

# Improving covert intelligence gathering: risk and efficiency

Covert intelligence gathering is full of complex challenges and risks. abmpegasus is a unique system developed with UK law enforcement to improve the management of covert policing. Two key areas that abmpegasus seeks to address are risk and the efficient implementation of robust procedures. This paper briefly outlines how abmpegasus makes it easier to tackle these two areas.

## Mitigating risk

There are few areas where operational risk is as high as that found in covert policing. abmpegasus helps police forces to make sure that **risks are properly assessed** before and during covert operations. When applying to use a Covert Human Intelligence Source (CHIS), officers are required to complete an assessment of risk based on the PPPLEM model (Police and Community, Physical, Psychological, Legal, Economic and Moral risk). The risk associated with individual pieces of intelligence is also recorded via an electronic 5x5x5 form, as required by the National Intelligence Model and Management of Police Information (MoPI) guidelines, asking the officer to assess the reliability of the source and the truth of the intelligence.

It is imperative that **CHIS anonymity** is maintained as far as possible. All intelligence entered into abmpegasus is allocated a Unique ISR (Intelligence Source Register) Reference Number. Only those that need to know the **provenance** of the intelligence are given the privileges to do so. When intelligence is to be exported from the covert abmpegasus system into a Force intelligence system, abmpegasus guides the user through the **sanitisation** process and allows easy **export** of the sanitised data.

It is important for covert units to know when a member of the public should have his/her status escalated to the level of CHIS. abmpegasus assists in the management of **status drift** by analysing the quantity and frequency of information that the member of public has provided. When certain thresholds are met, the relevant officer is automatically alerted to the fact that the person should be considered for recruitment as a CHIS which will ensure that the appropriate risk management and mitigation procedures are triggered.

Law enforcement organisations will have detailed **procedures** for dealing with all areas of covert policing particularly with regard to risk management. abmpegasus includes **configurable workflows** and **authorisation** to make sure that the processes are properly and fully carried out.

Similar risk assessment and procedural mechanisms are found in all abmpegasus modules to cover **surveillance**, **undercover operations**, **witness protection** and **communications data** requests.



### Maximise covert efficiency

Budget constraints and operational pressures mean that all departments are seeking to improve efficiency. Where legislative requirements for complicated procedures are highly prevalent, it can be difficult to balance compliance with efficiency improvement. abmpegasus improves compliance whilst making it easier and less burdensome to enforce stringent procedural policies.

Automated **workflow** helps authorisation processes to run quickly and smoothly. Where previously applications might have taken hours or days to be authorised, abmpegasus facilitates **instant electronic submission** of applications to the relevant Authorising Officer for approval. Upon authorisation a number of other tasks are automatically generated depending on the type of application, such as scheduling an application review.

**Communication** is improved between officers and departments thanks to automated generation of notification messages via the abmpegasus system. In addition, all officers, subject to security permissions, can have instant access to the same information as it is all held within one central database. **Role-based security** ensures that officers can only access the information that they have permission to see on a need-to-know basis, ensuring that the improved communication does not become a security threat.

The ability of officers to quickly **access covert intelligence** from one database has the potential to drastically reduce the duplication of effort, helping to address inefficiencies identified in the Flanagan report (2008). Where previously intelligence was held in disparate systems, abmpegasus brings it all under one roof to improve authorised officers' overview of the Force's intelligence picture. This can support the lean principles approach recommended in Jan Berry's February 2009 report. Integrated visual analytics and briefing tools aid further understanding of data making abmpegasus the leading solution for maximising the potential of covert intelligence whilst maintaining best practice and legislative compliance.

### References

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