Example of technological challenges in law enforcement essay

Society, Terrorism

Global Events with Local Effects: Telecommunication Technology

Traditional law enforcement deals with threats that are local, self-generating, and self-directed. But new communication technology has changed all that (Kobelev, 2005).

Local law enforcement agencies in the United States must now consider the possibility that a terrorist attack that takes place within our borders may have been initiated; or even directed, on real-time, from a faraway country. New communication technologies now allows terrorists to conduct their operations from anywhere in the world. Terrorists abroad can raise all the money they want here in the United States to finance terrorist operations here in the United States. Therefore, it is time for local law enforcement agencies to look beyond our borders to preempt local crimes (Kobelev, 2005).

International Travel: Scanning and Surveillance Technology

In many countries, criminals have more resources than law enforcement agencies, and are therefore able to exploit technological advances to further their criminal activities. When these countries ask for help from INTERPOL, the law enforcement officials cannot move fast enough. INTERPOL has to cross international borders to fight global crime, but advanced technological surveillance measures that help prevent the travel of criminals, also slow law enforcement officials down (INTERPOL).

Wiretapping: Voice Over Internet Protocol (“ VoIP”) Technology

Traditionally, one of the most power tools law enforcement officials had at their disposal was their ability to eavesdrop on telephone conversations between criminals. However, VoIP technology uses Internet technology instead of telephone networks for real-time voice communications. The Internet raises a number of security and technological issues that make it difficult for law enforcement officials to wiretap telephones to monitor criminal activities (Park, 2005).

Law enforcement agencies want to expand the Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act (CALEA) to force broadband Internet and Voice Over Internet Protocol providers to develop and implement new intercept technology that would allow law enforcement officials to identify and monitor potential criminal activity (Holtfreter, 2005).

There are two problems in compliance: right to privacy issues, and high cost. Critics also fear that the new laws would inhibit research and development and would force companies to move their operations outside the country.

Looking at all three issues together, to address the challenge that new technological advances represent to law enforcement, law enforcement agencies are fighting back with their own development and implementation of technology. Law enforcement agencies are also expanding cooperation beyond their jurisdictions, and drafting new laws to broaden the scope of their capabilities to fight crime.

References

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