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# CrimeStar Records Management System

*This versatile software gives small agencies the same record-tracking capabilities as big ones.*

## Bob Davis

**O**K. Let's be honest. There's nothing sexy about records management systems. There, I said it. And I know you are thinking it, too. Records management systems are boring with a capital "B."

All right, that said, let's move on because while records management may be as exciting as a room full of accountants discussing depreciation, it's an absolute necessity for law enforcement agencies.

Every agency must track crimes and capture information about the services it provides to its communities. Such information is critical. It could even cost you

21st-century records management technology. Digital records management systems are expensive to purchase; they cost even more to customize; and some vendors charge a pretty penny, or three, for maintenance and upgrade contracts. For agencies staffed with 50 or fewer officers and operating on tight budgets, records management software can be a necessity that they can't afford.

But there are some options available to smaller agencies, and I'd like to discuss one: CrimeStar RMS.

San Jose, Calif.-based CrimeStar, which is filled with former law enforcement professionals, knows that the majority of American agencies have 50 or fewer officers. It also knows these agencies have a great need for technology and it makes a concerted effort to provide products for this large, and largely untapped, market. That's not to say that CrimeStar can't service a large agency with thousands of cops, because it can. The software is that versatile.

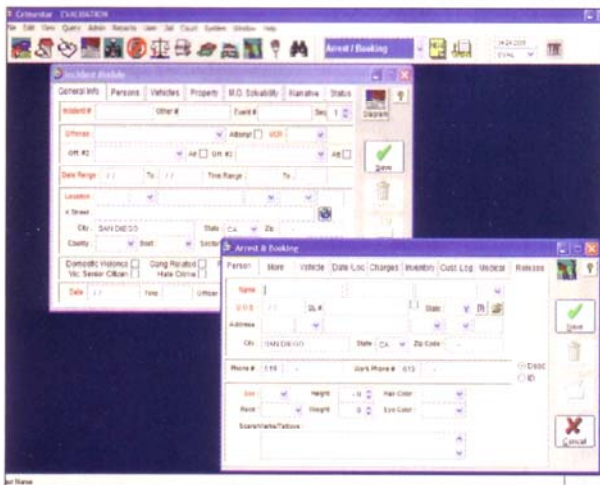
It has a nice graphical user interface (GUI) that's easily understood by beginners. Then if you run into any trouble, CrimeStar supplies you with a 277-page admin/user's manual in Adobe's PDF format. That much documentation may seem daunting, but I actually found the manual well organized, easy to understand, and filled with screen captures for reference. There's also an excellent on-screen help feature.

Police work typically involves handling multiple tasks simultaneously such as an incident report combined with an arrest report. In the paper world, you'll spend time filling out two separate pieces of paper. In CrimeStar RMS it works like this. After classifying the data you've entered into the database as suspect info on the incident report, the software activates a button, allowing you to populate all the corresponding fields on the suspect's arrest and booking reports.

CrimeStar RMS saves you a considerable amount of time, and it helps you eliminate errors when preparing reports. You'll never have to return a report for missing information such as a date of birth or ID number when you use CrimeStar. The software has mandatory fields that require the user to complete the information before the record can be saved.

Besides basic reporting features, CrimeStar RMS includes a variety of other useful tools. For smaller agencies, this one application can easily integrate a multitude of processes typically handled on paper.

You can automate your registrant-tracking process, track the property that has been reported stolen as well as the



**CrimeStar's RMS modules allow multiple forms to be open simultaneously for easy access to information.**

your job. If your agency's brass doesn't have the statistics, your chief or sheriff can't justify its current payroll, much less additional personnel. The easiest way to compile and keep these statistics is in a computerized data system.

Unfortunately, there are many obstacles that prevent agencies from using

its flexibility. It runs on Windows 98, Windows NT, Windows Server 2003, and both the home and professional versions of Windows XP. More importantly, it can be used on a single computer or in a client-server environment via a high-speed network. All you need to make CrimeStar RMS work is a basic PC with at least a Pentium 400MHz processor, 128MB of RAM, and 200MB of hard drive space.

The software is actually pretty easy to

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property impounded into your evidence room, and share civil orders such as temporary restraining orders and emergency protective orders from shift to shift so that all of your officers have immediate access to this information.

In addition, there are a variety of modules that will make your job easier. If your agency is responsible for registering firearms, you can do it with CrimeStar RMS. You can also use the software to track firearms issued to your own staff members.

That's just a fraction of what CrimeStar RMS can do. Here's some more:

- Calls for services can be managed more effectively and Uniform Crime Reports can be generated with a click of a button.
- If you're responsible for running a jail, you're covered by CrimeStar's basic jail management module.
- Need a personnel record system? CrimeStar includes a module for your personnel records.
- CrimeStar's fleet management module tracks police vehicle inventory, assignment history, and preventative maintenance routines.
- CrimeStar's investigative module can track cases assigned to investigators to final disposition.

CrimeStar RMS is the Swiss Army knife of cop data management. And in response to customer demand, the company is working to add even more features.

If you have ever priced records management systems, you know that you can get sticker shock in a hurry. CrimeStar RMS licensing starts at \$1,900. That's a bargain for all of the tools and capability offered by this software. If you've been looking for an electronic solution for managing your records as well as a large part of your administrative responsibilities, do yourself a favor and consider CrimeStar RMS. You can download a fully functioning trial at [www.crimestar.com](http://www.crimestar.com). ☉

*Bob Davis supervises the San Diego Police Department's computer lab. He has 26 years of experience on the force.*

**CrimeStar**

[www.crimestar.com](http://www.crimestar.com)

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