

California startup unveils gun technology for cops

October 24 2014, by Haven Daley



In this photo taken Wednesday, Oct. 22, 2014, Jim Schaff, vice president of marketing with Yardarm, demonstrates how a sensor fits into an Airsoft replica of a Glock 17 handgun in San Francisco. A California-based startup has designed new law enforcement technology that aims to automatically alert dispatch when an officer's gun is unholstered and fired. Yardarm can also track where an officer's gun is located and in which direction it's fired. (AP Photo/Eric Risberg)

A Silicon Valley startup has developed technology to let dispatchers know when a police officer's weapon has been fired.

The product by Yardarm Technologies would notify dispatchers in real time when an officer's gun is taken out of its holster and when it's fired. It can also track where the gun is located and in what direction it was fired.

Santa Cruz County Sheriff Phil Wowak, whose agency is among two testing the technology, said it will allow the sheriff's office to see whether deputies are in trouble and unable to ask for assistance.

"That's the worst nightmare for any police officer in the field," he said.

The system will not include a remote disabling mechanism. Yardarm demonstrated a system last year, but it has since abandoned the effort, according to Jim Schaff, marketing vice president for the Capitola, California-based company.

Schaff would not say exactly why the company gave up on remotely disabling guns. Gun rights advocates have raised serious concerns that so-called smart gun technology could be used to limit their access to weapons.

The developers insist their latest technology is "police gunfire tracking technology."

Sam Paredes, executive director of Gun Owners of California, said his organization isn't opposed to the particular technology Yardarm is developing and other smart-gun technology.

"If law enforcement wants to adopt this technology, that's great," Paredes said. "Just don't make every gun owner adopt the technology."

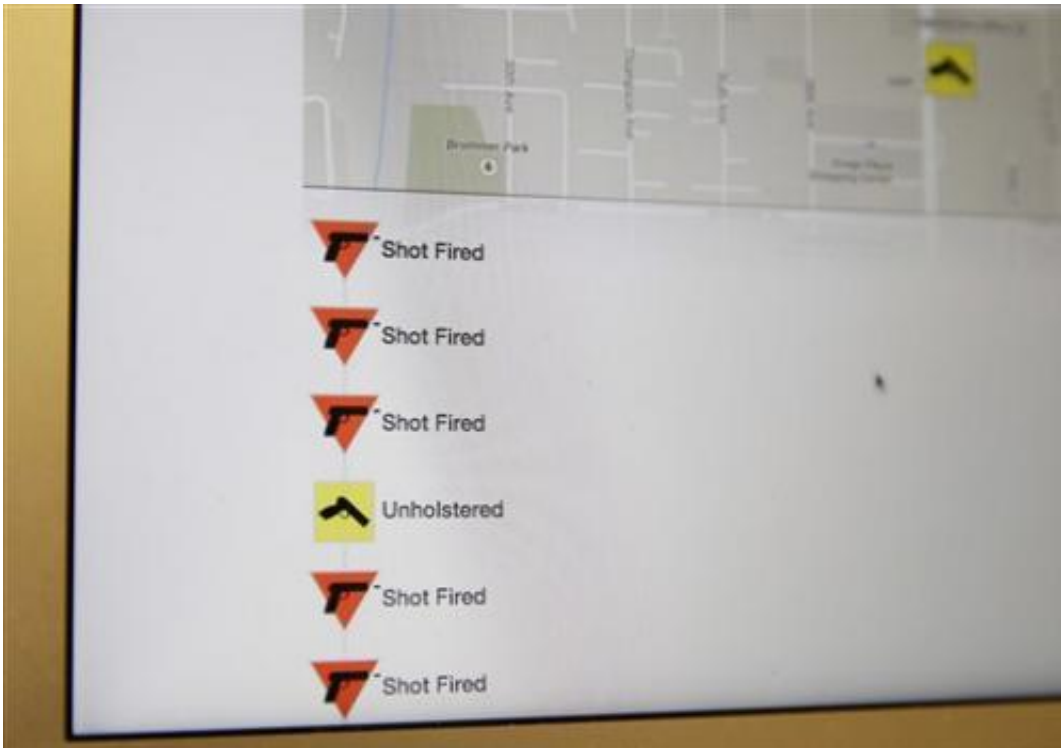


In this photo taken Wednesday, Oct. 22, 2014, Jim Schaff, vice president of marketing with Yardarm, holds a sensor that fits into an Airsoft replica of a Glock 17 handgun in San Francisco. A California-based startup has designed new law enforcement technology that aims to automatically alert dispatch when an officer's gun is unholstered and fired. Yardarm can also track where an officer's gun is located and in which direction it's fired. (AP Photo/Eric Risberg)

Smart gun technology has been around for decades, but technological advances and recent large shootings have prompted more than a dozen smart gun companies to begin developing weapons. Some began selling in gun shops this year, but analysts say controversy surrounding the technology could limit sales.

The technology that tracks an officer's gun relies on the Internet and requires a small device that can fit in the handle of most police handguns. It connects to the officer's smart phone using Bluetooth.

Yardarm hopes it can develop the technology nationwide and charge departments for it next year. Schaff said the company has not yet determined a price.



In this photo taken Wednesday, Oct. 22, 2014, a computer screen displays Yardarm's publishing of real time gun events on Google maps in San Francisco. A California-based startup has designed new law enforcement technology that aims to automatically alert dispatch when an officer's gun is unholstered and fired. Yardarm can also track where an officer's gun is located and in which direction it's fired. (AP Photo/Eric Risberg)

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