Keeping Cities Safe with Information Superiority

In the modern era, the perennial threat from radicalist groups and terrorist organisations is becoming increasingly unpredictable. Our enemies are no longer known to us. They do not exist on a map. They're not nations, they're simply individuals. And in the wake of tragic terror attacks on high profile cities, public safety is once again at the top of the agenda.

It's perhaps not surprising then, the demand for even more video based surveillance is as high as ever. A staggering 99% of federal agencies claim video is integral to fighting crime and terror. The IHS estimates that 1.3 million cameras were installed via mobile devices in police cars, trains, trams, transit buses, school buses and body-worn applications worldwide last year - and are forecasting 3.3 trillion hours of surveillance video is to be taken every year up to 2020.

Reviewing this tsunami of video is practically insurmountable - so much so that only a tiny proportion of footage taken from the London riots was ever watched!

However, the real challenge is allowing individual officers, teams, departments and different agencies to seamlessly collaborate and access evidence immediately, on any device. Too often, the ways in which security services are set up to optimise video surveillance are inefficient, siloed, and restricted to fixed recording parameters.

Security organisations need to respond quickly with the video-based data they have access to - especially when the threat is fluid and across multiple locations, as in the case of the Paris shootings where it became increasingly difficult to coordinate an emergency services response. Not only must they be able to store, search and share this video within a secure and controlled environment, but they must also embrace technological advances that are taking place to effectively merge this video with other data sources and create real-time intelligence that can be reviewed immediately independent of any hardware or location.

Cloud-based technology, such as video surveillance as a service, is yet another technological advance safe cities will use in 2016; since it gives them a flexibility that would otherwise be unavailable. At last month's Mobile World Congress, the soundbite which turned heads was the prospect of "live drone and bodycam video feeds with analysis under 5 seconds." Having this level of surveillance on demand will empower front-line personnel and give them an application that connects different types and sources obtained through mobile devices and multi-agency collaboration. This new innovation allows users to bring together and share live video, audio and photos as events unfold - for example CCTV, bodycam, drone or even unique footage from members of the public can be immediately viewed and analysed in real-time against historic data. This level of data sharing on a mission driven workflow will aid in lowering response times and overall in-situ awareness.

Modern surveillance also depends on consolidating intelligence with powerful analytics - all of which security organisations need to leverage effectively to help predict activity, co-ordinate action or store for post-incident retrieval and analysis.

The world is continually evolving, and thus the way in which we protect it must do also. By adopting a centralised briefing platform that is independent of hardware or location, security services can truly search, mine and leverage video to bolster security, identify and mitigate criminal activity and seamlessly collaborate cross-agency.

David Peto, CEO and Founder of Excession - from the makers of Aframe.

David discusses the impact of video on the security market in his keynote session at Mobile World Congress.