



San Antonio Police

A STORY OF... IMPROVED SECURITY,
ACCURACY, & DRAMATIC TIME SAVINGS...

Achieved goals and more...

- Become proactive VS reactive with regards to evidence.
- Decrease risk of human error.
- Simplified one screen entry.
- Software that was easy to use, learn and maintain.
- Generate and/or create any form or report quickly and easily.
- Retrieve statistics at anytime.
- Help with accreditation.
- Ability to move, locate and track evidence easily and securely.
- Improved purging capabilities.

BATTLING AN EVIDENCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM occurs frequently within police departments across the country. Until it automated its own evidence management process, the property room within the San Antonio, Texas, Police Department dealt with its share of challenges---for 30 years. A main-frame based evidence management system was in place, yet proved to be more of an inventory system than a management system.

Risk for Human Error Was High

Eventually, this antiquated system evolved into the creation of five separate ad hoc databases to manage various functions such as inventory, notification and conversion. The manual system's ability to notify about evidence to be purged was severely limited. A card-stock file

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system also was used to print cards for each evidence item as no barcoding method was available. “There was an extreme amount of opportunity for human error,” recalls Darrell Allen, Property Room Supervisor. According to Robert Wanzenreid, warehouse crew leader, one

of the challenges the property room staff experienced was accurately tracking chain of custody when items were temporarily released for processing. “You had to go back to our card file to see if something was actually here or not,” Wanzenreid said. “The system might say it was still in the property room, but it actually was temporarily released to go to the medical examiner’s lab or elsewhere.”

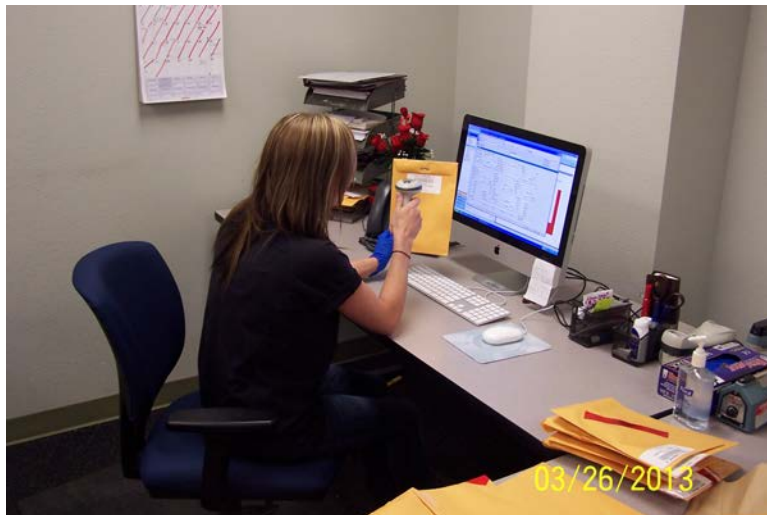
Centralized Information, Quicker Processing Time Were Goals

Frustration with such an unreliable and deficient evidence management system prompted San Antonio PD to seek a new solution. The property room staff established clear objectives for what a new program must accomplish. “We wanted to get all information in one place with a new system, rather than having to bounce around five different screens,” Wanzenried said.

For Delbert Area, evidence stock control supervisor, reducing processing time was a huge concern. “It was a matter of the labor involved in each item being worked on,” he said. “It was taking us 30 minutes for one item, so we wanted to be able to cut this down to about five minutes.”

Allen insisted a new evidence management system must be sequel server based, which would significantly streamline the property room’s notification capability. No wonder. San Antonio PD takes in approximately 5,300 each month.

Training On New Software Easier



For 16 months, San Antonio surveyed several evidence management software programs. Ultimately, the department chose the EvidenceOnQ program from Seattle, Washington-based FileOnQ. “What sold me on EvidenceOnQ was the single page end-user page,” Allen said. “It’s easy to train on for the end-user. Literally overnight, we had officers sitting down and keying their own data,” Allen added. “So, we’ve cut down the data entry and processing time by 80 percent!”

Generates Special Forms, Reports Faster

Generating specific forms and notification letters tied to evidence and property status is a major priority among San Antonio PD’s property room staff. Property room supervisor Allen today is confident in his department’s ability to notify the proper parties about personal property. The state of Texas requires that owners of personal property held in San Antonio PD’s property room be notified and have 90 days to act following such notification. Using EvidenceOnQ, “We’ll generate 25 to 50 letters a day that need to be mailed out,” Allen said.

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The police department’s narcotics lab must prepare a crime lab instruction sheet for every case that goes to the crime lab. The narcotics lab also must have a charge and disposition form that must be completed. These forms are now completely automated through EvidenceOnQ. “To be able to send disposition

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notices electronically and to get electronic responses back has given tremendous time savings,” Allen noted. “We had 97 cases that recently went to the DA,” said Allen. “That would have been equivalent to 194 individual forms that, prior to acquiring the new automated evidence management solution, would have had to be hand typed. “Now, we just push a button (in EvidenceOnQ) and these are printed,” Allen said.

Reports Cover Numerous Categories

When Allen joined San Antonio PD in 2005, there was no required reporting on a wide range of categories with any regularity. Now, reports on multi-faceted evidence status are routinely accomplished with EvidenceOnQ. “We generate a weekly report on critical issues such as currency, narcotics, and firearms,” Allen said. “On the purging

process, we can now generate electronic requests for purging and by what unit.”

Although EvidenceOnQ already provides many different types of reports, occasionally there are some exceptions. Allen recalls a few instances where an ad hoc request for a report came up. “For instance, we had a request for how many rape kits were in the property room and which were tested and which untested,” Allen explained. “The police department was going to build a separate database for this, but we avoided this situation because EvidenceOnQ already had this reporting capability.”

Software Helped With Accreditation

Allen recalls one time when the police department’s crime investigation lab was applying for accreditation, which required a form that had to be rigidly standard. Recalls Allen: “It took only one day at FileOnQ to prepare this form. They came right back and provided that form and we didn’t miss a lick.”

As a result of installing EvidenceOnQ, San Antonio PD has experienced some major benefits. These include:



● **The property room is now able to be more proactive about evidence management.**

● **Property room work efficiency has jumped significantly.** For example, by only entering very sparse details about a case, EvidenceOnQ can address nearly every query. “That helps us with customer service,” notes Delbert Area, the stock control supervisor. Allen cites more effective property intake. “Before we went to EvidenceOnQ, it took a staff of six individuals to process a day’s intake of property. Now, with the software in

place, a staff of three performs intake in about three to four hours on an average day. This allows us

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to take some labor and move it to the purging process,” Allen said. “We have a more consistent flow of purging.”

Both San Antonio PD and its property room have a more professional appearance. Notes Allen: “Barcodes are available for each item of evidence, and they’re consistent because they’re similar to barcoding that comes from the lab. The ability to be able to pull up an item and generate a custody report immediately, showing the movement history of any given item, shows professional management and that the evidence has been watched.”



Property Room Move Was Software’s Ultimate Test

San Antonio PD perhaps faced the biggest test for managing its evidence when in 2010 the property room had to move from a 50,000 square-foot warehouse to a new one with 100,000 square-feet of space. Moving the huge amounts of property required 67 tractor-trailer loads in three weeks, with all property relocated on shelves in the new warehouse. According to supervisor Allen, EvidenceOnQ enabled every piece of evidence moved to have an individual notation on when it was loaded on a truck, and when taken off and put on the shelf in the new warehouse. “Without EvidenceOnQ, there’s no way we could have moved as effectively as we did,” Allen asserted. “Chain of custody was maintained for each item during the entire move.”

Allen feels such a tricky, gargantuan move was possible also because the vendor designed its software to accommodate the capability of moving and tracking such huge amounts of evidence without affecting chain of custody. “This showed how FileOnQ thought about the software and provided the kind of flexibility and capability needed,” Allen added.

About the FileOnQ Inc. (Developers of EvidenceOnQ)

Formed in May 1996 as Integrated Software Solutions, we have specialized—from the beginning—in the development of products focused on lifecycle records management for the corporate, departmental, and workgroup user. For the past nine years, we have dedicated ourselves to powerful and customizable solutions for Law Enforcement to track and manage their property and evidence from the crime scene to

the court room. Police and sheriff departments, district attorneys, and prosecutors value the ability to access, view, manage, and track evidence and associated documents, media instantly using a web browser. Allowing them to communicate and work together on cases and evidence like never before.

Agencies at the local, state, and federal level have successfully implemented our system to not only [manage evidence](#) but also [officer equipment](#), [assets](#), [critical incident scenes](#), [fleet vehicles](#), [case management](#), and more. Agencies have discovered that what we offer is much more than a software system. It is a powerful platform with the tools needed to increase efficiencies throughout their entire jurisdiction.

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