



# Surveillance Impact Report

Realquest Online Services  
San Diego Police Department

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## DESCRIPTION

Realquest Online Services is a comprehensive online property and ownership research tool. Realquest Online Services allows the San Diego Police Department to address abandoned or inoperable vehicles on private property without contacting other government agencies to obtain public records. This platform provides Department members with private property owner names and mailing addresses. Department members use the Realquest Online Services information to mail correspondence to property owners to gain their voluntary compliance with civil codes.

## PURPOSE

The San Diego Police Department utilizes Realquest Online Services to address complaints made by community members regarding abandoned or inoperable vehicles stored on private property using public records and open-source information.

The technology allows Department members to efficiently conduct record checks to identify property owners through public records. This platform saves Department members valuable time by providing information that would otherwise have to be obtained through outside government agencies or City departments. This benefits community members who desire the nuisance vehicle's removal and the Department by allowing its members to complete work tasks within an acceptable time frame.

This technology enables the San Diego Police Department to identify and contact private property owners via U.S. Certified Mail to elicit their assistance in resolving civil code violations.

## LOCATION

Realquest Online Services addresses complaints made by community members in all council districts. Queried properties are based on community complaints regarding civil code violations after other direct attempts to contact the property owner have failed. Other direct attempts to contact property owners include and are not limited to knocking on the door of the structure at the location, leaving official documents at the location requesting the property owner contact the Department and speaking to neighbors.

City of San Diego crime statistics can be viewed at:

- [Crime Statistics & Crime Mapping | Police | City of San Diego Official Website.](#)

## IMPACT

The San Diego Police Department's Realquest Online Services Surveillance Use Policy safeguards civil liberties and civil rights. Realquest Online Services' uses are not based on discriminatory or viewpoint-based factors. The Department's use of surveillance technology is intended to support and benefit the communities of San Diego while minimizing and mitigating potential impacts on community members' civil rights and civil liberties. The information provided by Realquest Online Services is sourced from public records and open-source information.



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## MITIGATIONS

The collection, use, retention, or dissemination of data shall not be used to violate the Constitutional rights of any person or be used in any manner that would discriminate against any person based upon their ethnicity, race, gender, natural origin, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity.

Realquest Online Services provides efficient and time-saving access to public records and open-source information. Realquest Online Services does not utilize visual or audio recording capabilities or use facial recognition.

## DATA TYPES AND SOURCES

Realquest Online Services provides Department members with information gathered from public records and open-source information. Sources of information are:

- Multiple Listing Services (MLS)
- Google Maps
- County Tax Assessor's Office
- County Recorder's Office
- Environmental Impact Reports

## DATA SECURITY

Computers require user login authentication and are situated in secure law enforcement facilities. Only authorized employees of the San Diego Police Department working in an investigative or enforcement function shall access the data.

## FISCAL COST

The Realquest Online Services annual subscription costs \$2,327.64, including a 3% yearly increase and is funded through the Department's general fund.

## THIRD PARTY DEPENDENCE

All evidence stored within the platform is restricted and only accessible to authorized persons. Information can be accessed by the investigator and attached to civil investigations. Any information from the platform is immediately attached to a civil case.

No data will be stored on City hardware unless downloaded from the web application for use in a qualifying investigation and maintained in an active case file.

## ALTERNATIVES

Currently, no alternatives on the market have the same capabilities as this singular product.



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## TRACK RECORD

The Department has utilized Realquest Online Services to successfully contact property owners for over eight years. During that time, Department members have used Realquest Online Services approximately two times a year to help resolve complaints from community members.

Recently, the Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Unit responded to a Get It Done request regarding an abandoned Jaguar on private property in the Hillcrest neighborhood. A Police Code Compliance Officer evaluated the complaint and found the vehicle was sitting on flat tires, was covered in a layer of dirt, had spiderwebs connecting it to the ground, and its doors were unlocked. The property it was sitting on was a privately owned apartment complex. There were no tenants living in the building at that time. The car was parked so that it was completely visible to the alley.

The PCCO recognized the vehicle was a public nuisance under San Diego Municipal Code 82.31 and California Vehicle Code 22660. Subsequently, the PCCO began the abatement process by leaving a notice on the vehicle. The PCCO did not receive a response to the notice. Ten days later, the PCCO returned to the location and found no change to the vehicle's condition. The PCCO used Realquest Online Services to identify the owner of the apartment complex and obtain their mailing address. The PCCO sent a certified letter to the property owner in an effort to gain their voluntary compliance in resolving the Get It Done complaint. Eventually, the PCCO was able to talk to the responsible party and the vehicle was removed.

In another example, the Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Unit responded to a request from the City's Development Services Department. Development Services Code Compliance members were working to resolve a complaint from a community resident regarding a property with several zoning code violations in the Mira Mesa neighborhood. The property had an inoperable motorcycle and an inoperable truck stored on the property and in public view. There was no one living on the property.

The PCCO recognized the vehicle was a public nuisance under San Diego Municipal Code 82.31 and California Vehicle Code 22660. Subsequently, the PCCO began the abatement process by leaving a notice on the vehicle. The PCCO did not receive a response to the notice. The PCCO returned to the location at a later time and found no change to the vehicle's condition. The PCCO used Realquest Online Services to identify the owner of the property and obtain their mailing address. The PCCO sent a certified letter to the property owner in an effort to gain their voluntary compliance in resolving the complaint. Eventually, the PCCO was able to talk to the property owner and the vehicle was removed.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND COMMENTS

On December 7, 2023, at 1800 hours, there was a publicly held meeting in all nine council districts in the City of San Diego. The following surveillance technologies were presented by the San Diego Police Department:

1. Berla iVE
2. Cellebrite
3. CellHawk
4. CPClear
5. FaSTR



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6. Grayshift/Graykey
7. Magnet Forensics AXIOM
8. Nighthawk
9. OffenderWatch
10. RealQuest

There were two attendees in District 1. There were two attendees in District 2. There were three attendees in District 3. There were five attendees in District 4. There were zero attendees in District 5. There were zero attendees in District 6. There were two attendees in District 7. There were zero attendees in District 8. There were two attendees in District 9. There was a total of one comment and five questions out of the sixteen attendees. There were no comments submitted to the online public comment form.

Comment #1:

Comment regarding the fiscal impact and waste of City employee time for the presentations, in compliance with the ordinance.

Question #1:

Question regarding Berla. Does it require physical access to the phone to use Berla or can you access it remotely? Does law enforcement have access to the content of messages? Does the ordinance allow clandestine access to gather data and analyze it without the owner knowing?

Answer:

Physical access to the vehicle cannot be accessed remotely. No, just date and time. No, requires physical access to the vehicle. The system typically needs to be removed from the vehicle and the process takes hours. In addition, a search warrant requires the owner to be notified.

Question #2:

Question regarding Nighthawk and social media.

Answer:

The 2016 Electronic Communications Protection Act (ECPA) search warrant requires any information gathered from social media for analysis be retained until a court order for destruction, for cross-examination, prosecution, discovery, etc.

Question #3:

Questions regarding data storage and access. Who hosts/stores the data? The city or the vendor? Where are the programs hosted/stored? Locally, statewide, federally? Which personnel gets access to the sensitive data? Is there employee access training to prevent biases?



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Answer:

SDPD provides training in the handling of evidence. Evidence is downloaded and stored to retention policy dates. They can also refer to the Use Policy for further details.

Question #4:

Question regarding RealQuest. Phones connect to AppleCarPlay and AndroidAuto? Does RealQuest have access to AppleCarPlay or AndroidAuto?

Answer:

No, it is a separate system and has no access to those systems. It is devoted to real estate or real property.

Question #5:

Question regarding Nighthawk. Is Nighthawk access via a search warrant? You stated generally, but is that a requirement in this use policy?

Answer:

Access is usually through a search warrant. No knowledge of any that have been uploaded by other means. ECPA requirements are part of the review.

To maximize the reach of the materials presented at the community meetings, the Police Department created a link to the City of San Diego's technology website which provides all materials for presented technologies as well as upcoming technologies and additional materials. The materials and questions/comments section could be accessed by visiting the below web address:

[www.sandiego.gov/police/technology](http://www.sandiego.gov/police/technology). The web address was posted in conjunction with the QR code at the community meeting.

The Department also video recorded a meeting so that it could be presented to a larger group. The benefit of the video was the capability of translating the presentation into over 100 languages such as Spanish, and other languages frequently used by the communities within San Diego, to maximize penetration of the materials to affected groups. The link to the video is at: [SDPD Surveillance Technology Community Meeting 12/07/2023 \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SDPD_Surveillance_Technology_Community_Meeting_12/07/2023)