# Emerging Technologies

## Introduction

The current wave of technological advancement has significantly enhanced the law enforcement process across the globe. The improvement in the information technology has empowered the investigative agencies. The use of the state of the art investigative equipment in gathering Intel and pursuing law offenders has not only improved the quality of services offered but also rendered the police force useful. Never the less, the wave of technology has also presented with a fair share of challenges most importantly abetting the consumer, society and business-related crime. It is therefore evident that the emerging technology affects the law enforcement efforts both negatively and positively (In Hennessy, In Patterson, In Lin, & National Research Council, 2003).

## Essay on Emerging Technology and Law Enforcement

As one of its vital role in supporting law enforcement, technology has significantly enhanced such functions as investigating crimes, sharing and dispatching of crime-related information as well as active management of criminal records. For instance, with the help of infield computers, most if not all the law enforcement agencies are currently able to gain access to the automated finger identification system (AFIS) and retrieve the necessary information. Equally, with the aid of the interagency information sharing technology, the law enforcement agencies can as well access a wide range of information including the vehicle, driving and criminal records. Any information relating to warrants, for example, the search or arrest warrants can also be obtained from the system. It is the convenient sharing of criminal data that makes it possible for the investigative arms to run a security check on the suspects' criminal background and to reveal true identities and ascertain the criminal record. Therefore, it makes sense to argue that technology has capacitated the police making their work effective, efficient and precise (Keene, 2011).

Secondly, the patrol police have significantly benefited from the emerging technology since both the patrol cars and bikes are currently fitted with the state of the art technology to enhance surveillance as well as communication. The patrol locomotives are presently equipped with navigation systems, automatic license plate readers, laptops, as well as the multi-band radio systems. Apart from communication and surveillance, the automated electronic gadgets also provide room for timely submission of the necessary data for further investigations. The devices also enhance monitoring and visibility in the community. Roads, residential areas and offices located in areas considered to be prone to constant attacks and those mapped out as soft targets for criminals are also fitted with CCTV cameras to capture any unexpected events (Keene, 2011).

A case in time is the Minnesota case involving the disappearance of two 13-year-old girls. The Anoka County Sheriffs utilised digital forensics to trail the minors. With the aid of smartphones and iPods belonging to the two girls, the police were finally able to trace the girls to a basement in Burnsville where a man had hidden them. In this case, technology did not only assist the police in locating the victims but the culprit as well. The 23-year-old man who committed the offence was arrested and charged with kidnapping, felony sexual conduct as well as solicitation. Digital forensics that includes the examination of personal electronic gadgets such as tablets and cell phones is an investigative approach that is gaining momentum in the US. The strategy has assisted the police in investigating and enforcing the law (Thompson, 2017).

Despite the above advantages, technology, on the other hand, poses some security threats. The emerging technologies have on many occasions been used by criminal gangs to execute illegal activities for instance money laundering and identity theft. Others include theft of intellectual property, stalking, financial extortion and hacking into otherwise private systems and programs especially for companies and firms that heavily depend on online storage or operate on e-commerce basis. Criminals are currently using technology not only to link and coordinate criminal activities but also work remotely. What is more, with the aid of the internet criminals have established a channel through which program malware and viruses can be sent to computers and spam emails. It is no longer uncommon for internet users to end up in unfamiliar sites unknowingly thanks to hackers (Keene, 2011).

In the US currently, cybercriminals and hackers have now diverted attention to stealing of personal data and making it public. Some of the corporations that have fallen victim to the new trend of cybercrime include Home Depot, Best Buy, Domino's Pizza and Pf Changs. In 2014, JP Morgan also became victim to cybercrime. The criminals steal crucial information displayed on debit cards using various malware that usually targets the systems at the point of sale. The offenders then reproduce the debit cards and sell them to unsuspecting customers (Sabillon, Cavaller, Cano, & Serra-Ruiz, 2016).

Based on the above discussion, it is evident that technology has enabled law enforcement agencies to bring down crime rates. However, technology has also been used by criminals to advance criminality. In spite of the disadvantages, it is apparently clear that technology has among other benefits, significantly improved surveillance and communication thereby lowering crime rates. Technology has played a crucial role in the law enforcement process.

## References

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