

The impact of using maps as evidence

Law



The Impact of Using Maps as Evidence

Crime analysts have come up with various work products that will help in both legal and enforcement procedures. These work products include crime mapping that can be referred to as a discipline of Geography that is used to analyze and visualize crime hot spots through current trends on various crimes happening in these mapped locations (Chainey & Ratcliffe, 2006). Legally, it has various positive impacts to legal practitioners and police departments.

The positive effects of using crime mapping can be used to anticipate and aggregate crimes before they happen due to crime distribution trends. It has also been used to manage enforcement through making rational decisions on crime targets. Analysts through the geographical profiling have come up with theories of crime prevention. Research on profiled locations has shown that the work product has been successful and can also be presented as evidence in courts. In cases where evidence against a crime perpetrator is not enough, police enforcement argues that crime mapping should be used as evidence in legal procedures.

However, crime mapping also has negative impacts that are used by critics to prevent it from being used as evidence in courts. Since crime mapping includes analysis and visualization of collected data, incorrect data and tendencies can provide misleading information (Chainey and Ratcliffe 2006). If this evidence is presented in court, it may lead to prosecution of innocent individuals. In addition, the trends and analysis should be analyzed using the right computer software and take into account all assumptions. Changes in demographic trends may lead to incorrect results. In some regions, the statistics may lead law enforcers to assume some of the areas that do not

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appear as crime weak spots in their maps. As a result, crime mapping analysts should take into account all negative impacts before letting their work product used in courts as evidence.

Reference

Chainey, S., & Ratcliffe, J. (2006). 10. GIS and crime mapping (pp. 287-318). Chichester, West Sussex, England: John Wiley & Sons.