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CSNews

The CommSOFT and Language Assistant (LA) Newsletter

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LATEST NEWS

- CoLP Latest Force to Deploy LA for Custody
- LA for Custody aligns with all Custody Record Systems.
- LA Automates Detention Workflow

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City of London Latest Force to Deploy LA for Custody

City of London Police (CoLP) is the latest force to deploy LA for use in custody.

While CoLP has the smallest geographical policing area in England and Wales the force's territory has a huge daily throughput of people, with a level of non-English-speaking detainees equivalent to much larger forces.

Senior Custody Management officers at CoLP could immediately see the time, cost and accuracy benefits of using LA – around a 70% reduction in overall cost; reduction in time-to-detain of c.80%; no 'hidden' conversations between detainees and interpreters.

CoLP is also the first force to configure LA to align with the NSPIS custody record system (LA can fully align with any custody record-keeping solution).

"CoLP wanted as rapid a deployment as possible and, even including alignment with their NSPIS system, LA was fully delivered and in use within weeks, with only a few hours of staff input into the process", said Neil Coulson, CommSOFT's CEO.

The system uses 'real', certified human translations rather than 'computer translations'. These are done only once and are then used to deliver processes and conversations repeatedly (for

each individual DP), which is how much of the cost and time reduction is achieved. LA also encapsulates best-practice and legal compliance in procedures. Processes can be as simple or as complex as the situation requires.

LA's integrated work-flow creates minimal training requirements and the system has been described by front-line staff as "straightforward" to use.

LA is now being considered for further custody and non-custody scenarios traditionally involving the use of interpreters.

LA for Custody Aligns with all Custody Record Systems

Different forces use different custody record systems.

LA has been designed to take this into account and can easily and quickly be configured to align with whichever system a force currently uses (e.g. Genesis, Niche, Athena, NSPIS etc.).

Often this is achieved simply by re-ordering content (questions, statements etc.) from one of CommSOFT's existing 'off-the-shelf' configurations.

However, where a force requires additional content, this can also easily be incorporated for use in either automated or ad-hoc conversations and processes.

For example, in CoLP's NSPIS deployment mentioned above, the force required 70 new phrases to be incorporated, mainly to support their existing **risk assessment** and **welfare** procedures.

These were easily integrated into LA's conversation functionality and were then aligned so that LA asked questions in exactly the way CoLP's NSPIS system expected answers to those questions. This additional requirement was completed in under a week.

Many forces will find that one of LA's existing 'off-the-shelf' configurations will already align with their current custody record system.

Where this is not the case, the re-alignment process is quick and easy.

A further benefit of LA's designed-in ease of configuration is that conversations and processes are easy to modify – for example, when PACE requirements change or when a force replaces its custody record system with a new product.

Alignment, configuration, testing and deployment – even with a new custody record system – can be achieved within weeks, with only a few hours of staff input and minimal 'project' overhead.

“Three clicks and they’re detained – it’s that easy. LA automates everything else, and in any language”.

LA Automates Detention Workflow

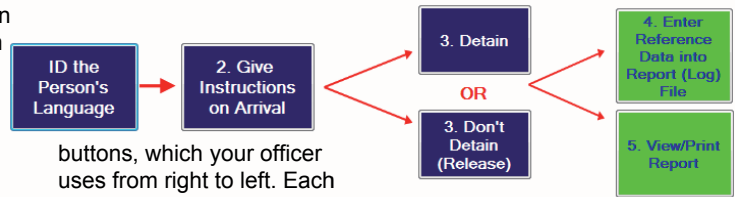
From a custody officer’s perspective, ‘processing’ a non-English-speaking DP can be fraught with hassle – from the very involvement of an interpreter (who may even have inappropriate conversations with the DP) through to the extra wasted time involved in *everything* having to be said at least twice during the process – once in each language.

LA removes these problems and automates your process so that in three mouse-clicks the detaining officer can have their DP processed – with no reduction in quality or compliance.

Really? How can this be true?

The graphic above shows LA’s workflow screen. This shows LA’s four detention workflow

Foreign Language Detention



buttons, which your officer uses from right to left. Each button initiates an automated multi-step process:

- BUTTON ACTION**
- 1. ID the person’s language:** this allows the DP to choose a language.
 - 2. Instructions:** Asks if the DP has any language problems; explains the process; asks DP to be quiet.
 - 3. DETAIN:** Asks all of the questions required to detain; makes all of the statements required

to detain; reports all answers to officer (in English) for custody record,

OR

DON’T DETAIN: Equivalent statements and questions for release.

Buttons **4** and **5** provide facilities to ‘tag’ LA’s logfile with a custody reference number or comments, and to view/print the conversation.

Each button starts an automated process/conversation with the DP relating to that aspect of the overall detention process. Your officer simply has to note answers to questions as LA asks them. All of the workflow is entirely in your control and can be specified and modified to fit your force requirements.

Opinion | “Statistical Translation” | Neil Coulson

Skype now “does translation”. Microsoft’s and many others’ software products “do translation”. So what’s the big deal with translation?

The problem is that letting computers “do” the actual translating relies on something called “*statistical machine translation*” – techie-speak for “*getting the computer to guess the most likely correct translation using statistics*”.

Can you imagine having a conversation where 15% of the words are just plain wrong? Worse than that, 15% of the words being wrong could mean that 100% of the *meaning* is wrong! That’s how accurate “*statistical machine translation*” technology currently is.

And there’s the second problem – “*meaning*”. Human translators don’t translate letters, words or sentences - they translate “*meaning*”. They ask: “*what does this mean?*” (in the language in which it’s expressed) and then “*how should I convey that*

meaning in another language?” – language is simply the expression of meaning and understanding – and, so far, computers can’t even get *close* to understanding “*meaning*”.

“*Does your partner work?*” has, for example, been translated by computers as “*does your partner function?*” – fine if your partner is a toaster! How about “*how long have you been claiming benefits?*” translated as “*how long have you been a beggar?*” That’s a little more concerning.

The more subtle and complex the meaning, the greater the impact of the computer making a mistake - though serious mistakes can also happen at the individual word-level.

Overall, computer translation may be fine for a chat with a friend or ordering coffee on holiday – but for any serious or professional use it still isn’t even close to being reliable enough. Even worse, because you don’t know the “*other*”

language you also *don’t know what mistakes are being made* and so don’t know exactly what meaning (and understanding) is being lost.

How *can* technology help, then?

Organisations very often have the same conversations *over and over again*, just with different individuals (e.g. custody detention). Using interpreters and translators means paying for this communication *every time*.

Technology can take ‘*real*’, certified human translations – *translated only once* – and deliver these *over and over again*, improving service delivery, saving time and dramatically reducing cost, which is exactly what CommSOFT’s *Language Assistant* does.

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“Technology can take real human translations and deliver these over and over again, improving service delivery, saving time and dramatically reducing cost - which is exactly what CommSOFT’s Language Assistant does”.