Sheriff's Office became overwhelmed, critical data could not be added or changed in a timely manner. Yet the office saw few alternatives. Allowing the other agencies direct access to the SunGard database was not feasible given its complexity and the sensitivity of the data. The county needed a way to ease the burden on the Sheriff's Office while allowing the other public safety agencies to maintain their own data in a controlled, secure and effective manner.

## ENABLING END USERS: DELL SOFTWARE GRANTS AUTONOMY WITHOUT SACRIFICING SECURITY

In March 2012, leaders at the Wake County Sheriff's Office implemented Quest One Identity Manager — Active Directory Edition and ActiveRoles Server from Dell Software. Quest One Identity Manager — Active Directory Edition empowers end

users to complete the most labor-intensive Active Directory group-related tasks on their own, without administrator involvement, while leveraging pre-defined approval processes and workflows. By using an easily deployed, simple and customizable request portal that automatically flows to the appropriate group owner in accordance with established policy, approved requests can be automatically fulfilled, removing the burden from Active Directory administrators.

“With Active Directory self-service, users can now change, update and control their own data,” says Creech. “They can make changes as they happen instead of depending on and waiting on us to do it.”

With Quest One Identity Manager – Active Directory Edition, when a user adds or changes data or creates new records, backend scripts interface with the SunGard system and update the appropriate databases automatically.

“It has taken much of the burden off of the Sheriff’s Office,” says Creech. “We don’t have the staff to support all the other agencies and their users anymore. It works well and allows us to focus on other priorities.”

Additionally, the burden of user access requests are transferred from IT staff to business owners without sacrificing security, compliance and governance objectives.

The addition of ActiveRoles Server has made securing and protecting Active Directory simple and efficient. By delivering automated tools for user and group management and Active Directory delegation, ActiveRoles Server allows the Sheriff’s Office to protect critical Active Directory data and eliminate unregulated access to resources.

“The program allows agency personnel to use the system but prevents them from getting native access within the application,

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Christopher J. Creech, Manager of Information Technology, Wake County Sheriff’s Office

which would grant them a broader set of privileges that we wouldn’t be comfortable with,” says Creech. “It allows them to manage their agency and their users without giving them access to change another agency’s data or to view certain types of protected information.”

Quest One Identity Manager – Active Directory Edition also allows the Sheriff’s Office to assign ownership of specific groups or distribution lists to key individuals in the organization based on their business needs and organizational roles. For example, the Sheriff’s Office divided users into view-only members and partner agencies. View-only members, such as the Clerk of Courts, District Attorney’s Office and State Bureau of Investigations, can sign in and view data but cannot enter or change it. Meanwhile, partner agencies (there are currently 10) can view data as well as change information or enter new data. In all, the system is currently used by just over 1,600 public safety personnel.

#### HELPING PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCIES DO THEIR JOBS BETTER

Creech says automatic user notifications were an additional benefit he did not expect with the implementation of Quest One Identity Manager – Active Directory Edition

and ActiveRoles Server. Any time a change is requested to an account, a password is reset or security privileges are altered, the affected user is automatically alerted.

“In the law enforcement community it is important to know what is going on, especially if something is changed that a public safety officer didn’t know about or didn’t ask for,” says Creech. “It’s a nice added benefit that helps alert us that something is wrong or if unauthorized changes are made to an account.”

By 2014, the Sheriff’s Office plans to enable Quest One Identity Manager – Active Directory Edition’s Group Attestation Engine as well. The Attestation Engine will allow business managers or group owners to schedule routine or on-demand attestation of Active Directory groups and distribution lists in order to ensure and maintain compliance.

Ultimately, Creech says the benefits of implementing Quest One Identity Manager – Active Directory Edition and ActiveRoles Server go beyond his agency and the other public safety agencies within Wake County.

“The ability to quickly update and share data is a huge factor in enabling us to do our jobs better,” he says. “Ultimately, it allows us to more effectively serve and protect the public.”

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