

Digital fingerprinting cleans up booking process

No more black ink and Polaroid photos. Suspects arrested in Wheaton now are processed digitally for better identification.

Where officers once rolled a suspect's inked fingers over a paper card and then mailed that card to the Illinois Bureau of Identification, now the officer applies a suspect's fingers and palm to a glass screen, and the scanned images are sent immediately to the state and FBI. The LiveScan system also allows for inclusion of digital mug shots as well as images of scars and tattoos.

Since fingerprints are the key to state and federal identification systems, obtaining quality fingerprints is paramount to solving and prosecuting crimes. A person's criminal history record is tied to his/her fingerprints. Ink prints may be smudged or of poor quality and are more difficult and time-consuming to process.

Wheaton's new computerized LiveScan system, primarily paid for with a

\$50,000 grant from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, also allows officers to submit fingerprints

and receive information back immediately to properly identify a suspect.

"The digital images not only save our officers time during the booking process," says

Wheaton Police Services Manager Janet Barbeau, "they provide a reliable record for future investigations and prosecutions."

