

The benefits of technology to criminals and law enforcements

[Law](#)



- Wireless sniffers tell potential burglars who have a high number of expensive web-enabled devices or indicate a level of wireless traffic that says who is and isn't at home (Munro, 2010).
- Users who “ check-in” using location-aware social networking announce to potential burglars that they are out; this data can be gathered and tracked (Munro, 2010).
- New technologies may be used to commit new types of crime, for which investigative tools and legal codes do not yet exist. In these cases, it is difficult to track, capture, and prosecute these criminals (McQuade, 2006).
- Desktop publishing software and high-quality laser printers available at consumer prices help fraudulent organizations appear legitimate. This leads to more effective credit card and identity theft scams (Criminal Intelligence Service Canada [CISC], 2010).
- Credit card skimmer devices can be placed within a point-of-sale credit card machine, and collect names and credit card numbers. These devices operate on battery power and do not require the criminal to be nearby for them to do their work; they can be picked up surreptitiously later (CISC, 2010).
- Peer-to-peer networking allows the sharing of illegal materials, such as child pornography or instructions for criminal activities, without a central server that could be shut down (CISC, 2010).

Technology makes things easier for law enforcement:

- GPS tracking on cell phones and other web-enabled devices, as well as cell phone call tracking, means that the police can find out where criminals are making calls from and where they are traveling (Howell, 2010).
- Database analysis turns information into a map that tells cops where a

specific crime is likely to live and where they are likely to strike next; this map also shows where crime hotspots are (Logan, 2004).

- Wireless networking of different departments helps with arson tracking (Logan, 2004). Arson is often not well-reported since it is the domain of the fire department and not the police department. Networking their databases together means that if the fire department suggests a fire is suspicious, the police immediately know about it.

- Tracking of ATM withdrawals, complete with photos, tell law enforcement where a fugitive is, or who may have taken a victims wallet (Howell, 2010).

- Database of scanned passports and IDs for travelers catches fleeing criminals as soon as they land or re-enter the country (Howell, 2010).

- Dashboard cameras on police cars record how a police officer behaves during a criminal arrest or investigation of a crime scene. This way, the actions of the police officer are no longer hearsay, but instead, are a matter of record. (Howell, 2010)

- The installation of the Automated Fingerprint Identification System has meant that criminals picked up for minor crimes don't get away with bigger ones. It is a national database of wanted criminals that tells officers almost immediately if the person they picked up for one crime is wanted for something more serious in another jurisdiction (Howell, 2010).

- Cell phone cameras held by most civilians can snap pictures of crimes in progress and provide valuable evidence to police departments (Horton, 2008).