

New technology of crime law and social control

Law



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Use of Technology by Police Courts and Corrections to prevent Crime and Delinquency

Imagine a world where criminals and delinquents are smarter than law enforcers and criminal justice organizations. Law, order and peace would be impossible. As criminals get better at their game, the world faces a greater risk of insecurity. Criminals work tirelessly to find improved ways of getting their way. The police on the other hand work effortlessly to develop the best ways of crime prevention and control. As a result, criminals are constantly seeking improved technologies of committing crime whilst the police are constantly seeking improved technologies of outsmarting criminals.

Byrne and Rebovich (2007) classify technology into two broad categories: hard and soft technologies. They give examples of hard technologies used by the police in crime prevention to include: closed circuit television cameras (CCTV), street lighting, citizen protection devices, metal detectors, and ignition interlock systems. They also give examples of soft technology which include: threat assessment instruments, risk assessment instruments, bullying ID protocol, sex offender registration, risk assessment prior to involuntary civil commitment, profiling potential offenders, and facial recognition software used in conjunction with CCTV. Byrne and Rebovich argue that hard technology has led to improved police protection devices, improved new weapons, less lethal force, computers in squad cars, mobile data centers and video in patrol cars. They outline advantages of soft technology to include: crime mapping, crime analysis, criminal history data systems enhancement, information sharing within criminal justice systems and private sector, new technologies to monitor communication to and from targeted individuals, amber alerts, creation of watch list of potential violent

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offenders and gunshot location devices.

CCTV and street lighting are the most commonly used hard technologies in crime prevention. CCTV is more significant in reducing property crime than street lighting (Welsh and Farrington, 2007). Great investments go into implementing CCTV but its rewards are tremendous. Cameras enable surveillance, making police work much easier. In conjunction with street lighting, cameras intensify security in the streets. During public events, cameras enable the police to monitor security details and ensure people's safety. When criminals know that they are being watched, they shy away from committing crime. The tremendous benefits of cameras made China spend over 3.4 billion dollars in 2006 alone on developing and implementing CCTV (Klein, 2008).

A great number of crimes are committed by very few individuals in a society. The police implement risk assessment tools to identify the few groups in society that pose great security threats. Risk assessment tools accurately identify a subgroup of offenders, enhancing efficiency on surveillance on high risk, people, places and time (Byrne, 2009). Risk assessment is a great way of preventing crime as it enables the police to focus on the main areas that need their attention, hence save time. Police work becomes more efficient and effective when the attention of law enforcers shifts to areas that deserve their attention. As a result, technological advancements have led to "dramatic changes in the organization of police" (Reichard, 2001).

Through the use of a computer application, the police are able to monitor transactions between individuals through their cell phones, e-mails and social sites. This has greatly facilitated investigations into financial crimes, drug crimes and sex crimes (Soghoian, 2011). Police are therefore able to

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track crimes across borders. Criminals have established highly complex networks across the globe. Through computer applications, the police are able to keep up with international crimes.

In conclusion, technological advancements go a great way in facilitating security and policing. Technology makes police work more efficient. It saves time and enables law enforcers to get more things done within a shorter time framework. Technology increases accuracy in police work. It also enables law enforcement agencies to deter criminals. Police presence alone deters crime. However, police equipped with great technological know-how go a notch higher in crime control and prevention.

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