

SUBJECT TO DEBATE

A NEWSLETTER OF THE POLICE EXECUTIVE RESEARCH FORUM

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A New York Times story about the PERF meeting is available online at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/28/us/police-chiefs-focus-on-disparities-in-gun-violence.html?_r=1

The screenshot shows a New York Times article from April 27, 2012, by Erica Goode. The article compares gun violence in Philadelphia and San Diego. Philadelphia reported 144 gun crimes in a week, while San Diego reported 20. The article discusses a survey of 250 police chiefs and mentions the Police Executive Research Forum.

Session at PERF Annual Meeting Explores Gun Violence

By James McGinty
PERF Project Assistant

PERF'S 2012 ANNUAL MEETING IN WASHINGTON, DC on April 26-27 led off with a session on gun violence, which included results of a PERF survey, case studies of gun crimes in six cities, and an analysis of the costs of gun-related violence. This session was part of a larger project on gun crimes being conducted by PERF with support from the Joyce Foundation. Following are excerpts from this session:

ASSISTANT CHIEF BOYD LONG, SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT:

California's Tough Gun Laws Have Helped Reduce Violent Crime

In the state of California, if you are convicted of using a gun in committing a crime, you automatically receive a 10-year sentence. If you use a gun and fire it, you get 20 years. If you fire the gun and cause an injury, it's automatically 25 years. I think this is one of the factors that has a significant impact on our gun crime. In each city, there are a handful of people who are responsible for violent crime. These laws help us lock up that handful of people, which puts a dent in violent crime.



CHICAGO POLICE SUPERINTENDENT GARRY MCCARTHY:

Stiffer Penalties Are Needed For Illegal Possession of Firearms

People don't go to prison for illegal firearm possession in Chicago. The gun that was used to shoot one of my officers about five weeks ago was sold to a 52-year-old woman in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1972. She died in 2006. Our big question is where a gun like that has been since then. We're confiscating a lot of illegal guns, but no one is going to jail for those firearms.

We now have a new law in Chicago that prosecutes gang members caught with guns with stiffer penalties. I think this is a big step.



MILWAUKEE POLICE CHIEF ED FLYNN:

Victims of Handgun Violence And Perpetrators Have Similar Demographics

85 percent of the victims of handgun violence in Milwaukee have criminal records, and the median number of prior arrests is 7. To a large extent, victims and suspects share income demographics, racial

>> continued on page 2

demographics, social status demographics, and criminal demographics. One gunshot victim studied by PERF was first arrested at age 13. Since then, he's been arrested 24 times for 47 offenses. When we caught up with one of his assailants, he was in the hospital recovering from wounds from another gunshot battle. We've gotten to the point with our fusion center where we've been predicting who is likely to get shot, and before that can happen, arresting them for something else, which usually isn't hard to do.



MINNEAPOLIS CHIEF TIM DOLAN:

Guns Are Available On the Street for \$100

We don't have many gun stores in our city, yet guns are

plentiful. You can buy a gun on the streets of Minneapolis for as little as \$100. We are seeing a drop in our seized guns because of changes in the laws on vehicle searches. Not very long ago, we would stop a vehicle and if the driver didn't have insurance or a license, you'd tow and search the car. You can't do that so much anymore. We've had changes in how police do business, so we have to work a little harder and be more creative.

TORONTO DEPUTY CHIEF PETER SLOLY:

Last Year We Had 28 Homicides in a City of 2.6 Million

Our homicides peaked in 1991, with 89 homicides. Last year we were down to 28 homicides. Our worst year in the millennium was 2005, when we had 80 homicides, 52 of which were committed with firearms. It was dubbed "The Year of the Gun" by our media. Since then, we have put in place a pretty comprehensive anti-violence strategy. It's probably not very different from most of what

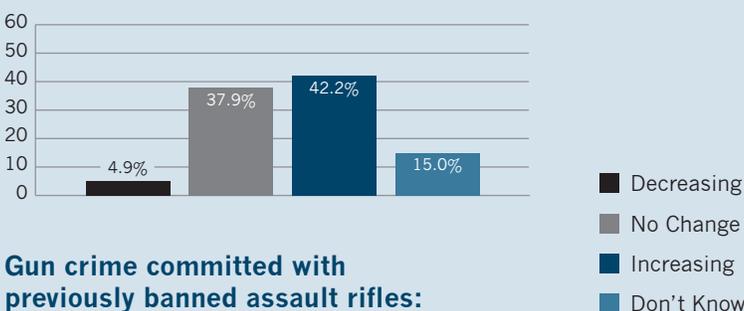


you have in the United States, because we stole a lot of it from you. We use intelligence-led, targeted, risk-focused enforcement. I think we need more discussion of community engagement, com-

PERF survey of law enforcement agencies shows increases in gun thefts and street purchases of firearms.

We asked: "Since 2005, what trends has your agency witnessed in gun-related crimes?"

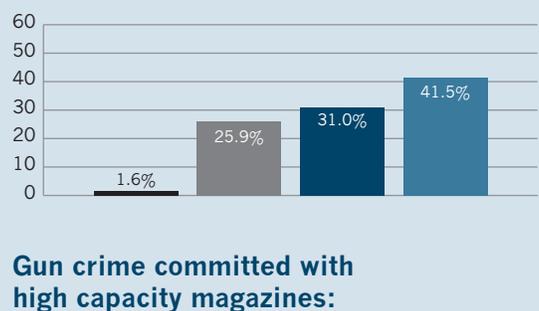
Gun thefts:



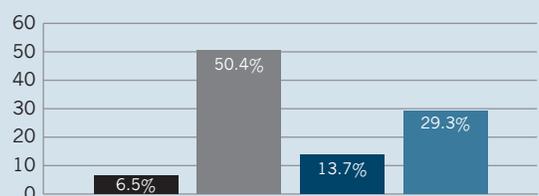
Gun crime committed with previously banned assault rifles:



Street purchases of illegal guns:



Gun crime committed with high capacity magazines:



munity mobilization, and changing the conditions in those very small geographic locations which bring in high volumes of criminal activity.

AUSTIN, TX CHIEF ART ACEVEDO:

Long Prison Terms for Gun Offenders Will Bring Results

We're not talking about lawful gun owners who are creating the problems. They're caused by gangsters. We in law enforcement are never going to be able to have all the laws passed that we'd like, so I think we have to focus on criminals and be sure that they face real consequences. The criminal use of a gun should get you 10 years in prison. That's really going to be what changes things.



CHIEF CATHY LANIER, WASHINGTON, DC METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT:

There is a Tolerance for Violence

Most of our homicide victims are young black men in black neighborhoods. Where is the outrage that nobody is going to jail for these crimes? How is it that so many people can be shot and nobody is angry about it? If a white man were shot in Georgetown, it would be a big deal and somebody would go to jail for a long time. I think the real problem is this tolerance of the idea that certain people don't matter as much and certain neighborhoods don't matter as much.



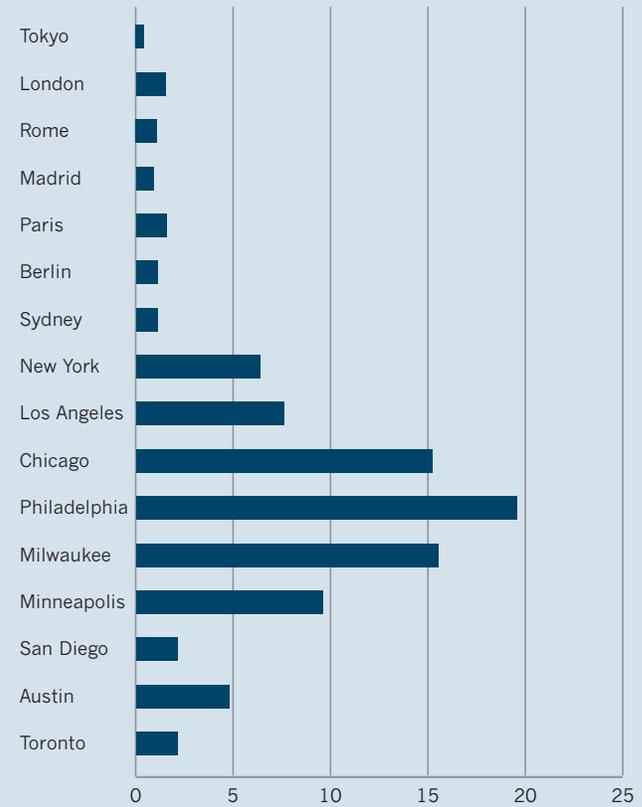
PHILADELPHIA POLICE COMMISSIONER CHARLES RAMSEY:

Violence Won't End Until People Care About the Shootings in All Neighborhoods

It's almost easier to solve a homicide than a nonfatal shooting, because a lot of the shootings are bad guys shooting bad guys, and they don't want to cooperate—they just want to go retaliate. A lot of victims don't give us any information about who shot them, so the Police Department doesn't have a case. It's just a constant revolving door.

Part of the problem is that everybody sees law enforcement as being the ones who "own" the violence problem. Where is the community in all this?

International comparison: Homicides per 100,000 population



Sources: UN Office on Drugs and Crime (<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/homicide.html>); UCR

As a society, we cherry-pick which cases get all the attention. Nobody in this room, unless you're from Sanford, Florida, would even know the name Trayvon Martin if it had been a black kid who shot Trayvon Martin. Homicides happen every day in Philadelphia and in other cities across the country, but if it's a black killing a black, then no one cares, except the family members and the police. It's not going to be on CNN, and you're not going to have a panel of experts on TV talking about it.



Our streets are bleeding profusely. We can pat ourselves on the back and say we had 100 fewer homicides than we had before. But too many people are still dying, and our society isn't creating a comprehensive strategy to deal with all the root causes of violence. Some Mayors are trying to work on these root factors that contribute to gun crime, but they don't get the financial support they need to make a real difference.

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I am not optimistic that it's going to get better any time soon.

People say, "We can't arrest our way out of the violence problem." Maybe we can't, but arrests are certainly *part* of the solution. We have some people who need to be taken off the streets for a long period of time.

This is a crisis. People have gotten desensitized. Young people in certain neighborhoods grow up thinking they're *supposed* to die on the streets of Philadelphia. If a homicide happens in Center City, that's a problem; but if it's not Center City, no one notices.

And the only people who can change that dynamic are our citizens—the people who truly can believe that a murder in Englewood is a murder against *all* of Chicago, that a murder in the East Division of Philly is a murder against all of Philadelphia. But right now, that just doesn't exist, and I don't see it changing anytime soon.

BALTIMORE POLICE COMMISSIONER FRED BEALEFELD:

"Microstamping" on Handgun Firing Pins Would Revolutionize Investigations

Currently we can only compare shell casings to other shell casings, and then hope to eventually match it up to a gun. Because of staff-

ing issues, there is about a six-month delay in getting results back from shell casing examinations in Baltimore. And once results do come back, all they usually tell us is whether a shell casing is linked to another shooting. We can only connect it to a gun if the gun is confiscated.

If you're not familiar with microstamping, it's a very simple technology that imprints serial numbers on the head of firing pins. If we had microstamping, any cop could pick up a shell casing, read a number off the back of the casing with a magnifying glass, type it into a database on their smartphone, and know in an instant who that gun is registered to. They could immediately drive to the owner's house and ask, "Do you know where your gun is?"

This would bring us much closer to preventing violent crime in our cities.

We also should have requirements to report stolen weapons. If you owned a pet cobra and it got away, you'd have a moral responsibility to notify everybody in the neighborhood. But in this country we don't have to notify anyone if our guns are stolen, which is just as dangerous a situation. 

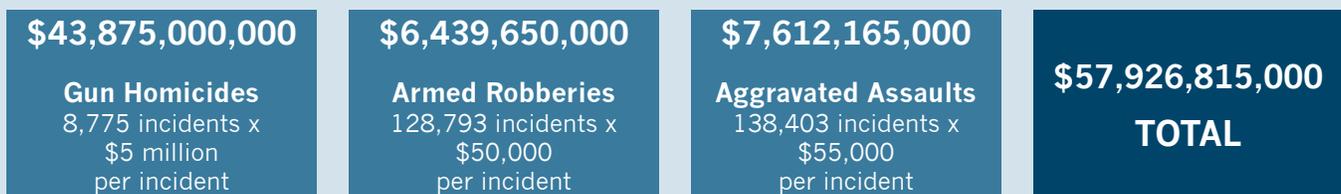


The Costs of Gun Violence: \$57.9 Billion

A 2010 RAND Corporation study cited 3 different methodologies for estimating the costs of crime.

- The most conservative methodology (resulting in the lowest cost estimates) was developed by Cohen & Piquero in 2009, as follows:
 - Murder: **\$5 million per crime**
 - Armed Robbery: **\$50,000 per crime**
 - Aggravated Assault: **\$55,000 per crime**
- These estimates include:
 - **Victim Costs** (lost productivity; medical care; social services; property loss; and a "quality of life" estimate)
 - **Criminal Justice Costs** (Costs per offender of each stage of the process, including police costs, prosecutor costs, court costs, and costs of prison, jail, and probation and parole agencies)
 - **Offender Costs** (medical care, costs borne by offenders' families, and loss of any legitimate earnings of offenders prior to incarceration)

Costs of Firearm Crime in 2010:



Sources:

Paul Heaton. *Hidden in Plain Sight: What Cost-of-Crime Research Can Tell Us About Investing in Police*. RAND Corporation, 2010. Available at http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional_papers/OP279.html.

Costs of firearm crime in 2010 data from UCR, cost estimates from Cohen and Piquero.

Michael Davis, Jack Harris, and Terry Gainer Win PERF Awards

ON APRIL 27, PERF PRESENTED ITS 2012 GARY P. HAYES AWARD to Brooklyn Park, MN Police Chief Michael Davis, and its 2012 Leadership Award to retired Phoenix Police Chief Jack Harris and to Senate Sergeant at Arms Terrance Gainer.

Michael Davis: Chief Davis's leadership talents were best described by Rick Myers, Interim Police Chief of Sanford, FL, who nominated him for the Hayes Award.

"Mike Davis began his career in policing with the Minneapolis Police, where he excelled right from the start," Chief Myers said. "Throughout his entire career in Minneapolis, his personnel file reflects a continuous flow of incoming praise for his compassion, fairness, and problem-solving. In less than five years as police chief in Brooklyn Park, Chief Davis has already made a profound impact. He arrived in 2008 to find a professional organization that was still rooted deeply in a traditional policing philosophy. Conflict between traditional residents, the increasingly diverse new residents, and the police was on the rise. Chief Davis led his agency to provide community leadership in helping new immigrant residents better understand the American system of laws and good citizenship, reducing conflict and tension between the police and new residents. He successfully integrated problem-solving and community policing principles across all divisions of the department. Mike Davis represents where police leadership is going. He is a thoughtful, insightful, collaborative leader who shows passion for his profession and compassion for the community he serves."



Jack Harris: Chief Jack Harris was chosen for the Leadership Award in part for his leadership on the issue of immigration enforcement by local police. "Jack's leadership clearly has inspired many of his fellow police chiefs across the nation to speak out against major changes in local police involvement in enforcing federal immigration laws," said Tucson Police Chief Roberto A. Villaseñor, who nominated Harris for the Leadership Award. "His fellow police chiefs and police commissioners see Jack as a real profile in courage."

Chief Villaseñor noted that Arizona has become known as "ground zero" regarding the immigration debate. Despite extreme pressures to adopt harsh policies in Phoenix, Chief Villaseñor noted, "Jack Harris resolutely took a different approach—focusing police resources on fighting serious crimes, including those connected to illegal immigration." Chief Harris also spoke out on the issue at the national level. In 2010, he worked with PERF to organize a meeting of nine police chiefs from across the country with Attorney General Eric Holder regarding Arizona's SB 1070 law.

During his 39-year career with the Phoenix Police Department, Harris made many other contributions to the advancement of professionalism in policing. He developed an Early Intervention System that has been replicated in other departments and is considered a national model. He improved internal investigations procedures and systems, developed mechanisms for repairing strained relations between police management and unions, and worked to cultivate leadership by officers throughout the department.

Terry Gainer: Terrance Gainer, who also received the Leadership Award, started his career in 1968 as a Chicago police officer. His talents were recognized as he rose through the ranks while studying the law. As a practicing attorney, he served as the Chicago Police Department's chief legal officer. In 1998, Gainer joined his colleague Charles Ramsey, who had been chosen to serve as Chief in Washington, D.C. As Ramsey's second-in-command, Gainer helped transform Washington's MPD, establishing accountability, professionalism, and responsiveness to the community. In 2002, shortly after the September 11 terrorist attacks, Gainer was appointed Chief of the U.S. Capitol Police, where he took responsibility for ensuring security at one of the most high-profile terrorism targets in the world. Gainer became Senate Sergeant at Arms in 2007, where he continues his leadership in maintaining security in the Capitol and Senate Office Buildings.

During his career, Gainer has taken other assignments in addition to his full-time jobs. In 2007 he served on the Independent Commission on the Security Forces of Iraq, which assessed the Iraqi Security Forces' ability to maintain the country's territorial integrity while denying safe haven to terrorists. In 2008, he assisted the Special Envoy for Middle East Regional Security, which was created to strengthen security institutions and advance the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. And In 2011, he led a team of American police practitioners and academics to provide training and expertise to the top 50 police executives in Tanzania.



TOP: Gary P. Hayes Award winner Michael Davis, and Alex Hayes, son of Gary Hayes. MIDDLE: PERF President Chuck Ramsey presents Leadership Award to Jack Harris. BOTTOM: Commissioner Ramsey presents the Leadership Award to Terry Gainer.



Social Media and Policing: The Limits and Possibilities

By Debra Morgan

AS COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR TO THE MINISTRY of Interior in Bahrain, Ms. Morgan is working to bring principles of democratic policing to that nation. As part of that effort, she has made a study of the use of social media by the police in disseminating information as well as receiving information from the public. In this article, she offers “big picture” guidance about police departments’ overall approach to social media, as well as technical details that must be understood if Facebook, Twitter, and other social media are to be used effectively.

Eight years ago, in 2004, long after many of the police officers working today had completed their police academy training, Facebook went on line for the first time. Social media was officially born. YouTube followed in 2005, and Twitter appeared a year later. Over the next six years, hundreds of millions of people across the globe participated in the creation of a vast online social network.

The vast majority of social media traffic is just noise. One study of 2,000 randomly selected tweets found that only 4% were newsworthy.¹ More than 40% were classified as “pointless babble,” and another 38% were merely “conversational.” Getting a message heard among the millions of other messages tweeted, posted and blogged can be difficult.

Prior to the advent of social media, information networks available to law enforcement agencies (such as the Automated Fingerprint Identification System and the DNA CODIS system) were largely limited to communicating crime-centric data. Social media, however, takes information networks to a new level—one that communicates to police departments the thoughts of all sorts of people, whether they are kids organizing a flash mob or witnesses Tweeting about a crime they just saw. In the 1980s, the Unabomber, Ted Kaczynski, scribbled his rants in a loose-leaf notebook in the privacy of an isolated cabin. Today, people such as Anders Breivik, accused killer of 77 people in Norway, post their manifestos on social media for all to see.

For some police forces, a social media component is absolutely essential. Big-city departments with unpredictable traffic snarls, frequent conventions and sporting events, multi-ethnic communities, and tech-savvy populations can no longer claim to be a full-service department without active, round-the-clock participation in the social media network. Many departments use the Internet to post traffic accident updates, requests for crime witnesses to come forward, and messages about security at big events. And there are many examples of cases in which police officers identified witnesses to crimes by searching Twitter or Facebook.

Many police officials find themselves considering a jump into social media. But it’s smart to stop and think before making the leap with both feet. Allocating scarce resources to a social media unit may not always provide the expected results. In areas with low crime rates or few resources for police, it may not make sense to train staff in social media and allocate funding that could be used more effectively elsewhere.

1. <http://www.pearanalytics.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/Twitter-Study-August-2009.pdf>

And if not done correctly, a police department’s foray into social media may lead some community members astray. For example, encouraging people to report crimes to a police Twitter account could conceivably interfere with the well-established 911 system. While Twitter is quick and easy to use, it does not yet replace a traditional 911 call that allows for a real-time conversation between a trained operator and the victim of a crime.

Twitter, Facebook, or Both?

One of the first decisions to make is how many social media sites to maintain. An official YouTube channel is necessary if the department will be posting video. Depending on the goals and the officer time allocated to maintain social media, a decision should be made whether to maintain a Facebook account, a Twitter account, or both.

While Facebook currently has more users than Twitter and is a treasure trove of information, that does not necessarily mean it is the right social media hub for all police departments. Facebook is similar in some ways to the design of most police department websites. Maintaining both could simply result in a duplication of effort with little extra benefit to show for it. For departments with active, well-established websites, it may be best to create a Twitter account and then add Facebook if and when the need arises.

Key Things to Know about Twitter

Twitter has a unique limiting factor: the 140-character limit imposed on all Twitter messages. This has forced even the most verbose Tweeters to choose their words wisely. It has also created a slew of abbreviations and Twitter slang. For instance, using “u” instead of “you” or “b/c” instead of “because” is perfectly acceptable.

On the other hand, no one needs to receive a Tweet from the police department that reads:

“Wazzup tweeps? BOLO 4 peeps drvn trickd out blk Chryslr with plt# BFN349. U c the SOBs? Snd us location.”

Police department Tweets should make use of Twitter parlance... to a degree. Retaining a professional tone of voice is a top priority.

For messages that require pages of explanation, not a few words, the information can be posted on the department website, and a Tweet with a link to the corresponding web page should be released. In fact, whenever a full press release, photo or video is posted to the website, you should consider posting a Tweet with a link to the new information. (When including a link in a Tweet, use a URL shortener such as <http://goo.gl> or <http://tinyurl.com>.)

Choosing the right Twitter account name is important for two reasons. First, the name should be able to be easily incorporated into the Tweets themselves. This will help people locate the messages. Second, the account name should identify the department in as few characters as possible. For example, @SanFranciscoPoliceDepartment (all Twitter names start with the @ symbol) would not be as useful as @SFPolice or @SFPD.

It is also important to have Twitter verify the account (a verified account carries a blue check next to the account name) to prevent people from sending false messages from a fake account.

Hashtags Can Help Spread Your Messages

When Tweets are sent they should include relevant hashtags (a hashtag is any string of letters preceded by a # symbol.) For example, use #LAtraffic or #SeattlePD to identify the nature of the

Tweet. A Tweet about a traffic accident on the 405 freeway in Los Angeles might read:

"#LATraffic: 405 southbound at 110 interchange at standstill due 2 accident. Updates 2 follow."

#LATraffic identifies the message and allows Twitter users to follow everything with that hashtag included. Future #LATraffic Tweets will automatically reach anyone following that hashtag *as long as it is included in the Tweet*.

Once the hashtag gains a following, Los Angeles drivers who encounter traffic problems will start reporting them using this same hashtag. *Thus, the public begins to spread the kind of information that you generated in the first place.* It's that easy.

For police departments that have dedicated social media units, subscription media analytic sites such as ViralHeat and Radian6 can track Facebook, YouTube and Twitter to produce statistics. Looking at these statistics replaces the front-line view of social media with a valuable helicopter view. Statistics can identify what social media platforms are most used in a community, how frequently they are used, and very importantly, who the top influencers are and what reach they have.

These analytic sites can also highlight frequently used hashtags that allow a police agency to get in on the conversation. For instance, if a neighborhood watch group in Detroit, using a #Detroitcrime hashtag, receives tips that should in fact be directed to the police, a department Tweet such as the following can be sent:

"Report #Detroitcrime to #Detroitpolice @DetroitPD."

Everyone following the #Detroitcrime hashtag receives the message and is alerted to the existence of the Detroit Police Department Twitter account (@DetroitPD) and is given a new hashtag to use (#Detroitpolice) when providing tips.

What makes the above Tweet even more effective is that it is short enough (has a small number of characters) to be *re-Tweeted* to people not already following the #Detroitcrime hashtag. Suddenly, with the push of just a few keys, the Detroit Police Department has inserted itself into the community discussion and reporting of crime.

Be careful, though. Once the lines of communications open, a police department can be responsible for following up on all of the tips that are received.

Using Social Media in Investigations

If a department decides to monitor social media for purposes of investigating suspects or crimes, it should keep at least one eye on the courts. As most senior police officials can attest, there are times when police protocols come under judicial review as a result of lawsuits. With 100% certainty, it can be anticipated that some individual or aggrieved party will sue to have guidelines imposed on social media monitoring. Police officials should be aware of the agreements and court settlements emanating from the political protest movement of the 1960s. These agreements, such as the NYPD's Handschu Agreement, focus on the rights to privacy and to engage in political activity, and require a criminal predicate to be established prior to monitoring activities.

Taking a Professional Approach to a Casual Medium

Most people use Facebook or Twitter for casual purposes, but a police department uses social media strictly for professional purposes.

So even though most of the content on Facebook or Twitter may be informal, police should remember to be just as rigorous about social media as they are about any official document they release to the public. Just because a Tweet is shorter than a press release does not mean it should receive less attention to grammar and fact-checking. And just because a rookie officer is a self-proclaimed Twitter expert and has some free time while working the front desk of a precinct house does not mean he should be given the responsibility of speaking for the department.

In fact, police officials are probably well-advised to avoid having their own personal Twitter accounts. There are many news articles about people who have gotten themselves into trouble for what they have said on Twitter. So let the department's public information officer or community liaison officer write the department's tweets, and leave it at that. A police chief does not need to tweet or answer community members' tweets. People would rather imagine their police chief working hard to fight crime, rather than sitting in his office answering tweets.

Before a department begins posting information on social media, its Media Policies and Procedures Manual should be updated to provide guidance on these new technologies. Tweets should be handled by someone with media know-how who has a direct line to the chief of police and who has the chief's confidence. Often, the best person is the public information officer or community relation liaison (the exception being traffic updates, which may be best handled by a traffic designee.) It is much easier to teach someone the mechanics of using Twitter than it is to teach the wisdom needed to release information in a pitfall-free way. That wisdom can only come with experience.

Because early information gathered from a crime scene is often incorrect, the immediacy of Twitter can be a danger. In the first few hours after a high-profile crime occurs, Twitter is an effective way to deliver a "holding statement" that reassures the public that the police are on the scene, but it should not attempt to relay specific details. Further information can be provided later, as it is confirmed, after relatives of victims are informed, etc.

Making Use of the Network

Once a Twitter account has a healthy number of followers, it can be used in a variety of situations. For example, if the police department's city is hosting the Super Bowl or some other large sporting event, social media messaging should be a part of the overall public security strategy. Police can Tweet about everything from traffic delays to security protocols at the venue to reminders of how sports fans can report something suspicious.

By building these capabilities on routine matters, you can help ensure that they will work in an emergency. For example, if a police department has 5,000 followers on its Twitter account and an emergency occurs at the major sporting event, those Twitter followers will re-Tweet the information to their followers, who will re-Tweet it to their followers, and so on down the line. In a very short amount of time, it is conceivable that the majority of people in the venue will receive the information you release.

My advice is to proceed at a comfortable pace, discover the pitfalls and the possibilities, and grow gradually.



Debra Morgan



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