

Criminal technology  
past to future  
criminology essay



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Technology continues to change at a rapid pace after one type of technology is released another usually follows suit to compliment the first or to replace it. The same is true with policing styles as the eras changed the technology changed and shaped how officers handle situations. With so much technology out there it makes you wonder what could possibly be left. The truth is technology will never cease to change, just as policing styles will have to change to adapt.

## INTRODUCTION

Over the years and through several eras policing has changed, along with the change of policing styles came the formation and implementation of technology that helped them along the way. From the political era to the more modern day community policing era was found recently to be lacking in products that were already being marketed. By the time we caught up we realized a little to late that these items we use now could have been in place and were available 30 to 40 years earlier. How did we first start with technology, when did we finally catch up and what are our best advances so far and what yet do we see coming ? I will explore this in the paper as we take shortcuts through past eras; their technological uses and advance through each era to post modern day technology, the benefits these contribute and what they got under wraps for our next step into technological advances in policing.

## Eras

Policing, as we know it today has developed from various political, economic, and social forces. To better understand the role of police in society, one has <https://assignbuster.com/criminal-technology-past-to-future-criminology-essay/>

to know the history of how policing became what it is today. Policing has been categorized into three basic eras, which include the Political Era, Reform Era, and lastly the Community Problem-Solving Era that is the present form of policing.

### Political Era

Policing style was quasi military consisting of a decentralized command structure resulting in control over precincts by ward leaders. An assigned officer was always closely tied to the neighborhood, slowness of communications and transportation limited officers contact with central command. Citizens were able to bring complaints to the officers that could be dealt with it on the spot as officers patrolled on foot. Based on their discretion these officers dealt with problem in accordance of the values and norms of the neighborhood of which they were in.

During this time most officers came armed with the technology of a gun and a nightstick. Today these are still the first weapons of choice when called upon to use force. Telegraphs and telephones as well as police call boxes were the new jump in communications technology during this era. While the start of investigations with the Bertillon system for criminal Identification and fingerprinting crime scenes also became used.

### Reform Era

The Reform Era brought about concerns of political influencing on policing. People worked to eliminate the involvement of politics to making policing more professional. With these changes more advances in technology were

also implemented. Transportation and communication put police where they could receive calls from a central location and dispatch officers as well to respond more quickly over a widespread location. Police started decreasing the public aid to focus on combating crime. Police were hired based on qualifications not affiliations, the reform wanted police with detachment and a greater commitment to training.

Reform policing had three key operational parts; foot patrol was replaced by cars equipped with the two-way radios as cars were being used to commit crimes. The availability of cars also meant more ground could be covered. Motorized police patrol was becoming a method of crime control.

Rapid Response was important in three ways the first was you have a better chance at catching a criminal if you can reach the scene quickly, better chance of clearing the case if the criminal is caught. Most importantly the time in which it took to respond to a call was being judged because rapid response had become possible and the community not only required but also expected it.

Investigations became a huge part of policing as these technologies were advancing. Policing was becoming more professional as their social services programs declined. Police started using new scientific techniques to follow up criminal investigations as they offered officers better incentives. Many technologies formed in this era were the foundation for much of what is used today. The only thing that has really changed is the way the techniques are applied. The use of directed and targeted patrol has increased; prioritizing calls in an effort to get to more important calls first and case screening to

avoid wasting time on cases that were likely not going to be solved. These refinements to the techniques of this era are known as strategic policing.

### Community Era

The Community Policing Era was brought on from The Professional Eras. There was also wide spread concern about the effectiveness and limitations of policing and their behavior due to officers frustrations with battling the same crime over and over (Uknown).

In the 1960's the president's commission on criminal justice is the main foundation in many of today changes found in law enforcement. The crime rate in the 60's had a dramatic increase, thus the government decided it was time to investigate the way the criminal justice system was run and how it could be made better. Cultural diversity and many different changes in the social structures of communities caused traditional policing to be less effective than before. System visionaries and police executives saw the failing system and started working on a plan to make it better.

The 1970's new program " safe and clean neighborhoods" was formed it was intended to improve living conditions. Money was provided to take policemen of their cars and place them on foot patrol. This new program made calls to crimes more difficult, response slower, the work harder. Even though crime rates were not reduced it made citizens feel more at ease as it reduced their fears in these areas (H. Verschaeve, 2004).

Within this era to present times new technologies came to surface due to the fact the presidents crime commission found a technology gap. Today this

technology plays a huge role in how policing is mandated. Commissioners called for the introduction and establishment of a single telephone number to call the police, with this came the launch of 911 the one number for police and fire departments.

Not long after came the computerization age being brought into policing these computer were used to not only for record keeping but also found useful for criminal investigations, crime analysis and budgeting. The most important computer based program after computers introduction of the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), inside the NCIC everything was stored and index from fugitives, missing persons and stolen property. This was practically the first technology used by police for computers during this time. The Automated Fingerprinting Information System (AFIS) was the next essential development in policing efforts; it had a grave disadvantage as other states did not have access to that information.

Soon came patrol cars came equipped with their own computers with reporting systems and auto fingerprinting systems. As obstacles were seen during this time they worked to overcome the obstacle of incompatible technologies (Seaskate, 1998)

#### Impact Technology had on Policing

Technology has had an impact of making high quality information quickly available. With the capability of being able to collect information they are able to analyze and share data with stakeholders not only inside but also outside of government. Earliest applications included traffic accident files established in 1960's, since then programs for statistics operations and <https://assignbuster.com/criminal-technology-past-to-future-criminology-essay/>

management program planning went underway. The machine that is so complex tool that it helps makes decisions for strategic planning and man to machine interactions. The success of these computers have been favorable. Users routine data processing is so highly structures it has proven to be rather effective and the implementation can be made with ease.

However impact of the computer will vary from one department to the next making it difficult to generalize. It is perceivable that the impacts of a different nature are contemplated in structural changes, as direct major organizational shifts are not expected. For example it is perceived that use of computers will continue to result and has resulted in power shifts' generally speaking raises in one persons decision making at the expense of another.

Trends of this nature that seem to be occurring for example a shift in work activities related to routine and recording tasks, one of the biggest fears of technology is people being replaced by machines. When actually introduction of the computers increased jobs they needed people to carry out the computers data processing work (Colton, 1973).

### Current Advancements in Technology

One of these would be the advancement of DNA evidence DNA can identify criminals with 99.9% accuracy information when biological evidence exists. There are DNA databases where samples of DNA are stored when someone has been convicted of a charge where DNA was involved. This system, called the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), maintains DNA profiles obtained under the federal, state, and local systems in a set of databases that are <https://assignbuster.com/criminal-technology-past-to-future-criminology-essay/>

available to law enforcement agencies across the country for law enforcement purposes and came into existence in the late 1980's. In order to take advantage of the investigative potential of CODIS, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, states began passing laws requiring offenders convicted of certain offenses to provide DNA samples. Currently all 50 states and the federal government have laws requiring that DNA samples be collected from some categories of offenders

The benefits of this advancement is DNA is so accurate it can ensure a fairness in the criminal justice it so accurate it can exonerate persons previously charged with a crime they did not commit due to negative matches in DNA (Using DNA to Solve Crimes, 2003).

Another advancement in technology is Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) it's a surveillance method used for several reasons from electronic tolls to traffic enforcement. The benefits are that it can be used through existing closed circuit television or road rule enforcement cameras and can read license plates on vehicles traveling up to 100 mph. The other benefits is that the pictures the camera takes is stored some are configured to even photograph the driver. It is able to take picture anytime of the day by using infrared lighting (Unknown, 2010).

### Future Roles of Technology

Honestly the future of technology is surveillance equipment, what the military and government officials have coming out right now is absolutely astounding but they cross the border of privacy rights. The newest technology

I see being implemented is TWS otherwise known as Through the Wall  
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Surveillance, which is so advanced it can detect any slight movement such as breathing through a solid wall. As technology advances new ideas are always forming there are micro chips that can be implanted in people as well as sunglasses that have chips that will scan people as they walk by and will tell you their names and maybe a few lines about them. Other technologies already in effect but not yet widely used is facial recognition. The new biometric technology could become a mainstream of the technological world but when does it cross the line of privacy? (Unknown, Modern Marvels: Surveillance Technology, 2004)

## CONCLUSION

So you see as each era has gone by not only have the policing changed but also technology changed as well to suit its style. Even though some could have been implemented as early as 30 to 40 years earlier there must have been a reason it was not yet put into place. Even now there are things we can use that are not in place maybe because we are not capable of offsetting the expenses, or there is concerns of availability and crossing the lines of privacy. With this new technology unfolding and just on the horizon it makes me also wonder if the policing style will change with it.