

# CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

## BlackBerries may join cops on patrol Wouldn't need to be in cars to tap police database

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BY **FRAN SPIELMAN** City Hall Reporter

BlackBerries, which have become as popular and addicting as cell phones in the business world, may someday be in the hands of all 13,500 Chicago Police officers.

The Chicago Police Department already has jumped headfirst into the technology age -- with everything from surveillance cameras and high-speed license plate readers to a prototype squad car of the future and the crime data clearinghouse known as I-CLEAR.

But Mayor Daley has been pressing police brass to put technology to use for the cop on the beat.

Now, the Police Department is field-testing 17 BlackBerries with officers assigned to bike and Segway patrols, narcotics and Area One gun teams. At least 100 more are expected to be ordered at the end of this month and distributed to specialized units, including organized-crime squads.

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**Chicago police officer Juan Salazar demonstrates the use of his Blackberry device while on patrol Friday.**

*(John J. Kim/Sun-Times)*

The goal is to get the time-saving devices into the hands of every officer on the street.

"Independent of the vehicle, without having to go back and access the computer in the car, officers on foot or conducting missions have access to a huge, rich database of information on wanted people, wanted vehicles, gang offenders, crime patterns and previous police stops," said Jonathon Lewin, commander of the Police Department's Information Technology Section. "It'll result in more crimes being solved and smarter policing."

### 'Not a big leap' for new cops

Police Supt. Phil Cline said his command staff has been carrying BlackBerries for the last three years.

At roughly \$200 per unit, it would cost \$2.7 million to buy BlackBerries for all Chicago officers.

"Especially officers on bikes and on foot are constantly running license plates, running [names of] people they think may be wanted. It's just giving them the same tools that the squad car has. It just makes you that much more productive," Cline said.

The name of the vendor that created the software and interfaces for the Police Department is Info-Cop. That may someday be what Chicagoans call officers with BlackBerries, some of whom don't even need the two hours of training they receive, according to Cline.

"The guys from my school had to learn to go from a manual typewriter to a computer," said the superintendent of a department that was once one of the nation's oldest and now is getting younger every year. "But the officers coming on now grew up with computers. So it's not a big leap for them at all."