

**Table 65. General functions of computers in local police departments, by size of population served, 2003**

Population served	Percent of agencies using computers for —								
	Internet access	Records management	Crime investigations	Personnel records	Dispatch	Interagency information sharing	Fleet management	Automated booking	Resource allocation
All sizes	77%	69%	50%	45%	33%	31%	21%	20%	10%
1,000,000 or more	75%	63%	69%	69%	69%	50%	69%	63%	44%
500,000-999,999	76	73	70	70	76	51	70	38	48
250,000-499,999	78	78	78	63	78	54	54	39	42
100,000-249,999	84	84	75	62	83	57	53	41	42
50,000-99,999	90	85	71	66	85	59	41	50	33
25,000-49,999	85	83	73	59	79	51	37	43	27
10,000-24,999	83	84	66	53	66	39	30	37	17
2,500-9,999	78	76	54	51	35	35	25	19	7
Under 2,500	71	55	34	33	7	19	9	8	5

## Computers and information systems

### Computer functions

Local police departments used computers for a wide variety of functions in 2003. For example, 77% of all departments, employing 83% of all officers, used computers for Internet access (table 65). More than 3 times as many local police departments used computers for Internet access in 2003 as in 1997 (24%).

During 2003, 69% of all departments, employing 80% of all officers, used computers for records management. Half of departments used computers for crime investigations. Those using computers for crime investigations employed 71% of all officers.

Forty-five percent of departments, employing 64% of all officers, used computers to maintain personnel records.

A third of local police departments used computers to aid the dispatching of calls for service. A majority of departments serving a population of 10,000 or more had computer-aided dispatch, and 72% of all local police officers worked for such a department.

**Table 66. Analytic functions of computers in local police departments, by size of population served, 2003**

Population served	Percent of agencies using computers for —				
	Traffic stop data collection	Crime analysis	Intelligence gathering	Crime mapping	Hotspot identification
All sizes	46%	32%	28%	19%	11%
1,000,000 or more	56%	69%	50%	69%	56%
500,000-999,999	57	78	67	67	54
250,000-499,999	51	85	61	81	63
100,000-249,999	49	82	61	74	54
50,000-99,999	50	74	49	61	40
25,000-49,999	64	62	50	41	29
10,000-24,999	58	48	37	30	17
2,500-9,999	52	31	28	14	8
Under 2,500	35	16	19	9	3

Thirty-one percent of local departments, employing 53% of all officers, used computers for inter-agency information sharing.

About a fifth of local police departments used computers for fleet management (21%) or automated booking (20%), and 10% used computers for resource allocation.

In addition to these general uses of computers, many departments use computers in an analytic capacity. For example, nearly half (46%) of departments, employing 49% of officers, used computers for the collection of data on traffic stops (table 66).

Thirty-two percent of departments, employing 67% of all officers, used computers for crime analysis. This included a majority of the departments serving 25,000 or more residents.

Nearly 3 in 10 departments, employing 46% of officers, used computers for intelligence gathering in 2003. This included more than half of departments serving 25,000 or more residents.

In 2003, 19% of departments, including a majority of those serving 50,000 or more residents, used computers in conjunction with crime mapping. Departments using computers for crime mapping purposes employed 57% of all officers.

Eleven percent of departments, including more than half of those serving a population of 100,000 or more, used computers to identify crime hotspots during 2003. Departments using computers for this purpose employed 45% of all officers.

### Computerized files

In 2003 a majority of local police departments were maintaining computerized files on incident reports (83%), arrests (76%), traffic citations (70%), calls for service (68%), traffic accidents (67%), and stolen property (60%) (table 67). All of these types of information were maintained in a computerized format by a majority of the departments in each population category of 2,500 or more.

Nearly half of all departments maintained computerized files on warrants (48%), traffic stops (48%), and alarms (45%), and more than a third maintained computerized criminal history files (36%) (table 68). A majority of the departments in each population category of 10,000 or more had computerized files with these types of information.

About 3 in 10 departments maintained computerized information on use-of-force incidents (32%) and summonses (29%). A majority of the departments serving 50,000 or more residents had computerized use-of-force files, and about half of those serving 1 million or more residents had computerized summonses information.

**Table 67. Types of computerized information files maintained by more than half of local police departments, by size of population served, 2003**

Population served	Percent of agencies maintaining computerized information files on —					
	Incident reports	Arrests	Traffic citations	Calls for service	Traffic accidents	Stolen property
All sizes	83%	76%	70%	68%	67%	60%
1,000,000 or more	88%	88%	75%	81%	69%	81%
500,000-999,999	84	76	54	86	62	59
250,000-499,999	83	83	68	88	78	68
100,000-249,999	94	91	76	92	84	80
50,000-99,999	90	94	77	95	84	77
25,000-49,999	94	94	84	93	88	79
10,000-24,999	92	90	85	87	84	75
2,500-9,999	89	87	81	76	77	70
Under 2,500	72	58	53	47	49	43

Ten percent of departments maintained computer files on intelligence related to terrorism in 2003. This included about 69% of the departments serving a population of 1,000,000 or more, and 46% of those serving 500,000 to 999,999 residents.

Overall, fewer than 1 in 10 departments had computerized files on fingerprints (9%), illegal attempts to purchase firearms (5%), or biometric data for use in facial recognition (1%). However, a majority of the departments in jurisdictions with 100,000 or more residents had computerized fingerprint files.

Less than half of local police officers worked for a department with computer files on fingerprints (49%), traffic stops (49%), use-of-force incidents (45%), intelligence related to terrorism (22%), illegal attempts to purchase firearms (7%), or biometric data for facial recognition (4%). A majority of officers worked for a department that had computer files on all other types of information included in the 2003 LEMAS survey.

**Table 68. Types of computerized information files maintained by less than half of local police departments, by size of population served, 2003**

Population served	Percent of agencies maintaining computerized information files on —									
	Warrants	Traffic stops	Alarms	Criminal histories	Use-of-force incidents	Summonses	Intelligence related to terrorism	Fingerprints	Illegal attempts to purchase firearms	Biometric data for facial recognition
All sizes	48%	48%	45%	36%	32%	29%	10%	9%	5%	1%
1,000,000 or more	69%	75%	69%	69%	69%	50%	69%	69%	25%	13%
500,000-999,999	54	54	70	56	67	38	46	62	8	3
250,000-499,999	56	59	73	63	71	29	32	54	7	5
100,000-249,999	67	61	76	61	57	36	33	55	9	2
50,000-99,999	68	61	78	59	51	35	21	39	6	2
25,000-49,999	67	69	78	59	46	43	19	26	8	2
10,000-24,999	64	65	67	57	37	40	16	16	7	3
2,500-9,999	52	55	50	42	35	31	9	6	4	1
Under 2,500	34	31	25	17	22	20	4	2	4	--

--Less than 0.5%.

**Table 69. Types of infield computers or terminals used by local police departments, by size of population served, 2003**

Population served	Percent of agencies using infield computers or terminals									
	Any infield computer or terminal	Vehicle-mounted				Portable (not vehicle-mounted)				
		Any type	Laptop	Digital/data terminal	Digital/data computer	Any type	Laptop	Personal digital assistant	Digital/data terminal	Digital/data computer
All sizes	56%	44%	30%	20%	15%	38%	33%	7%	6%	5%
1,000,000 or more	100%	100%	31%	69%	31%	69%	63%	38%	31%	6%
500,000-999,999	100	95	36	33	57	68	49	30	3	11
250,000-499,999	95	85	56	24	54	63	54	24	5	10
100,000-249,999	96	88	34	26	48	60	52	21	11	10
50,000-99,999	93	87	45	34	40	68	60	18	8	9
25,000-49,999	89	83	55	42	44	66	59	20	12	13
10,000-24,999	78	64	43	32	26	54	47	12	10	9
2,500-9,999	58	43	31	22	14	40	34	7	7	4
Under 2,500	36	26	20	10	4	23	20	3	3	2

*Use of computers in the field*

A majority (56%) of local police departments used mobile computers or terminals in the field during 2003, including more than 80% of those serving 10,000 or more residents (table 69). Departments using infield computers or terminals employed 83% of all local police officers.

Forty-four percent of departments, employing 79% of all officers, used vehicle-mounted computers in 2003. This included a majority of those serving 10,000 or more residents.

Vehicle-mounted laptop computers were used by 30% of departments, employing 41% of all officers. Twenty percent of departments, employing 43% of officers, used vehicle-mounted digital/data terminals. Fifteen percent used vehicle-mounted digital/data computers.

Thirty-eight percent of departments employing 57% of all officers, used portable (not vehicle-mounted) computers in 2003. This included a majority of all departments serving 10,000 or more residents.

**Local police departments using infield computers or terminals, 1990 and 2003**

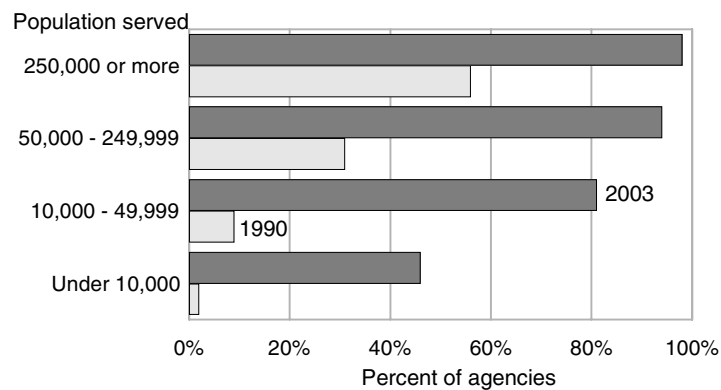


Figure 18

Portable laptops were the most common type of infield computer, used by 33% of all departments. These departments employed 50% of all officers. Less common were personal digital assistants (7%), portable digital/data terminals (6%), and portable digital/data computers (5%).

The percentage of local police departments using infield computers or terminals in 2003 (56%) was significantly larger than in 2000 (40%), and it was about 11 times greater than in 1990 (5%). Likewise, the 83% of local police officers working for a department with infield computers or terminals in 2003

was higher than in 2000 (75%), and nearly 3 times that in 1990 (30%).

From 1990 to 2003 large increases in local police use of infield computers and terminals have occurred in jurisdictions of all sizes (figure 18). During this period, infield computer use among departments serving 250,000 or more residents increased from 56% to 98%; departments serving 50,000 to 249,999 residents, from 31% to 94%; departments serving 10,000 to 49,999 residents, from 9% to 81%; and departments serving fewer than 10,000 residents, from 2% to 46%.

Thirty-three percent of local police departments used infield computers or terminals for writing field reports during 2003 (table 70). These departments employed 34% of all officers. Eighteen percent of departments used them for at least some infield communications. These departments employed 49% of all officers.

In more than a third of local police departments, at least some officers in the field could use computers to access vehicle records, driving records, and warrants during 2003 (table 71). This included a majority of the departments serving a population of 10,000 or more residents. Departments using infield computers for these purposes employed more than 70% of all officers.

In 23% of departments, employing 37% of all officers, infield computers could be used for the purpose of interagency information sharing. This included 63% of those departments serving a population of 250,000 to 499,999.

In 22% of departments, employing 43% of all officers, infield computers or terminals could be used to access criminal history information. This included a majority of the departments serving 100,000 or more residents, and more than a third of those serving 10,000 to 99,999 residents.

In 20% of departments, employing 39% of all officers, infield computers or terminals could be used to access repeat calls for service information. This included more than half of departments serving a population of 25,000 or more, and more than a quarter of those serving a population of 10,000 to 24,999.

The percentage of local police officers employed by a department providing infield computer access to information has been on the increase since 1997 when LEMAS first began tracking this capability. Departments providing patrol officers with infield computer

access to vehicle records employed 78% of all officers in 2003 compared to 67% in 2000 and 56% in 1997 (figure 19).

Other types of information and the percentage of officers employed by a department providing infield access during 1997, 2000, and 2003 are as follows: driving records — 51% in 1997, 58% in 2000, and 71% in 2003; criminal history records — 25% in 1997, 29% in 2000, and 39% in 2003; calls for service records — 23% in 1997, 37% in 2000, and 39% in 2003.

**Table 70. Use of infield computers for reports and communications by local police departments, by size of population served, 2003**

Population served	Percent of agencies using infield computers for —	
	Field reports	Communications
All sizes	33%	18%
1,000,000 or more	6%	63%
500,000-999,999	35	48
250,000-499,999	44	63
100,000-249,999	42	59
50,000-99,999	43	58
25,000-49,999	50	49
10,000-24,999	43	29
2,500-9,999	31	18
Under 2,500	29	4

**Table 71. Computerized information accessible to infield officers of local police departments, by size of population served, 2003**

Population served	Types of information accessible in the field						
	Vehicle records	Driving records	Warrants	Protection orders	Interagency information system	Criminal history records	Calls for service history
All sizes	38%	35%	35%	30%	23%	22%	20%
1,000,000 or more	100%	100%	100%	81%	44%	75%	50%
500,000-999,999	97	81	95	76	49	54	46
250,000-499,999	95	88	90	66	63	56	68
100,000-249,999	87	78	83	61	46	50	59
50,000-99,999	82	74	75	59	44	39	54
25,000-49,999	77	69	72	61	54	40	49
10,000-24,999	57	54	51	41	35	36	27
2,500-9,999	37	33	33	31	22	20	18
Under 2,500	20	20	18	16	13	13	9

**Local police officers with infield computer access to information, 1997-2003**

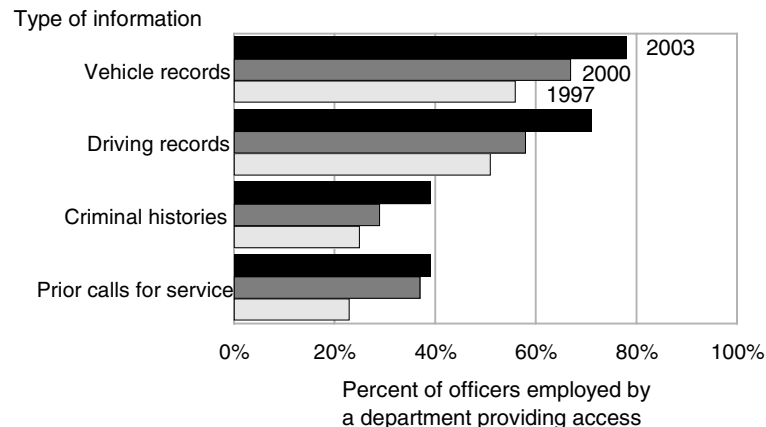


Figure 19