INTRODUCTION The following case study focuses on a project in which the Trinidad & Tobago Forensic Science Centre realized a dramatic 26-fold increase in the generation of actionable intelligence through ballistics evidence matching.

FORENSIC CASE STUDY: TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Forensic Case Study:
Trinidad & Tobago

PROBLEM   During the first 26 months of operation of the Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS), personnel at the Forensic Science Centre were disappointed that only eleven ballistics evidence matches had been generated and confirmed. Questions were raised about the value of the government's crime fighting investments. Attention centered on the increasing workloads caused by rising levels of gun violence and on the mounting ballistics evidence backlog. Staffing levels were a critical issue and it would take many months to recruit and train new people. In the meantime, the backlogs would continue to build, causing significant delays that would result in armed criminals remaining free, enabling them to shoot and kill again.

SOLUTION   In 2006, the Forensic Science Center took an innovative and two-pronged approach to solving the problem. They began recruitment to increase the number of firearms examiners from three to seven. At the same time, they contracted the services of International Resources Group of Washington, DC, to provide three qualified firearms examiners for a period of one year. These fully-trained and qualified expert resources were able to immediately begin work on eliminating the ballistics backlog that had grown to over 2,200 cases, ranging from simple firearms possession to murder.

RESULTS   With the right people and processes maximizing the technology's potential, the number of confirmed IBIS hits rose dramatically from 11 to almost 300 in just ten short months! One hit gives an investigator leveraging power to develop new leads from no less than two events. Incredibly, the new forensic team observed a hit ratio of about 50% on evidence discharged from auto-loading firearms, thus indicating a pattern of repetitive crime gun use.

TODAY

The use of IBIS to link three or more incidents has been frequent. In one instance, a gun has been shown to have been used in at least nine different crimes, including murders.

CONCLUSION The more data in – the more information out. Crime solving success is dependent on people being leveraged with good processes and effective technology. Outstanding results were achieved as soon as the process of data entry was well supported. Every community could be experiencing results like this.

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FORENSIC TECHNOLOGY

CASE STUDY: TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
The Effective Application of People, Processes, and Technology to Reduce Ballistics Backlogs and Provide Detectives with More Actionable Intelligence for Crime Solving