

# CONFLICT, SOLUTIONS AND RESOLUTION

**Nicholas Ashton**, CEO/CIO,  
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reviews the possibilities  
of software in safeguarding  
the public.



**W**hich came first in the world of computers? Software or hardware? This was overheard when two engineers argued.

The software engineer said: "Without software, hardware cannot even execute its job."

The hardware engineer retorted: "Without hardware, your software will have nothing to run."

And so on and on, the argument continues.

The world of policing is exactly the same, argumentative in nature and with procrastinators in action.

## DIGITAL POLICING

Sir Robert Peel, the father of modern policing in 1829, stated that 'the people are the police and police are the people'. You would never know it in today's uncanny world of societal failure. Yes, the whistle and truncheon have been replaced, but management is still having meeting after meeting regarding digital policing, amongst budget cuts and the depletion of experienced staffing levels.

Computers and programming are not here to make our lives more difficult as some still think. They are here to assist in our daily logical and illogical attitudes of life. Mundane, repetitious actions bore us and we miss the most simplistic signs. Costing time, money and lives.

Digital policing is not something that just happened, it has been in use for decades, in its initial form as simple databases. San Diego, California in 1983 had one of the first jail databases in the US and has since developed many programs to assist the daily intake of information and occurrences.

Today it is a proven digital enhancement to daily police work, developed, not by software engineers, but with law enforcement officers with a major enterprise connection. Twenty-one years ago the first real street-level crime analytics and predictive analysis hit the streets with enormous success.

Like Peel, visionaries lead the way with innovative, easy to use crime fighting tools, which come with that street level experience that must go hand in hand with crime fighting and communities.

With such a larger percentage of the global population online, it is not just how you respond to them in an online manner, it is the glut of information that you never had access to before for crime solving issues. It is not how the public perceives your Facebook page or the content of your Tweets; it

is all about what they, the public are posting and texting about, which is of vital importance. We have opened Pandora's Box of information, which before, experienced police officers would have had to spend many hours discerning from research, trusted sources and more.

The British Home Secretary stated some time back that, "cutting crime means catching criminals, but it also means preventing crime".

## BEING PROACTIVE

Digital policing relies on agnostic capabilities to look at all data sources and collectively fuse the information under one roof, so to speak.

Whether the public understands or not, information is information and privacy factors are removed in most countries. Public social networks are just that, public.

Daily social media usage is climbing. We see emotional posts, threats, questions and braggadocios opportunities; and those comments are all insightful, giving law enforcement a chance to be proactive.

Watching and paying attention to what others are posting can assist in understanding what the street chatter or atmospherics really are. It is a superb proactive tool and can minimise issues.

The ability to geofence areas and see what is transpiring allows for definitive policing. Even after an event, the witness chatter is priceless. When used with analytics, its value increases ten-fold.

## SMARTPHONE-CONNECTED POLICING

The interface with smartphones is massive, with the ability to use all the inner workings such as GPS-enabled apps, news channels and of course social media. Law enforcement-wise, it has enriched our capabilities for interaction and information gathering. This leads to more intelligence-led community policing efforts.

The smartphone is a connection to law enforcement; the opportunity to glean information. Allowing it to be a personal journal of the owner in the case of a crime or event. It is more than just a telephone; it is practically a crystal ball!

It is a two-way street for gathering and sending information that can avert a crisis or a public event such as a missing child, or maintain stability during road closures or even a terrorist attack. ►

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*Beginning his career in the Metropolitan Police, Nicholas has decades of experience in counter-terrorism and cybersecurity. He has founded and worked at numerous different companies serving law enforcement agencies and is a champion for digital policing initiatives.*

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At CommSmart, we have embraced digital policing. It is now an enhancement for law enforcement's original mission and continues the principles of policing. Commercial enterprise has invested billions on analytic attributes and this is a cost saving investment for all global law enforcement.

### LOCATE SUSPECTS, WITNESSES AND QUICKLY UNCOVER ASSETS

As we know, during the initial stages of an investigation, information is scarce. CommSmart's predictive crime and analytics tool, Atmospherics, uses investigative technology that can expedite the identification of people and their assets, addresses, relatives and business associates by providing instant access to a comprehensive database of criminal/public records that would ordinarily take days to collect. Developed by experienced law enforcement professionals, it enables law enforcement agencies to locate suspects, find missing children and quickly solve cases.

This is tied to the RMS/CAD data, used by 'beat officers' to understand their crime stats. Daily, they are reminded of prior events and historical data, which lead to 'hotspots' of crime and predictive analysis.

The social and analytical interactions are designed to be accessible at all levels, meaning the information can benefit officers, analysts, and management. Peel could never have dreamt of the amount of data that would be aiding the police of the future.

When looking at the chatter, which happens prior to and after a criminal event, you can drill down into social media and monitor the activity of all connections, historically and in real time. Including their photographs, texts and live video. Nothing is left to chance! This also improves and aids probation services and anti-social behaviour intelligence.

The culmination of information enables productive and predictive crime resolution.

It draws all of the above information to one screen, becoming an even more substantial asset at the core of what law enforcement is all about, resolution. It is pure, simplistic, linked analysis.

Local law enforcement, under the statutes, is concerned with responding to crime, keeping order, investigating illegal activities and if they have the time and information, they can even try to prevent crime. This, after all, is their role, to police the community they serve.

### SUMMARY

The people are the police and police are the people. The Nine Peelian Principles of 1829<sup>1</sup> still stand tall today and even go further when connected with technology and professional policing standards.

However, if we learn anything from the global experience it is that conventional policing methods are not an effective way to deal with or to prevent terrorism.

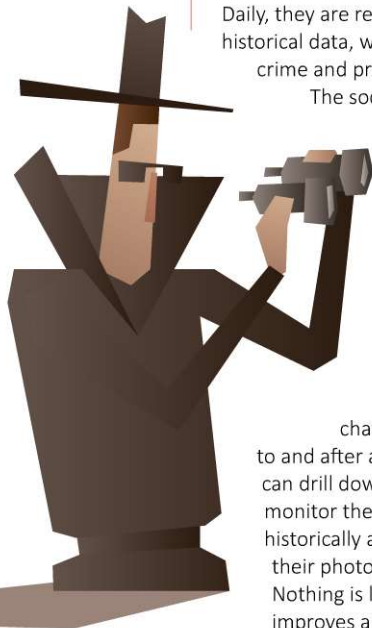
By conventional policing, we are assuming that agencies have already evolved and adopted or reinstated, a community approach to faithfully policing their communities.

Many forces are moving away from a collective solution and turning to apps for smartphones, which lead to a disconnected individual solution that will not be able to connect the county, country, and individual intelligence agencies.

More than 18,000 law enforcement agencies across the US have entered into the computing and cyber environments with CADs and RMS (street level data), with some even joining data sharing networks. Data analysis has increased policing efficiency and has advanced policing in the right direction in support of information led policing.

Sadly, community policing and information led policing, together, are not aggressive enough to deal with terrorism and drug/gang-related crime in their communities, because agencies ignore the largest sources of data and information in today's society: social media.

Predictive analytics and social media monitoring is the key to utilising all resources and ensuring digital policing continues evolving and safeguarding communities. 🚔



#### Reference

1. Robert Peel's 9 Principles of Policing, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/policing-by-consent/definition-of-policing-by-consent>