

# SF adopts crime mapping tool

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San Francisco recently unveiled a crime mapping analysis tool that police expect will lead to better deployment of resources.

The Crime Mapping and Analysis for Public Safety (CrimeMAPS) tool, which was developed with \$1.5 million in federal assistance, will enable officers to query criminal information through the Web or a desktop PC.

"For example, an officer may say, 'I want to know all the residential burglaries a quarter mile from this location on Sunday over the last six months,'" said Erich Seamon, technology manager with the city's telecommunications and information services department. "They may be better able to redistribute officers in a certain location where there is a high-crime area."

Data from different databases, such as 911, sex offenders and probationers, will be extracted, geo-coded on the fly and transferred to the system on a daily basis, he said. The system will also include a variety of geospatial layers, including demographic data, patrol areas, neighborhood watches, gang territories and business-related information. For example, officers can view crime information related to bars because crime tends to occur around them.

"This is the first step we've taken to truly take police information and activate it geospatially," said Seamon, adding that the city already had an extensive geographic information system program. "Before that, the only way they could really examine data is look through the record management system through pieces of paper."

CrimeMAPS is similar to the Chicago Police Department's Citizen and Law Enforcement Analysis and Reporting (CLEAR) system, but more complex in the sense of pulling data in near real time, said Seamon. The system is also similar to Comstat — a crime analysis, strategy and accountability system originally developed by the New York City Police Department and used in several other major cities — but is much more collaborative and participatory in nature, said Seamon, who described CrimeMAPS as a "kinder and gentler Comstat model."

San Francisco's system uses Microsoft Corp.'s Windows 2000 servers running Microsoft Active Directory, IBM Corp.'s DB2 database technology and ESRI geographic information system software. Data is maintained in EMC Corp.'s storage-area networks and Citrix Systems Inc. software pushes the application to desktop clients in a secure network.

CrimeMAPS will be available to more than 3,300 police officers within 80 departments.

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