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Technology Used to Enhance Police Patrol Strategy

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In the modern era where technological advancement is on the rise, the law enforcement agencies have made significant efforts to embrace technology in their investigations. Most of these devices are applicable during patrols, for instance, DDACTS (Data Driven Approach to Crime and Traffic Safety). DDACTS functions in identifying offenders as well as helping the security personnel curb criminal activities and traffic accidents by revealing vital information about planned crime (Weiss, 2013). The officers cover the police car from both sides by mounting three high-resolution digital cameras on the roof of the vehicle. The positioning of the cameras is in such a way that they point forward and ensure coverage of the vehicle on both sides (Weiss, 2013).

The cameras can work well in the dark due to the infrared lighting equipped in each of them. Moreover, the system has an integrated GPS which aids the caption of license plates into a laptop inside the police car (Weiss, 2013). The high-speed Wi-Fi hotspot installed in police stations helps the security personnel to download vital information when they report for duty. Such details include a list of wanted and stolen vehicles, revoked or suspended drivers licenses, among other information that needs the attention of the police (Weiss, 2013).. The updating of the files occurs in four-hour intervals, thus enhancing instant hits on the targeted motorcars through OCR (Optical Character Recognition) cameras. DDACTS targets vehicles at all levels; local, state, and national. The technology pre-selects its target, which mostly includes vehicles identified in the FBI statistics as the most common for felony stops.

The DDACTS system has enhanced crime prevention in various areas such as the highly populated Denver. The cost of installing DDACTS is \$11,000 per vehicle, and police officers must undergo training to boost their efficiency in using the technology. It is a powerful tool that

helps a single security person accomplish more since the cameras can capture hundreds of plates in a single drive. Besides obtaining data, the cameras read and process information to enhance more hits. Moreover, the technology cannot permanently purge information before 364 days are over (Weiss, 2013).

DDACTS has eased the investigation process besides acting as a valuable tool for crime and traffic safety pattern analysis. In the event of a gang activity or crime scene, for example, a police car fitted with DDACTS cruises the region either at night or during the day and captures records of the nearby vehicles. As a result, it is easy for investigators to identify witnesses and suspects (Weiss, 2013). Besides, DDACTS helps to predict regions vulnerable to traffic accidents, and police officers can take precautions in advance.

Police officers on patrol can also use a Facial Recognition Software which makes an analysis of someone's face, for instance, the length of the nose or the spacing between eyes (Robertson, et al., 2016). The device uses these details to create a template used to identify criminals by comparing it with photographs and other images captured from mug shots or surveillance video. A recent development by the FBI is the invention of the Next Generation Identification system that stores pictures in bulk (approximately more than 50 million) and accessible by the law enforcement agencies for identity verification purposes.

Range-R is one of the technologies that the U.S. law enforcement has employed since 2012 to pinpoint people. The technology resembles a high-tech stud-finder and costs approximately \$6,000. It functions by the use of radio waves to "see" through the walls of a structure and locate the people inside. Range-R detects slight movements such as human breathing to know the location of someone stationed 50 feet away (Joh, 2016). The device only detects the location, but not the image.

Another technological device employed in the law enforcement department is the Stingray which functions as a cell phone tower. As a result, the nearby mobile phones connect to the Stingray mounted on a police car (Joh, 2016). The Stingray has an antenna which allows the security personnel to detect the location of a cellphone at a given time. Moreover, data and identification numbers stream from the nearby phones to the Stingray. As a result, it is easy for the law enforcement agencies to get call register details, messaging content, as well as dialed contacts (Joh, 2016).

Initially, Stingray was for use among the spy agencies and military personnel, but today the law enforcement agencies have embraced the technology. However, civil rights groups have opposed the technology, which they label a violation of the Fourth Amendment (Joh, 2016). They argue that there should be safeguards in place to ensure no data gathering from innocent citizens. More patrol technologies include the Taser and Axon body cameras which are useful tools in conducting investigations, enforcing traffic rules, or when interacting with community members.

The axon camera uses power from a battery pack, and an officer can wear it in multiple ways. The Taser has a built in battery, and the security officer wears it at chest level. The cameras capture images and videos without the suspicion of the public (Ariel, 2016). As a result, it alleviates the risk of losing cases due to the high number of witnesses unwilling to testify in court. The data is helpful in court references of traffic or criminal offenses. The department relies on state grants to buy new devices.

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