



Online portal saves time for victims of crime

A CASE STUDY



The issue

Reporting high volume, lower complexity crimes can be a time-consuming process for both customers and the Police. There were only two ways to make these reports - over the phone on 131 444 or in person with a police officer.

What the government did

In June 2016 the **NSW Police Force Community Portal** was launched. This online platform is for people to lodge crime reports where there's no emergency or need for an immediate investigation by a police officer. This includes lost property, intentional damage or graffiti and theft.

In April 2020, the Police expanded the service to include 'fail to pay', which allows retailers and other business owners to report when people do not pay for goods or services.

What was achieved

By March 2020 the portal has:



More than **320,000 registered users**



Received more than **75,000 non-emergency reports**



Made it easier for customers to report crimes



Reduced the time for customers to report a crime **by at least 70%** across all crime types in the portal



Made it easier to track a report's status



Freed up frontline police resources and other support channels so police officers can better respond to emergencies.



Who is the customer?

Any person, whether a citizen or a visitor to NSW, who has been the victim of, or needs to report, a crime to the NSW Police Force.

This portal is not for cases where there has been violence or a confrontation with an offender; if an offender is still in the vicinity; or other situations that are best served by police officers who'll need to attend the scene.

What customers are saying

“It was just really easy, I didn’t have to go to the police station. It was very seamless.”

“I needed an incident number to give to my supplier to replace tools and I was able to do that straight away with the police report and number.”

“It’s easy to use and I was pleasantly surprised how quickly someone followed up.”

1 Take a strategic approach to break down the problem



Insight

When building a portal, consider starting with processes that have the highest need but lowest complexity.

Portals are designed to provide a central point for customers to find information or services. But when you have multiple types of customers requiring different processes, developing a solution can take time.

Police research of their crime report statistics identified lost property, then theft and intentional damage as the most common customer problems. These issues were not complex in the overall picture of policing, but consumed large amounts of police time.

The Police targeted these high volume, low complexity problems first, which enabled:

- ✓ faster and easier rollout compared to an entire build for all possible report types
- ✓ faster access for large customer volumes
- ✓ the capability to introduce more complex processes down the track.

This is similar to an 'effort vs impact' matrix. **This project management strategy prioritises decisions based on the level of effort required and the potential impact or benefits an option will have.** Teams first look for solutions that are low effort and will likely have a high impact.

	LOW EFFORT	HIGH EFFORT
HIGH IMPACT	GREAT Execute it right away	GOOD Can you reach the same impact with less effort?
LOW IMPACT	FUTURE PRIORITY Can you increase the impact?	GOOD Focus on the other ideas.

Developing the solution that was easiest, but would also impact the most customers, sits in the 'Great' or 'High impact/low effort' box. Identifying these types of solutions can save time and effort in your product build.

Tip: Partner with experienced agencies to develop your system. Police engaged with Service NSW, to help them procure the right vendor and integrate their portal with MyServiceNSW accounts.

2 Providing quality customer service to different types of customers



Insight

Tip Use customer insights to guide your solution. Police research in 2013 gained **2000 responses** from a public survey via the NSW Government's 'Have Your Say' website. **More than 80% of respondents** favoured being able to report less serious crimes online, including via smartphone.

Customers who are threatened or experience violent crime need a higher level of care from police. However, many customers of less serious crime may prefer a quick and streamlined process and do not need the same level of care and service.

In response to this feedback, police prioritised a **convenient, easy and secure method** of reporting a crime. The portal meets customers' needs by enabling them to provide information at their own pace, without needing to attend a police station.

The NSW Government's **6 customer commitments** can help explain what an easy-to-use portal needs to include:



Easy to engage

A simple layout using images and plain English text.

A triage process to help customers understand their situation.

The ability to upload multimedia, such as photos for evidence, via phone, tablet or computer.

A messaging inbox to communicate directly with Police working on that case.



Explain what to expect

Clear information about what information customers need at each step of the report.

Email and SMS notifications about the status of reports.



Respect my time

Let users save a partially completed report and return to it later. For example, this is useful when users need to find serial numbers of property that has been stolen or when users are completing a report while in transit.

Provide customers with a reference number (they can use the Community Portal number with insurance claims).



Act with empathy

Police officers can engage directly with customers to help them understand the process.

Depending on their circumstances, customers can still report crimes in person, at a station or via telephone.



Resolve the situation

The portal means that customers can resolve their issues sooner; especially if they need a police report for their insurer.

Customers are informed of updates in cases as they happen.

Police can solve crimes faster, investigate leads and resolve reports more effectively than previous handwritten reports.



Engage the community

Public support from surveys informed the decision to build a portal.

Regional customers often prefer to engage in person, though police stations tend to be a considerable distance. These customers can lodge the report online to start the process, and later visit the station to receive updates in person, if they prefer.

3 Improve your offering to customers



The first delivery of the Community Portal provided functional, but not overly simple, interface.

Police released **phase two** of the portal in **April 2020**. The homepage has been completely re-designed, leveraging modern technology and NSW Government digital design insights. This has made the interface easier to understand and use, and creates a more positive customer experience at an often difficult time.

Phase 2



Makes it easier to get started

- Previously an account was required before customers made their first report. Now only a valid email address, date of birth and name is needed.



Provides more tailored information

- The on-boarding process uses clear, precise language on what to report, how to report and what to expect through the process.
- Step by step guides include screenshots and examples to make reporting easier and faster.
- More detailed, tailored notifications inform customers on how to manage their report, such as how to provide more information.



Provides a layout consistent with other NSW Government websites

- A tiled layout replaces old icons. Using images and simple explanations of crime types helps direct customers to the most appropriate report type.
- A report retrieval tool on the homepage allows customers to quickly access a previously saved/submitted report.
- An integrated help centre. This keeps customers within the portal website rather than re-directing them to another Police site.

To learn more contact:

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