15-09 - Introduction to the Large Emergency Event Digital Information Repository (LEEDIR) and LASD Digital Witness Systems (Use of Crowd Sourced Media for Investigations)

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

NEWSLETTER

Field Operations Support Services, (323) 890-5411

Introduction to the Large Emergency Event Digital Information Repository (LEEDIR) and LASD Digital Witness Systems

(Use of Crowd Sourced Media for Investigations)

Background

Federal and local authorities investigating the Boston bombing in 2013 received an overwhelming amount of crowdsourced assistance from the public through its submission of digital media. "Crowdsourced Media" is defined as: photographs, video, sound files or any other form of digital media, pertaining to or taken of an event or crime, and sent to law enforcement from the public. In 2014, LASD and CitizenGlobal partnered to create a web-based system called "Large Emergency Event Digital Information Repository" (LEEDIR) for accepting this crowdsourced digital media. The LEEDIR program (or system) was developed to fulfill the technological requirements needed for receiving, storing and managing the large quantities of digital media associated with large scale criminal investigations or natural disasters. LEEDIR is provided free of charge to law enforcement agencies throughout the United States if the following event specific criteria are/were met:

- 5000 or more people were in attendance,
- Multiple jurisdictions or disciplines were involved, or
- Affects an area of 5 square miles or more.

CitizenGlobal, the creator of LEEDIR, provides a paid service that provides the identical system for incidents which do not meet the criteria or otherwise qualify for the free LEEDIR program. In order to differentiate

between the two systems this identical paid service is called “LASD Digital Witness”. Detective Division procured this service for LASD and is available for use in criminal investigations which might benefit from crowdsourced media submissions, but do not qualify for the free LEEDIR service. Unlike LEEDIR, LASD Digital Witness does not have set criteria for its use. The purpose of LASD’s Digital Witness is to provide an identical platform to receive, store and manage crowdsourced media for;

- Daily “general” suspicious activity and
- Information directly related to criminal investigations

The success of LEEDIR and LASD Digital Witness is strongly dependent on the public's awareness and cooperation. Investigators shall work directly with the Sheriff’s Information Bureau (SIB) while appealing to the public for its assistance through the use of press conferences, press releases and social media outlets.

The public may submit any form of digital media. If the media is linked to a specific event they may access the LEEDIR website (www.LEEDIR.com) or use the “LASD Digital Witness” link on the Sheriff’s Department’s website (www.LASD.org). They may also report generally suspicious activity through the LASD Digital Witness system.

NOTE: This is not designed to be an alternative method for reporting crime.

Both programs may also be accessed through the use of mobile apps. The LEEDIR app and the LASD Digital Witness app (separate distinct apps) are available, free of charge, for Android and Apple devices through their respective app stores (Apple App Store or Google Play Store)

Activation Procedures

The request to activate LEEDIR or the LASD’s Digital Witness program for a specific event shall only be made with the approval of the concerned Unit Commander or through his/her designee. Use of LEEDIR for events involving natural disasters should be managed or coordinated by the Emergency Operations Bureau. The protocols for using LEEDIR for natural disasters remain the same as for criminal events.

To activate LEEDIR, SIB must be notified by calling (323) 267-4800. The LEEDIR coordinator and CitizenGlobal will approve all activations of LEEDIR.

Activation of LASD Digital Witness is normally driven by a criminal investigation. Fraud and Cyber Crime Bureau's Cyber Investigation Center (CIC) must be notified in order to activate LASD Digital Witness. The CIC can be reached by calling (562) 347-2601 during normal business hours. After-hour notifications must be made to the on-call CIC supervisor, through SIB by calling (323) 267-4800. (323) 881-8100

Upon approval, a "callout" is created. A specific title is used to identify each event. LEEDIR and LASD Digital Witness have the capability of managing submissions for multiple unrelated events.

Investigative Responsibility & Resources

The investigative responsibility and management of the public's media submissions may be handled at the station level or by Detective Division, depending on the nature of the event driving the LEEDIR or LASD Digital Witness activation. Station-level resources are likely to be inadequate if the incident is the magnitude and scope of an incident such as the 2013 bombings in Boston

Investigative responsibility and management of the public's media submissions shall primarily be the responsibility of the investigative unit requesting its use. If the investigative unit's resources become overwhelmed, Fraud & Cyber Crime Bureau's Cyber Investigation Center shall be notified and may provide additional assistance and equipment. The CIC's Cyber Operation Center (COC) has the necessary equipment, networking and trained personnel to assist with reviewing and managing the public's media submissions on a large scale.

Detective Division may also be contacted to assist with larger events requiring additional investigative resources.

Media/Evidence Management

General media submitted by the public will be reviewed on a daily basis (Monday through Friday) by the Fraud & Cyber Crime Bureau. A notification will be sent to the agency/station unit having jurisdiction of the incident. The notification will contain a hyperlink allowing access to the media received. The notification will be sent to the on-duty station Watch Sergeant or Watch Deputy if a response of patrol personnel is required. The notification will be sent to the unit's Detective Bureau Commander or sergeant(s) if the information is related to a crime which was already reported. The notified agency/station unit will be responsible for final review and disposition of the media.

The public's media submissions to the LEEDIR and LASD Digital Witness systems are likely to be deemed evidence. Once these submissions have been reviewed and otherwise processed, all submitted media shall be removed (downloaded) from cloud storage and placed into LASD's evidence storage system under the appropriate URN. Digital evidence shall be stored on CD or DVD-ROM. Final responsibility for managing the evidence shall remain with the handling unit.

LASD Digital Witness Activation for Investigations

LASD Digital Witness may be activated prior to an event. This enables live monitoring of social media streams which is an advanced feature of the system.

Investigators should consider the activation of LASD Digital Witness for the following incidents or events:

- Large parties or public gatherings
- Illegal activities such as street racing
- Officer involved shootings
- Newsworthy incidents
- Small scale riots
- Any situation where the public is/was likely to photograph or videotape the venue before, during or after the event.

Additional information regarding LEEDIR is also available through the Fraud and Cyber Crimes Bureau web site. Questions regarding the contents of this newsletter may be directed to Field Operations Support

Services.