

BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION OF REAL-TIME CRIME CENTERS



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The Axon Fusus Real-Time Crime Center (RTCC) Platform is an extremely valuable resource for law enforcement agencies across the country. Though they have risen in popularity over the last two decades, until recently they were reserved for a few agencies that could afford them, with prices well into tens of millions of dollars, making them exclusive to police departments with the deepest pockets. Included in these costs were not only the software, but the hardware and accessories that accompanied them as well as the personnel responsible for maintaining and utilizing these costly command centers. The next generation of RTCCs are not only more cost efficient, but have the capacity to seamlessly leverage a variety of police technologies, leverage cloud-connected devices, and even be mostly software-based themselves.

THE FIRST RTCCs:
BORN OUT OF TRAGEDY



The first RTCC was inaugurated a few years after the tragic events that unfolded in New York City on September 11, 2001. City officials believed that it was time to get even more organized when it came to their emergency response and be able to sift through necessary information much faster.[1] Data-sharing was plagued by large gaps that hindered response and intelligence, so fusion centers were berthed at centralized locations as a solution. Initially, RTCCs were intended to be central data mining units, which mostly consisted of numerous expert crime analysts sorting through ample amounts of data sets. Data came from upwards of 30 different sources from traffic cameras all the way to driver's licenses and addresses. This was all placed in a crime data warehouse with a search layer added so that data could be collected more quickly than by hand or door-to-door searches. The focus was largely on data analysis to discover crime trends, so the label "real-time" was more of a prophecy to where this technology was headed as opposed to what they were really capable of doing at that time.[2]

Since then, RTCCs have continued to adapt into something more. Technology is significantly more sophisticated and layered and agencies are incorporating newer tactics that don't just require analysis. They are looking for actionable evidence through visual and informational sources to enhance their real time capabilities in the field when dealing with emergency response and crime-solving.[3] Bigger departments in cities like Atlanta, Georgia, Orlando, Florida and Minneapolis, Minnesota and even smaller agencies in locations like Rialto, California and Rocky Mount, North Carolina have adopted fully cloud-based RTCCs. RTCCs are no longer niche units–they are becoming full-scale central intelligence units with the power to completely shift the way that policing is done.

RISE OF THE OPEN PLATFORM

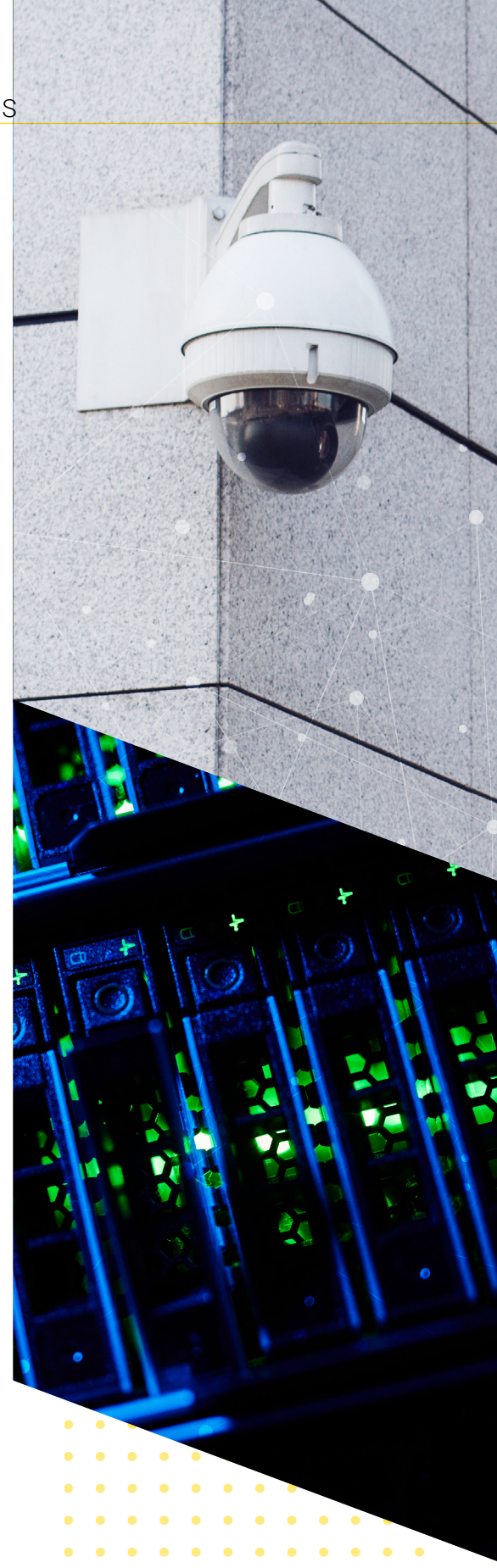
RTCCs are still evolving, and the need and desire for more open platforms and layered information hubs is pushing fresh and innovative companies like Axon Fusus to take on the task of overcoming the initial limitations of the first crime centers.

One of the bigger obstacles was determining how to eliminate data silos. As mentioned before, the first fusion centers had data coming from around 30 different sources.[4] These sources all had their own functionality and required tremendous manpower to sift between relevant and irrelevant information as well as having to pull data from software and hardware that had their own operating systems, structures, log-ins, and interfaces. Authorized searches were no more than query-based searches and that didn't account for manually having to go into the field to retrieve video footage, pictures, license plate numbers, locations, and other pertinent data critical to cases and investigations. That is still a challenge that agencies face today.[5] To meet this challenge, "open" Real-Time Crime Centers like Axon Fusus are now designed to be technology-agnostic solutions, eradicating the need for officers to have to use more than just its platform to utilize multiple sources of information from current and cutting-edge technology and cameras currently in their arsenal or soon to be added.

Open RTCCs work more efficiently by consolidating pertinent data into one place and leveraging the strengths of each technology onto one, interactive pane of glass. Reads from technology like automatic license plate readers (ALPR), gunshot detectors, private security cameras, doorbell cameras, traffic cameras, body cameras, and other emergency response platforms are easily interpreted in real time, with unneeded information sifted out, giving personnel the most useful data possible within seconds.[6] Because of the platform's design, an open platform like Axon Fusus can be used regardless of an officer's location and operates as both a mobile resource by tablet or computer, and a stationary tool such as a physical crime center, without expensive hardware components that exhaust limited resources. First responders can also be communicated with and assigned locations, videos, pictures, and tips, delivering enhanced situational awareness and more intelligent operational command.

Access and analysis of big data funnels through police agencies usually in the form of computer-aided dispatch systems (CAD), records management systems, ALPRs, gunshot locators, public and private surveillance camera systems, court records, and publicly available information like social media. Each of these tools are individually vital to the efficacy of police work–but when unified into a single data stream, they can deliver more detailed and well-rounded data that allows law enforcement to more precisely and effectively solve crimes and respond to emergencies without intruding on the lives of innocent people.

BUILDING A PUBLIC SAFETY CLOUD



RTCCs used to be a location. The next generation are now capable of serving as a function. Brick and mortar is no longer what holds these platforms back from being able to service every law enforcement need. The cloud has opened the door from transitioning RTCCs from hardware to software-based. The challenge of affordability and access are overcome by the adaptability that newer RTCCs bring and their ability to be used with something as small as a laptop and a mobile device.[7]

With the cloud and artificial intelligence being major force multipliers in law enforcement today, agencies looking to deploy 21st century policing methods now require state-of-the-art encrypted cyber storage, real-time analysis, enhanced collaboration between other technologies and police departments, compliance, privacy, and audit capacities. Minimizing operational costs and increasing the ability to gather crucial intelligence more quickly is vital. Decreasing the amount of information redundancy and proactively implementing cybersecurity initiatives are also important strategic components required to effectively scale law enforcement operations.

It's a daunting list, but by moving to cloud-based RTCCs that come equipped with all of these components and are readily serviced and future-proofed, departments of all sizes are now able to fit them into their budgets and have the same powerful tools as any other agency, customizable to their needs. With police technology moving away from solely on-premises centers with big associated costs, a fully-operational RTCC is no longer just an asset to big departments only.

Cloud-based, artificial intelligence-enabled crime center platforms are also significantly easier to set up. They no longer require as much hardware (if any) or vast amounts of manpower or technological knowledge to be established thanks to their reliance on software that is continuously updated over-the-air.[8]

These advancements also open the door for technology to be more effectively used in the public safety space. There has been an uptick in the number of companies looking to improve the efficacy of the work that police do, and at the same time improve the quality of safety for community members. Emergency response applications, alert systems, ALPRs, gunshot detectors, private and public security camera networks, and other public safety utilities were created to alleviate some of the pressures in policing. However, not many RTCC platforms are designed to be interoperable with different technologies due to the development of product suites that lock law enforcement users into one specific set of products from a single brand.

In contrast, an open platform like the Axon Fusus RTCC Platform finds strength in collaboration and was built with law enforcement users in mind. The overall goal is to make policing better for law enforcement and the community. Open platform design invites multiple integrations and enables more powerful networking effects between a variety of police technologies. What's understood is that law enforcement technology is at its best when it can work with other software and hardware. The Axon Fusus RTCC Platform builds off of the strengths of each platform and consolidates what was once multiple different functions into one place.[9]

The Axon Fusus RTCC Platform also fosters greater opportunities for cross-jurisdictional partnerships and activities with other police departments. The added benefit is that it can be combined with a department's best police practices. These partnerships and integrations make the Axon Fusus RTCC Platform a platform that is an elite, multi-faceted force multiplier. The next generation of RTCCs powered by the Axon Fusus RTCC Platform are pulling together the best resources police can use in real time, adding powerful cloud software and artificial intelligence, and making them work as a unit rather than separately.[10]

RTCCs leverage the human knowledge that comes with crime analysts and professionals and combine their experience with information gleaned from a wellspring of sources. Systems like the Fusus by Axon RTCC Platform, with just a few people, are capable of relaying the important information necessary for effective rapid and intelligent incident response, and enable dispatchers to push it to the right officers in the field in real time.





IMPROVING PUBLIC SAFETY OUTCOMES

With these radical technological developments, RTCCs are now appropriate for any agency looking to enhance the situational awareness of their police officers, maintain better operational command, and radically improve their emergency response capabilities for crimes and critical events. Newer RTCCs have already created incredible results from practical usage by agencies across the country. Numerous departments are able to tout the crimes that they've solved, the people that they've helped and saved, and the community-building that's happened just by using powerful platforms like Axon Fusus.

In Oxford, Alabama, the Axon Fusus RTCC Platform used by the Oxford police has pulled together over 23 different agencies in conjunction with each other to respond and solve crimes that cross jurisdictions. Bay County Sheriff's Office in Florida have established similar working relationships and through their Axon Fusus RTCC Platform have partnered with the Panama City Police Department, Panama City Beach Police Department, Lynn Haven Police Department, Parker Police Department, and the Springfield Police Department.[11]

Local school systems have even connected their security systems to their local police in the event of active shooter and critical situations. There is immediate value seen in what the The Fusus RTCC Platform offers educational institutions and the open platform that Fusus delivers allows any school safety data source to be funneled directly into their city's RTCC. Schools in Bay County in Florida[12], Buncombe County in North Carolina[13], Osceola County in Florida[14], and San Gabriel in California[15] are among the great examples that show how the The Fusus RTCC Platform can operate as proactive measures for school safety.



The community element of the Axon Fusus RTCC Platform has also played a major role in the shift of the RTCC's focus. At one time, crime mitigation was exclusively within the purview of police personnel. Now, departments can bridge the gap between officers and the community, creating a major force-multiplier. Community engagement has always been a top priority for forward-thinking agencies. When law enforcement and the community can come together and create a public safety ecosystem that works for everyone, places like Jackson, Mississippi see a 51% reduction in crime after the inception of their Axon Fusus RTCC Platform and Community Connect program.[16]

The Community Connect program is an offering that taps into businesses and residents and understands that they are a resource that police agencies need to have on their side. Most neighborhoods and communities are equipped with private security cameras. Before the advent of community camera sharing programs, officers were relegated to having to go door-to-door or make phone calls to ask for footage that was critical to getting vital data about incidents. This was costing law enforcement valuable time.

With community involvement and voluntary owner sign-off to utilize cameras, those security feeds are now being pulled directly into investigations, providing critical intelligence and helping police fully clear cases faster and at higher rates. The Axon Fusus RTCC Platform shapes how officers can leverage real-time information to formulate a well-rounded approach to every angle of emergency response and crime-solving. This has been seen as a win-win situation for both departments and communities. Community members are able to see the results of sharing their cameras with their local agency and their local agency is able to operate more efficiently than ever before. Trust and relationship building with the community is one of the biggest advantages police departments have been able to tap into. The common consensus is that everyone wants to be safe and private and public unity is formed through genuine strategic partnerships.





GREATER SAFETY
WITH AN EYE TO PRIVACY

Privacy isn't necessarily lost in the infrastructure and usage of an RTCC. Who is watching and how footage and information is being used is a frequent concern for any community and it will continue to be. How data is gathered is important, but with platforms moving into more software-based systems, there is an opportunity for greater accountability around compliance and audit abilities.

Axon Fusus serves as a great example of how powerful technology can also be responsible, with robust community protections in place. Users can be logged and tracked, with case numbers, platform usage, access, activity and other user data tracked and stored in a secure audit trail. Any private technology such as cameras must have voluntary permission from the owner to be used, no matter the level of crime or incident. There is no facial recognition or innate human characteristics used or stored in a database. Video feeds are only accessed when they are needed- general surveillance is not implemented and most private camera locations are only accessible on alert.

The Axon Fusus RTCC Platform also strictly adheres to local, state, law enforcement, and federal policies when concerning data access and usage. Axon Fusus shows how to be mindful, without taking away from the effectiveness of the technology. The real-world application of the Axon Fusus RTCC Platform is leadership by example in the way that these platforms can be used properly.

THE AXON FUSUS RTCC PLATFORM: A LAW ENFORCEMENT GAME-CHANGER

Agencies across the country are coming forward and touting their Axon Fusus RTCC Platform and what they've been able to accomplish in their communities. As a result of this powerful tool, the relationships between jurisdictions, and the collaboration between different technologies due to Axon Fusus's technology-agnostic design are tangible assets that produce tangible outcomes. Departments now have full access to customizable, affordable systems that can handle diverse incidents throughout their cities without the chaos and scramble of trying to compile critical information when it is needed as quickly and as accurately as possible.[17]

From California to Florida, law enforcement agencies are using their Axon Fusus RTCC Platform platforms to push them into the next era of policing. Their crime-solving and emergency response capabilities have been dramatically improved and are creating a holistic public safety ecosystem where citizens are safely protected during operations, and where resources are maximized and evenly dispersed without efficacy ever being sacrificed.

Since 2020, the Fusus RTCC Platform has paved the way for a new way to consolidate data that can be useful in nearly every category of public safety. Both violent crime and property crime cases are being cleared and missing persons have been located within hours. The The Fusus RTCC Platform is a dramatic upgrade from where RTCCs used to be in the past and a huge catalyst in pushing more agencies into relying on holistic technology solutions.

Numerous departments have been able to utilize actionable, visual and data-driven evidence from their Axon Fusus RTCC Platform. For example, Statesboro police have arrested suspects involved in armed robberies, aggravated assaults, homicides, and shootings.[18] [19] [20] [21] [22] Rocky Mount police have caught suspects of breaking and entering, homicide, and armed robbers in the act.[23] [24] [25] [26] [27] Bay County deputies have facilitated the quick recovery of a woman lost in a large, rural stretch of land in their jurisdiction and have also nabbed a man responsible for a hit-and-run that killed a child using city and private cameras to pull identifiable data along with an accurate description.[28] Forsyth County deputies identified and resolved an active shooter situation.[29] Osceola County police used their Axon Fusus RTCC Platform to solve a triple homicide, catch human traffickers, arrests armed robbers, and rescue a suicidal woman all within minutes.[30] Lafayette police solved a homicide with a Wyze camera that was fed into their platform.[31] Henry County deputies have been using their Axon Fusus RTCC Platform to help find those at fault for accidents that happen within their community and have sped up that process.[32]

The Atlanta Police Department, who have one of the biggest camera networks in the country, have also seen major successes utilizing their Axon Fusus RTCC Platform, leading them to catch suspects in a grocery store shootout, locate a senior citizen lost on MARTA public transportation, caught the suspect that took the life of an infant in a shooting, arrested the suspect that took the life of a cab driver, and were able to find an abductee and arrest an abductor all in a short span.[33] [34] [35] [36]

RTCCs powered by the Axon Fusus RTCC Platform are becoming an invaluable resource to agencies. They've come a long way since 2001 in New York City, producing massive results for police departments in every corner of the country. These platforms are being acknowledged as the future of policing, not just by police, but by cities like Orlando, Atlanta and Cleveland who are using them as incredible change agents to their approach on crime mitigation. These agencies are seeing success in the implementation of holistic public safety ecosystems- it's just the beginning of a new era of policing bringing together law enforcement, private residents and businesses on a common platform to create safer communities.

NOTES

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