

MARKET INSIGHT REPORT

Document and Track Seized Money More Efficiently

According to the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), a total of 32,176 domestic drug arrests were made in 2011. One of the challenges faced by narcotics officers is the vast amount of time and effort required to accurately track and trace incoming and outgoing cash seized in busts or used in sting operations. In most agencies this task is performed manually, often by the narcotics officers themselves, because they are responsible for maintaining a secure chain of custody.

Narcotics officers requiring cash to complete a drug-related transaction typically withdraw the needed amount from the agency's secure vault or safe room. Similarly, when cash is confiscated as a result of a drug arrest or ongoing investigation, it is returned as evidence to the agency having jurisdiction. This is not, however, as simple or easy as it sounds.

Faster and more accurate processing of buy and seized money eliminates manual processes, reduces labor costs, and helps keep officers out in the field.

Tracking buy money is a tedious process

Buy money tracking and tracing presents its own challenges. Every withdrawal and deposit of currency must be accurately inventoried and accounted for. It must be counted, sorted, scanned or photocopied, and the serial numbers recorded in text—bill by bill—then wrapped and returned to the safe or evidence room. With amounts often staggeringly large, this is an immensely time-consuming and labor-intensive activity and one highly prone to human error. Just imagine the time involved to record the serial numbers of thousands of bills.

To capture serial numbers, many agencies record these numbers either by hand or with a photocopy machine. This adds a considerable amount of time and labor to the process. In preparation to simply count the seizure, they must first hand sort the currency by denomination and then start the tedious counting process. In many instances, if three individuals are counting the same seized currency, they may arrive at three different totals, requiring them to recount the seizure again. If they want to check the seized currency for buy money, this is also a time intensive, manual and painstaking comparison process.

Inefficiencies cost money

Every law enforcement officer and agency recognizes what this kind of inefficiency means in terms of manpower, asset allocation, and overall productivity. They know all too well that the more time taken up by procedural and administrative tasks, no matter how necessary, the fewer the resources available to put 'feet on the street' to combat crime. And, with resources already being squeezed due to budget restraints, the situation is unlikely to improve. Unless there is a practical and innovative solution—and now there is.

Selecting the right technology

Frustrated with the inefficiencies of manual processing and documentation, many forward-thinking law enforcement agencies are implementing automated solutions in the form of compact, portable currency scanners. These scanners are also used in banks, casinos and retail establishments to improve accuracy, speed and productivity, and they are readily available in today's marketplace. One prime example is the Cummins Allison JetScan iFX® currency scanner.



This dependable and extremely accurate device features digital imaging technology that simultaneously scans the front and back of each bill, captures and stores serial numbers, scans for counterfeits and counts mixed bills, all at a speed of 1200 bills per minute. The JetScan iFX is available with various levels of counterfeit detection depending on your agency's requirements. The machine is so compact and portable, it can be moved around an office or carried on-scene. Image and document management software is available for agencies that wish to add the serial numbers into a centralized database to easily compare serial numbers of seized currency with buy money.

Real-world results: time and cost savings, more feet on the street

One case in point that demonstrates how automated cash processing improves accuracy, efficiency and productivity is the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office in Phoenix, Arizona.

Before automating, the County's evidentiary and security protocol required that seized cash be counted multiple times by multiple individuals before being stored in the property and evidence warehouse awaiting the trial outcome. As Lt. Brian Stutsman, of the Special Investigations Division noted: "When dealing with significant cash seizures, the amount of time involved was incredible." Since adopting the CA JetScan

iFX solution, the time and labor savings have made a valuable contribution to the agency's efficiency. "Our County Attorney now has an additional level and form of evidentiary value," says Stutsman. An added bonus is that, once fully processed, the seized cash can be deposited into a bank account where it can earn interest for the agency.

Another example is the Pennsylvania Attorney General Bureau of Narcotics Investigation, a statewide agency with 300 agents working to shut down, arrest and prosecute illegal drug trafficking organizations.



Tasked with finding a better solution to manual cash processing, the Bureau's IT department evaluated products and recommended the JetScan iFX machine. Today, nine of the machines are used throughout the state. According to the agency's Northeast Regional Director, John Soprano, human error has been eliminated, accuracy has improved significantly, and a task that once took hours to perform can now be done in a matter of minutes. "It gives us more time to spend going after the drug dealers rather than sitting in the office counting and photocopying money," says Soprano. In addition, all nine machines are connected to the Bureau's Case Expense Tracking System, a web-based database tool that allows agents to instantly compare buy money with seized money statewide.

Affordable options for cash strapped agencies

Many will ask: How can we afford to implement this technology when our budgets are already stretched to the limit? The good news is that there are affordable solutions available from industry leading manufacturers. The desktop models referenced here, for example, are relatively inexpensive, costing less than many two-way radios. Some agencies have used seized cash proceeds (R.I.C.O. Funds) to finance their investment, while others may have applied for Byrne Grant funds. These grants are awarded by the Department of Justice to support state and local government in their efforts to prevent and control crime.

The time has come for law enforcement agencies of every size to consider adopting a more automated approach to the cash handling challenge. With municipal, county and state budgets becoming increasingly constrained, it has never been more essential to free up officers, deputies and agents from administrative tasks and enable them to apply their time and talents to ensuring public safety and pursuing evildoers.

To learn more about how our solutions can help your agency document and track seized money more efficiently, visit cumminsallison.com/ifx



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Cummins Allison sets the standard for accuracy and dependability.

Cummins Allison is a global leader in developing solutions that quickly and efficiently count, sort and authenticate currency, checks and coin. With a 125-year heritage of leadership in technology and product innovation, Cummins Allison serves the majority of financial institutions worldwide, as well as leading organizations in retail, gaming, law enforcement and government. Ninety-seven percent of our customers recommend our products and services.

CA holds more than 350 U.S. patents and invests double the industry average in R&D. Our world-class sales and service network includes hundreds of local representatives in more than 50 offices in North America, 4 wholly-owned subsidiaries in Europe and is represented in more than 70 countries around the world.