As adoption of body cameras increases, many police departments are overwhelmed with how, when and where to store video. Adding to the challenge are various storage myths, which can cause agency leaders to believe they will be unable to afford the storage needed to support body cameras or that they will need to hire additional staff to manage the solution. In this Q&A, Ted Hayduk, a global consulting solution architect specializing in video surveillance, explains why body camera video storage is simpler than you may think.

TED HAYDUK, *Global Consulting Solution Architect, NetApp*

DEBUNKING THE MYTHS OF BODY CAMERA VIDEO STORAGE

Q: What are some common assumptions about body camera storage?

A: There are myths that body camera storage is complicated because: 1) cameras generate a significant amount of data; 2) you have to hire people who specialize in how to handle video data and; 3) it's a large project that touches all aspects of management. However, video is just another type of information that needs to be managed, similar to what agencies are already handling in paper, audio or still-picture form. Body camera information can flow through a department's standard policies and procedures with some minor changes. There are techniques and technologies that allow departments to easily control the video throughout its life cycle.

Q: What are some perceived challenges around body camera implementations?

A: There's a perception that when you take pictures, video or audio, you have to use the best technology available. Body cameras are intended to capture the interaction between citizens and officers — agencies don't need the best quality video to achieve this. A high-definition camera allows you to see images that are farther away, but the body camera range should be 10 feet and inward. The Department of Justice requires video footage used to identify an individual to have an image density of just 40 pixels per each foot of distance. By using the right tool for the right job, agencies can reduce their file size by four to five times.

Q: What are some best practices for capturing, handling and storing body camera video?

A: Agencies need to consider:

- **What is the mission of our body camera program?** This will help them determine what officers should be capturing and how cameras should be used.
- **How will cameras be assigned?** It's best to assign each officer a camera to create a sense of ownership and simplify the chain of evidence.
- **How much data will our cameras generate?** Officers should only use the camera while they are interacting with citizens. On average, between 1.75 and 3 hours of footage are captured per shift — that's about 1 GB or less per hour.
- **What are our data storage policies?** There are 29 states that have legislation on how body camera video should be stored and used, which can vary between 30 days and 1 year.

Q: What criteria should agency leaders use when selecting a data storage provider?

A: The cloud is one option and it's the preferred method for several vendors. However, the agency needs to understand what that means in terms of risk. Who encrypts the data? Who stores and processes it? It's the agency's responsibility to certify that CJIS-compliant vendors are actually following rules and procedures. Additionally, some agencies that sign up for long-term agreements find there are terms and conditions they didn't fully understand. Even if the cloud looks easy and affordable, consider the potential risks and look at your fixed costs over a five-year period. There are several environments that allow agencies to handle all of the data on premises. With an on-premises solution, agencies can determine who and what data is added or removed. Then, they can leverage the cloud to make safety copies because the encryption of that data is rendered by the in-house software before it goes to the cloud. In my experience, you can save 40 to 60 percent by going with an on-premises solution. It's important that police departments look at all available options, understand the issues about how body camera data is captured, and consider how to archive and manage it over time.