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Collaboration and Innovation, with Public Safety Needs
Front and Center

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Collaboration and Innovation, with Public Safety Needs Front and Center

WHEN THE PANDEMIC HIT in March of 2020, public safety agencies found themselves on high alert, responsible for protecting and reassuring the public while managing constantly changing threats and risks. For some public safety workers, switching to remote work wasn't a big issue, but for those on the front lines, agencies had to scramble to determine how they could continue

working without a degradation in service. And now that many are back to work as (almost) usual, public safety agencies are looking for ways to retain as much of the remote benefit as possible.

While these challenges were very real, they also brought with them real opportunity for improvement. "If we've learned anything in the last two years, it's that everything needs to come together into a clearer picture for everyone, and that only the right people should be able to see it," said Stephen Ellis, government solution lead at Zoom.

To make that happen, it's important to adopt technology that captures how the public safety workforce wants to work. And it has to be done by putting people at the center. "Human centricity is paramount. Bringing full operational visibility to the right people—and only the right

people—at the right time and in the right way," he said.

For example, public safety personnel need to be able to see conditions at a scene in real-time so they can make more informed, accurate decisions. Leaders also need to be able to easily incorporate other data into the decision-making process like video and audio. One way to find

the right balance is to look at military and federal law enforcement use cases along with policing across the country for insights, Ellis said.

"The idea is to be able to deliver insight to people on the ground and in command centers, and both teams need to be able to access all of the video and audio information available," Ellis said. "For example, drones today create incredible images, along with fixed and mobile cameras.

Even thermal imaging can be incorporated, along with sensors. We want to be able to

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Ellis also sees a real need for better ad hoc collaboration across the public safety spectrum, and said that flexibility is the best way to achieve it. If, for example, a school shooting takes place, public safety personnel need a way to quickly collaborate, which involves connecting in

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footage from the school's cameras and sensors. To make sense of the information, participants could quickly start a Zoom meeting, including the principal and other school officers along with police personnel. These situations require flexibility of all parties, but also of the equipment and technology involved.

As technology improves, so will the opportunities for better information and collaboration. "Think about the advent of unmanned systems of robots and of drones," Ellis said. "We want to be able to capture all of that insight in a way that helps the human operator make better decisions for civic security. The promise is there."

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