

THEME: Borders, Security Technologies, Data Gathering and Data Sharing

PROJECT: A Technology of Policing Delivery

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Primary Location: Mitchell Institute

A multitude of data and information is gathered, analysed and deployed within policing organisations in order to plan, predict and operationalise police resources – both strategically, and operationally on the front line of policing.

Yet beyond individual technologies (whether equipment or software) situated within the police ‘front’ and ‘back office’, a number of questions arise. Particularly, how ‘joined up’ are the various technologies and data which underpin police decision-making and practice? How well do different systems of data communicate with each other? And how useful is the total amount of data collected by police organisations for officers on the ground?

Similarly, much police analysis of data remains a retrospective process – based on patterns and events which have already occurred. In this regard, what technological options exist with regard to generating better ‘real-time’ data for use by police. And on a related point, what is ‘useful’ data for police officers on the frontline of policing; and how does that compare with the data they currently use?

It may be seen that much policing technology tends to be path dependent in terms of its use and deployment. New technologies are adopted which in turn become self-reinforcing – strategies are created around the technology; officers are trained in its use; results and outputs around are based around the technology; and changes or reversion to previous technologies or approaches become increasingly difficult or costly. In this regard, a much deeper examination of policing technologies (as broadly conceived) is key to understanding the balance between tech-enabled policing and tech-led policing.

The proposed PhD will be situated within the Mitchell Institute, with a potential criminological focus. However, other disciplinary perspectives will be considered. It is anticipated that collaboration with a police service will be required in order to undertake the core research for the PhD.

Primary Academic Discipline: Criminology