



E-Community Oriented Policing Services (E-Cops)

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ABSTRACT

The proposed system applies to all Police stations across the country and specifically looks into the subject of Crime Records Management. It is well understood that Crime Prevention, Detection and Conviction of criminals depend on a highly responsive backbone of Information Management. The efficiency of the police function and the effectiveness with which it tackles crime depend on what quality of information it can derive from its existing records and how fast it can have access to it. It is proposed to centralize Information Management in Crime for the purposes of fast and efficient sharing of critical information across all Police Stations across the territory. Initially, the system will be implemented across Cities and Towns and later on, be interlinked so that a Police detective can access information across all records in the state thus helping speedy and successful completion to cases. The System would also be used to generate information for pro-active and preventive measures for fighting crime. The project has been planned to be having the view of distributed architecture, with centralized storage of the database. The application for the storage of the data has been planned. Using the constructs of SQL server and all the user interfaces have been designed using the DOT Net technologies. The standards of security and data protective mechanism have been given a big choice for proper usage. The application takes care of different modules and their associated reports, which are produced as per the applicable strategies and standards that are put forwarded by the administrative staff.

KEYWORDS : Crime reporting, incident-based, victims, criminals

INTRODUCTION

E-policing is the transaction of services and information between the police and citizens via the internet. Use of the Internet to report calls for service is an emerging trend. How are police responding to such changes, given our existing challenges with information technology and electronic communications for operations and management. It focuses exclusively on e-policing issues, challenges, processes and impact on users. It discusses the state of e-policing knowledge, and reports a survey of police web sites and community public consultations. It reviews field studies that reveal the challenges, benefits, obstacles and impact of using online crime reporting. Finally, the report examines how the police can take advantage of established best practices in e-policing, taking into consideration related direct and indirect costs, expected results and, above all, the associated risks (human, technological, internal politics, etc.) However, they must do so within their organizational context and without jeopardizing security, effectiveness or efficiency. This research project examines one particular police use of IT called e-policing.

We examined its impact on police, citizens and policing activities.

We asked how citizens saw e-policing and how they suggested it might be implemented.

The research project was done in four steps:

1. A literature review of e-policing (definition and concepts) in Canada and abroad
2. A survey of police service web sites in Canada, the United States and Europe
3. A public consultation with citizens and police officers in different regions
4. Field work with three different police services that provide online crime reporting to their communities

METHODOLOGY

The technologies used in the following systems have

Computer Bulletin Board

The Searcy Police Departments in Arkansas was the first police department to post a computer bulletin board system as an information gateway to the public. As early as 1995, citizens were able to post questions, leave messages with individual officers or the chief, and even file complaints. The system provides up-to-date information to citizens on new laws, general safety tips and reminders of basic traffic regulations.

E-Lert

E-Lert is an electronic public alert system operated by the Seminole County Sheriff's Office in Florida. Through E-Lert, information is sent to subscribers about sex offenders, sexual predators or registered felons who have moved into their neighborhood. It also offers crime alerts about travelling criminals, people with active warrants or others the public should be aware of. The subscriber and information databases store information by ZIP code

First Coast Fugitives

The State of Florida and local law enforcement agencies have formed a partnership with a newspaper to catch fugitives. Their web site features fugitives and includes a direct contact number and e-mail address for the detective and agency submitting the information.

DATA ANALYSIS

BENEFITS:

- The process is quick and easy; police no longer have to rely on administrators' interpretation of events.
- Reporting incidents does not require face-to-face contact with the police
- Better access for those in rural or remote areas
- Ability to ask questions and get answers when convenient
- Ability to exit the process at any time without difficulty or repercussions
- Online forms assure that identical-screening questions are asked
- Ability to schedule work more evenly through the day
- Ability to deliver 24/7 police services conveniently and cost effectively without a physical presence – possibly establishing a virtual police station in crime spots and remote areas
- Improved linkages with local organizations and partners

ISSUES RELATED

- Users and decision makers must be involved in development and planning this still innovative approach to police-public communications.
- Other issues to be addressed before adopting online crime reporting include:
 - Ease of access to forms developed for the police
 - Types of reportable crimes and incidents
 - Penalties for false reports
 - Security of the reporting system

PROBLEMS

- Crimes reported are not from the jurisdiction
- Police may have to rewrite reports coming from the web
- False reporting

CHALLENGES

- To collect and store data on minor crimes that previously were unreported and unrecorded.
- The UK experience shows that e-policing can be an efficient two-way communication process. However, it must accommodate all new forms of electronic messages, such as text messaging or digital photos sent from cell phones.
- Problems that may surface with online crime reporting include:
- Crimes reported are not from the jurisdiction
- Police may have to rewrite reports coming from the web
- False reporting

DISCUSSION

The study discusses and analyzes:

- E-policing definitions and concepts
- How police web sites are being used to communicate information to citizens
- Foreign experiences in online crime reporting and best practices/lessons learned
- Potential impact of e-policing in the future

The link generated for online reporting of crimes connects the user to a form that invites the public to submit reports for crimes that are commonly not investigated, including:

- Lost property
- Identity theft
- Theft
- Vehicle burglary
- Harassing phone calls
- Vandalism

These crimes are generally not investigated.

Users receive online assistance to help write reports. Reports can be submitted in many different languages; the system uses automatic translation to render the report in English.

Types of crimes reported online

Canada	United Kingdom	USA
Lost items valued at less than \$5000 Stolen items valued at less than \$5000 Vandalized property or car Theft from car Illegal use of personal credit card, bank card or cheques valued at less than \$5000	Theft Criminal damage/vandalism Theft from a motor vehicle Hate crimes Hate incidents Race crime Racist incident Homophobic crime or incident Transphobic incident Faith-related incident Sectarian incident Disabled incident	Vehicle burglary Theft Theft under \$500 Theft of services Theft from auto Bike theft Suspicious activity Traffic violations vandalism/mischief Emergency at business after business hours (broken windows, open door, etc) Trespassing Lost property Gas drive-off Phone harassment Defacing property (graffiti) By-law violations (sidewalk snow removal, barking dogs, abandoned vehicles) Drugs, weapons Identity theft Economic crime (bad checks, credit card) Cybercrime

Police Role in the Information Society

- In a world of Internet communication and evolving communication technologies the public's reach and demand for connectivity is extensive. It remains for police officers and police organizations to mind the gap between everyday services and the needs and expectations of communities where they work.
- Bicycle theft, vandalism, theft from shed and hate crimes are of-

ten left unattended by front-line patrol officers. E-policing may imply, as the UK experience showed, an increase in crime reporting. The more crime is reported, the more current information/intelligence police have about the level of crime in their community. Minor crimes become less hidden, allowing crime prevention programs to be adapted to meet the needs and problems of individual neighborhoods instead of taking a "one size fits all" approach.

- Are officers isolated from petty events/crimes that the public deem important because police focus on major level 1 and level 2 crimes? Efficiency in police work is gained when police officers have the time and capacity to concentrate on major events. At the time, it may limit overall communication between the police and the public.

- Most discussion group participants no longer expected to meet a police officer personally for every problem, social issue or petty crime in the community (unless it involved a major crime). Foremost, they wanted their problems dealt with quickly and successfully saw the public being increasingly empowered to deal with petty crimes or related events themselves. They placed value on the ability to report and resolve problems via the Internet.

- E-reporting is meant to be one more easy access to the police. However, access to the Internet or other electronic communications (including the capacity to use these tools) by some elderly people, or those with mental disabilities, the poor and the computer illiterate concerned some participants. These groups may be hard to reach but nonetheless have special needs and are a concern for social services, social institutions and the police. Apart from this concern, the majority of discussion group participants expected to be able to communicate with the police electronically and be answered in the same way by 2007.

CONCLUSION

E-policing is not about technical issues; it is more about cultural changes within police organizations. Are organizations ready to work with citizens with electronic tools?

Value and Definition

For the police:

- E-policing is electronic collection, storage and sharing of complaints and information
- from citizens.
- E-policing includes requesting information/tips on crime/terrorism etc. from the public
- and could focus on specific communities such as ethnic groups or certain occupations to obtain digital pictures, text messages, general comments, responses to surveys etc.
- Therefore, e-policing implies processing information and storing the information.
- E-policing allows the police to send out its message directly to citizens and communities without having to contact the media – it is direct communication.
- It could become for a surveillance police tool through tracking incoming addresses and callers

For citizens

- E-policing makes possible electronic requests for information and electronic responses.
- E-policing can empower citizens within their communities.
- E-policing allows the public to report crimes online.

Issues Related to Process

- Users and decision makers must be involved in development and planning this still innovative approach to police-public communications.
- Other issues to be addressed before adopting online crime reporting include:
- Ease of access to forms developed for the police
- Types of reportable crimes and incidents
- Penalties for false reports
- Security of the reporting system
- Acknowledgement Problems that may surface with online crime reporting include:
- Crimes reported are not from the jurisdiction
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