

Police departments



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Predictive policing refers to any policing strategy that develops and uses advanced analysis and information to inform future thinking crime prevention. COMPSTAT (short form of COMPuter STATistics) is a systematic computerized way of using the GIS (short form of Geographic Information Systems) to map crime trends and identify problems. It was introduced in 1994 by NYC Commissioner William Bratton to address the high crime rate in New York City.

In this paper we are going to compare and contrast the application of information technology to optimize police departments' performance to reduce crime versus random patrols of the streets. We are also going to show how COMPSTAT as an IS implements the basic IS functions; and how IS have allowed police departments that implement tools such as COMPSTAT to respond to crime faster. Lastly, in this paper the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis (SWOT analysis) on behalf of police departments that intend to implement predictive policing will also appear.

Predictive Policing To build the comparison and contrast the application of IT to optimize police departments' performance to reduce crime versus random patrols of the streets first we have to find out what kind of information technology is available to police today. Predictive policing, or programs such as COMPSTAT, is taking data from disparate sources, analyzing them and then using the results to anticipate, prevent and respond more effectively to future crime.

Charlie Beck, chief of the Los Angeles Police Department writes " The predictive vision moves law enforcement from focusing on what will happen and how to effectively deploy resources in front of the crime, thereby

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changing outcomes,” (Predictive Policing: The Future of Law Enforcement, NIJ, 2012) Predictive policing focuses on five elements and they are Integrated information and operations: Large police departments maintain lots of databases and its unusual to see these computer systems joined together to allow effective analysis.

It is unlikely that other information sources, such as gunshot detection systems are linked into police analytical or fusion centers. Finally, police departments do not link their operations and information systems to other parts of the justice system or social services system. So, Poor information sharing prevents good analysis and investigation and can wreck efforts to intervene with individuals to stop the cycle of violence. The best way to look at the future and act appropriately is to have a complete picture of the current situation.

It is a must for police to integrate their information systems to enable situational awareness. Seeing the big picture: Prevention is important as response, and every incident is an information-gathering opportunity. Few crimes are unusual incidents. Most crime is part of a sequence of criminal activity and social issues. This means that police need to be able to recognize these patterns in societies. So, to save their valuable time and energy it is necessary to build police organizations to use information to see the big picture patterns of what is going on around them.

Cutting-edge analysis and technology: This element is as straight forward as it sounds. Police departments have lots of information but their analysis is not so strong. Tomorrow's forward-thinking department must depend on good information that has been fully analyzed. With the appropriate tools

police analysts must analyze the information and turn into usable products for the officers. Predictive analysis may include tools that link people or activities, visualization of complex interrelationships, deal with terrorism as well as domestic violence or id theft and many more.

Morally, with the vast available tools and technology police departments should learn how to use them. Linkage to performance: It is necessary to track police performance. However, it is also important to track performance targets and crime trends. The new technology helps police to place themselves into the situations instead of being limited to past situations. It is important for police to be able to recognize these criminal developments before they become a threat for public. Adaptability to changing conditions:

This element describes how flat-networked organization, training in how to adapt to strategies based on information and high professional standards are needed. This generates a number of comments, including the need for a reward structure based on how officers use information provided by crime analysts and on the fundamental lack of technological understanding within police departments. The COMPSTAT is a management process or program within a performance management framework that synthesizes analysis of disorder data and crime, strategic problem solving, and a clear accountability structure.

It is a systematic computerized way of using the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to map crime trends and identify problems. It was introduced in 1994 by New York City Commissioner William Bratton to address the high crime rate in New York City. We can compare the four (4) COMPSTAT principles with the four basic information system (IS) functions. The first

COMPSTAT principle is “ accurate and timely intelligence”, which is close to the first basic IS function input. The second one is “ effective tactics” which parallels with processing, second basic IS function.

Last two principles are “ rapid deployment” and “ relentless follow-up and assessment” parallels with output and feedback respectively. Below we are explaining four COMPSTAT principles: COMPSTAT has increased the intellectual capacity of the police department to react efficiently to crime a lot. This proves that how IS have allowed police department to respond to crime faster with the tools like COMPSTAT. To understanding our Strengths and Weaknesses, and for identifying and analyzing both the Opportunities and the Threats, SWOT analysis is a very useful technique.

For police department internal analyses are strengths and weaknesses and external analyses are opportunities and threats. The strengths of this system are “ police department manual revised in its entirety to today’s current best practices, clear mission statement to guide the department, professional public image, established and proven training program for new officers, police trainers and new drug crime investigators, new testing process for police officer position, and thorough background investigations for officer candidates” (2008 Assessment of the Duluth Police Department) and so on.

The weaknesses in this system are “ police headquarters old, outdated, lacks adequate space and is not secure, inadequate training budget, difficulty recruiting minority, informal leaders/ dissidents, need for addition sworn and civilian staff” (2008 Assessment of the Duluth Police Department) and so on. There are obviously many opportunities and threats.

Here are some for opportunities: “ re-establish the juvenile bureau to effect change on youth, field based reporting, opportunity to educate the public every day in crime prevention, target hardening” (2008 Assessment of the Duluth Police Department) etc. and for threats: “ no computer crimes unit to handle to proliferation of today’s computer crime, turnover of newer officers leaving the department for other law enforcement agencies” (2008 Assessment of the Duluth Police Department) etc.