

National institute of justice



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National Institute of Justice National Institute of Justice The contemporary society witnesses a growing increase in sophistication of crimes committed by criminal elements in the society. As a result, the growing sophisticated crimes require new and more advanced ways of combating these crimes. In effect, a lot of research is crucial in order to develop these new ways.

Consequently, the need for new methods to combat crime underlines the important role of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). Created in 1969 with a mission to improve knowledge and understanding crimes and the justice system through research, development, and evaluation, NIJ has been in the forefront of virtually all innovative policies formulated for criminal justice (NIJ, 2009). One such innovation is the Geographical Information Systems (GIS). Geographical Information systems are computer programs important to capture data requisite in the criminal justice system (2009). This expose elucidates the role of NIJ in the (MAPS) program, and the importance of the program to help reduce crime and improve public safety.

With the introduction of GIS, computerized crimes maps have become a commonplace in fighting crimes in the contemporary society. Using data from the police on crimes and the geographical area of certain crimes, analysts are able to map where crimes occur. In addition, analysts analyze the reasons why the crimes occurred and effectively finding various ways of to respond to the crimes (NIJ, 2009). In this regard, these computerized crimes maps combine a geographical and social aspect in analyzing crimes. In effect, the analysis of crimes becomes crucial to the security authorities. Using funds from the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 1996, the National Institute of Justice created the Crime Mapping Research Center (CMRC) in 1997 (NIJ, 2009). The center's fundamental responsibility was to determine

the department of police's use of analysis in policing. Consequently, the center developed programs meant to train and enhance the ability of police to utilize spatial maps and sets of data in combating crime (NIJ, 2009). In effect, this step marked the beginning of the program by NIJ since CMRC subsequently evolved into the Mapping and Analysis for Public Safety (MAPS) program in 2002, which funds research that uses GIS technology (NIJ, 2009). According to NIJ (2009), the role of NIJ in the MAPS program is to support research, which is important to help security agencies to enhance public safety. On a broader perspective, this program examines four fundamental aspects. The first of these aspects is the utilization of maps to analyze crimes. Secondly, the program examines the analysis of spatial data. Next, the program examines the way maps can aid researchers evaluate programs and policies essential for the criminal justice system. Finally, the program examines fundamental methods for developing tools for spatial analysis, mapping tools, and data sharing tools (NIJ, 2009).

While combining geographical analysis and social aspects, the MAPS program is important in reducing crime and improving safety in the public. According to NIJ (2009), "Geographic analysis can help reveal crime patterns." In this regard, MAPS program helps examine the trends in criminals including their neighborhood and neighborhoods that may attract criminals. Secondly, a geographical analysis helps to identify the differences in crime between urban and rural environments (NIJ, 2009). In effect, these differences are important since they enable authorities identify regional trends in criminal activities and develop crime prevention strategies for combating crimes. Finally, MAPS programs are essential to help establish certain actions, which are crucial in reducing crime and improving safety in

the public. These actions include collaborative efforts from law enforcers and the communities in crime prone areas, which curb the spread of crime. Other efforts include public relations campaigns, which increase the awareness of residents to crime in their region amongst other efforts (NIJ, 2009).

In conclusion, it is evident that the National Institute of Justice plays a crucial role in the policies formulated to combat crime. Through research, development, and evaluation of issues in the criminal justice system, the NIJ has been in the forefront of formulating crucial policies and programs. One such program is the GIS program, which are computerized programs important for success in the criminal justice system. Under the GIS, NIJ has been able to create the MAPS program, which geographical data with crime data from the police to analyze crimes. In effect, the MAPS program has become a crucial tool in reducing crime and improving public safety.

References

National Institute of Justice [NIJ]. (2009, June 24). Mapping and Analysis for Public Safety. Retrieved from <http://www.nij.gov/maps/>