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Bomb squads, police investigators and narcotics control are just a few of the agencies using Investigator, a high-tech computer software developed in Christchurch. Now, it's stepping up to work for some of the world's biggest security agencies. **STORY SUZANNE McFADDEN**

INVESTIGATOR, A SMART Kiwi-made software programme helping police and enforcement agencies solve crime around the globe, may have a bit of an image problem.

The trouble is, three-quarters of the agencies who use it don't want people to know. "It creates a marketing dilemma when you can't tell people how great it is," says Paul Stokes, managing director of Methodware, the subsidiary of Jade Software Corporation that developed the product.

Fortunately, word of mouth between sleuths and agents across the world has helped Investigator make its mark in 29 countries, and six languages.

Designed to manage complex cases, Investigator software helps detectives link together pieces of evidence to build a wider picture in an investigation. It provides a visual illustration of links between people, places, transactions, phone calls and the like, making it easier for investigators to recognise connections.

And it means that all members of an investigation team can view all of the evidence at the touch of a button, even when they're out in the field – doing away with the old whiteboard-in-the-meeting-room scenario.

"It can't solve a crime, but it can help, because the only thing that can solve a crime is still a person," Stokes says.

But it's not just police getting the most out of Investigator. It is now used by a raft of government agencies – bomb squads in Asia, narcotics control in China, border police in Serbia, customs and sport anti-doping in Australia.

Investigator was developed for Australian Federal Police (AFP), which was searching for a case management system that would help store and track information in cases both in Australia and overseas. (The AFP focuses on combating organised crime, drug trafficking, terrorism, money laundering and major fraud.)

One of its senior detectives spent more than a year living in Christchurch, working with the Jade development team to create a database that would record, categorise

and link facts, evidence and events. "It was built by policemen," says Stokes, "not a bunch of tech guys who don't understand the problems they're trying to solve."

Investigator is designed to cope with the demands of modern policing: a murder investigation that runs for three months, for example, might collect 100,000 pieces of evidence and witness statements. "To expect 50 detectives working on the case to have read every one of those is unrealistic," says Stokes. Investigator takes all that data and creates a pictorial representation of how it links together.

"If they're out in the field, they can call it up on their PDA or laptop, and it helps them to drive the conversations they have with people in the investigation as well. When we tell a detective – whose biggest pain point is constantly filling in paperwork – that we can remove a lot of that, they get excited."

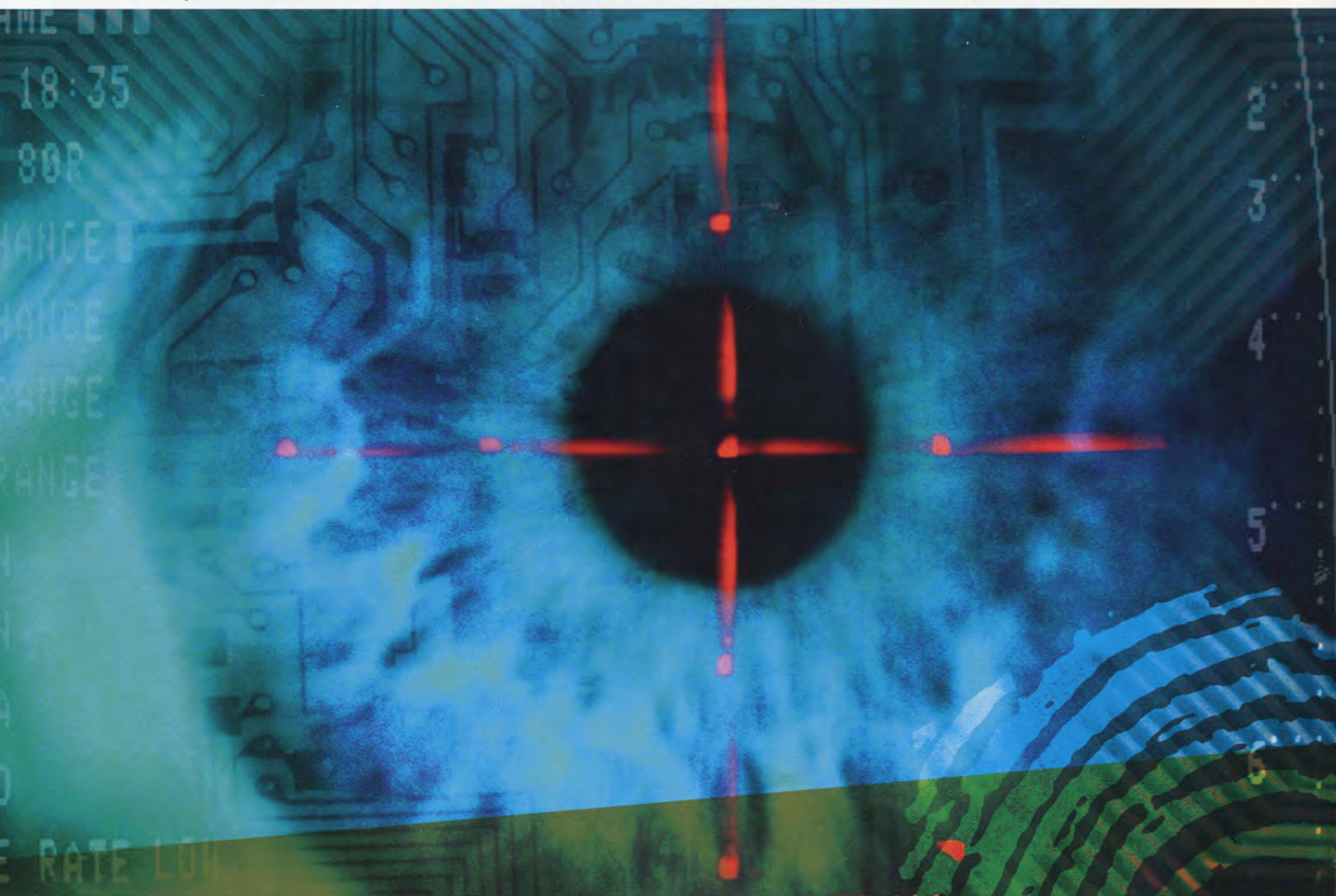
Over the past three years, the AFP has continued to help Jade develop Investigator, and has recommended it to other agencies around the world. "A lot of the success we've had so far has been based on referrals from investigators in Australasia working on cases with people in Europe," Stokes says. "The AFP have a gifting programme, so if they're working on drug trafficking, they may gift it to a drug squad from another country where they think the drugs are coming from."

"Increasingly it's being used in the more covert areas of law enforcement – things agencies can't talk about. That's especially the case in Europe."

Investigator is already the market leader in Asia-



This page: New Zealand is the perfect place to develop high-tech security products like Investigator, say Jade Software's Paul Stokes (top) and Craig Richardson.



“We’re working in **highly secure** investigations and intelligence, and we think it’s somewhere **New Zealand** can play very well.”

Pacific, but is now moving further abroad – Jade has an office in London.

David Johnston, a former Police Commander for Homicide and Serious Crime in London who led the initial investigation into the July 7 bombings, is part of the Investigator advisory team.

In New Zealand, the police are using Investigator for the Pacific Prevention of Domestic Violence programme, and Jade is in discussions with other government departments about developing a software system refined for their needs.

It’s already obvious the New Zealand government highly rates the software system, with a recent funding boost from TechNZ, the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology’s business assistance programme. The funding has gone towards further developing the product to make sure it is robust enough to handle the world’s biggest agencies.

“You can imagine that some of the agencies in the United States, where they might have 100,000 investigators, create a different demand. Those really big deals are on the horizon,” says Stokes.

Jade Software has more than 30 years’ experience and is world-renowned for its data management technologies, which help run Europe’s trains, operate the world’s ports, and enable global financial transactions.

Investigator is one of the more innovative products it has developed, says Jade managing director Craig Richardson. “The important thing is that it’s built on the principles where we think we are strong – it’s very well-designed around solving particular problems.

“We’re working in highly secure investigations and intelligence, and we think it’s somewhere New Zealand can play very well. We’re trusted by other nations, we are seen as being very independent, and we do a good job generating these products from very credible people.”



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