

## Sex attacker convicted using new facial composite technology, EvoFIT



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*\* ABM announces successful trial of new system at Lancashire Police \**

**Nottingham, 13 June 2008** - Criminal intelligence technology provider, ABM, today announced that its ground breaking technology EvoFIT has been used to help convict Ross Gleave, 18, who received a seven year sentence for the attempted rape of a schoolgirl in Blackpool. Lancashire Constabulary is the first UK police force to successfully trial the new facial composite system, which enabled identification of the offender within hours of a computer generated image being circulated.

Using EvoFIT, the victim was able to help create a very good likeness of the assailant's face, which was then used to show to members of the public. Being a first time offender the perpetrator was unknown to the police and therefore EvoFIT was instrumental in identifying him. DCI Andy Webster at Lancashire Police said: "EvoFIT provided a crucial breakthrough in this investigation by providing that all-important name."

Widely considered as the third generation facial composite system, EvoFIT enables victims and witnesses to construct a likeness of a criminal's face. Traditionally, the construction of facial composites in law enforcement has been based on the piecing together of individual facial features – eyes, nose, mouth, etc – but EvoFIT is based on the 'whole face perception principle'. Simply, witnesses select from a set of complete faces, rather than individual facial features, to produce a superior result.

Dr Charlie Frowd at the University of Central Lancashire, who developed the system, explains: "The main benefit about EvoFIT is the way in which composites are constructed. Victims do not have to describe or articulate facial features; instead they just need to be able to recognise, or have a sense that they would recognise, the face of the criminal. From here they are shown sets of whole faces and indicate which pictures look like the person in question.

"EvoFIT allows composites to be made even when a witness cannot describe a face in detail, a prerequisite for the existing systems. In fact, it is extremely difficult to describe someone, but far easier to give a judgement on the likeness of a face when shown a picture. This may have been particularly beneficial in the Blackpool case as the victim was just 11 years old. The system also has the ability to change age, weight and other holistic properties of a face to further improve the likeness. The process is superior and more accurate than existing facial composition techniques and does appear to take less time."

The technology has been 10 years in development and has emerged from a collaboration between ABM and three Universities – Stirling, Edinburgh and Central Lancashire. Peter Hancock, who led the development at Stirling, noted that "the system is based on research into how the human mind processes information. EvoFIT

breeds the selected faces together, combining characteristics and a composite is 'evolved' over time. In some cases, EvoFIT has produced an image so realistic that it has been confused for a photograph of the person."

ABM's Managing Director, Alastair Luff, said: "EvoFIT is the product of a long journey of bringing together research and technology to produce the next generation of facial composite tools. EvoFIT is the direct result of research through the government's DTI/EPSRC/LINK research programme and a long term collaboration between ABM, Dr Charlie Frowd and the team at Stirling and Edinburgh. We have been delighted with the results that have been produced from the laboratory over the last few years and, importantly, from the police trial of the system in Lancashire. Lancashire police's recent successes with the product have demonstrated that real and significant results can be achieved with EvoFIT. We are now looking forward to other members of the Police Service utilising this powerful tool."

Dr Frowd concludes: "After ten years of research and development work, including dozens of different research experiments, EvoFIT is able to produce highly recognisable images. Lancashire Police are seeing considerable results with its success rates in identifying serious offenders increased by up to 300%. The conviction of a sex attacker in this particular case illustrates EvoFIT's ability to successfully assist the police with their criminal investigations. Several other suspects are awaiting trial also having been identified using this technology"

For more information on ABM's solutions, please visit [www.abm-uk.com](http://www.abm-uk.com)

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## Notes to Editors

### About ABM

ABM is a leading supplier of criminal intelligence IT, developing best of breed solutions in partnership with customers to meet the unique requirements of the law enforcement market. ABM's intelligence-led applications are national standard compliant and work from a single data source enabling customers to gain substantial time saving and financial benefits. Its 180 law enforcement customers worldwide include internationally renowned organisations such as the Metropolitan Police Service, New York Police Department (NYPD) and Western Australia Police. For more information, visit ABM at <http://www.abm-uk.com>

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