

# Crime data collection



We have at our disposal two major databases exclusively created to aid law enforcement.

The first one is administered and updated by the Federal Bureau of Investigations. It is appropriately identified as the Uniform Crime Report or UCR. The UCR contain official data transferred to and received from various law enforcement agencies across America. This interchange of crime statistics is based upon what is referred to as index crimes such as homicide, non-negligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, aggravated assault and similar anti-social behaviors. On a monthly basis various law enforcement agencies direct their crime numbers to the central database at the FBI facilities. (Frequently Asked Questions Federal Bureau of Investigation). Results of the FBI's compilations are published annually and dissemination of the assembled data is readily made available to law enforcement agencies around the nation.

Participation by various law enforcement bureaus is on a voluntary basis therefore one can not verify total accuracy in the conclusive results. Reported data to the UCR is generally indexed as violent or property type crimes in its Part I section while its Part II expands slightly and tracks more specific crimes. The information is broken down into several different reports which we will bypass at this time. One of the major complaints lodged against the UCR is that their members feel it does not accurately reflect the actual crime rates since its inclusions only listing crimes which have been reported to the law enforcement agencies. In addition, it only tracks major crimes and not any minor violations thus it is impossible to link the minor and major crimes together. As an example of this downfall suppose a person

is murdered during a carjacking, the reported information would be listed under the category of murder and not the car jacking. Inconsistencies exist specifically in the manner for which forcible rape crimes are submitted to the database as the inputs do not currently list rapes against men or same sex rapes.

What this amounts to is that the total number of criminal acts which occur may not be known since not all crimes committed come to the attention of the police. In addition, not all crimes are considered to be of sufficient importance to warrant inclusion into the index. Another shortcoming of the UCR is in its unit of analysis. The agency uses the arrest to document the crimes thus if the same person is arrested several times within the calculated year the reported arrests are tabulated as the total number of individuals arrested. (Land.) With these considerations kept firmly in mind we can readily begin to see the downfalls of this database. Our second contribution to law enforcement databases is the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data or the NACJD. This organized collection of data was established to facilitate research into the field of criminal justice.

It provides a computerized resource of archived data which can effectively be used for training workshops as well as background material. (National Archive of Criminal Justice Data). This database is ideal for those instructors planning to create a training class as you can find actual records of various crimes in its files. This could typically be classified as a ??? think tank??? database. The database is limited in nature within certain geographical respects. It??™s Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (PHDCN) represents a large scale study into the families, the schools and the

<https://assignbuster.com/crime-data-collection/>

neighborhoods which can affect a child's development but only within the geographic confines of Chicago.

Its concern is to identify those pathways which eventually will lead a child to a life of crime. Data collected from this project is included into the NACJD archives. Its second task consists of the Homicide Research Working Group (HRWG). This is another study created to foster communication and coordination among people involved in homicide studies. In view of the specific nature of this database it projects little actual value to law enforcement personnel who desire concrete figures. Its limited scope provides a narrow perspective of its crime data.

This is the age of computers and as such it should not be a drastic problem creating a centralized record system for crime control. Unfortunately neither the UCR nor the NACJD is capable of complete and accurate classification of criminal activities. It was initially hoped that with the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security a more centralized database system would have been devised however so far that option has not materialized. For effective law enforcement measures it is necessary to possess a sound database with uniform and accurate inputs. A viable record system is the first essential ingredients for an effective crime reporting system.

Standardized data entry is required in order to have accurate and useful data to pass on to various law enforcement agencies. The UCR is a good start but needs drastic improvements. All crime enforcement computers should be networked together in order to permit better analysis of its contents.

“ National Archive of Criminal Justice Data.” National Archive of Criminal Justice Data. . Frequently Asked Questions. Federal Bureau of Investigation, U. S.

Department of Justice. Washington, D. C.

. Uniform Crime Reports. Retrieved on 2008-03-30. Land, Kenneth C..

“ Understanding Crime Statistics: Revisiting the Divergence of the NCVS and UCR..” Contemporary Sociology 36 (2007): 481-482.