

Enhancing Cooperation Between LEAs and Citizens: The INSPEC2T Approach

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Abstract : Enhancing the feeling of public safety and crime prevention are tasks customarily assigned to the Police. Police departments have, however, recognized that traditional ways of policing methods are becoming obsolete; Community Policing (CP) philosophy; however, when applied appropriately, leads to seamless collaboration between various stakeholders like the Police, NGOs and the general public and provides the opportunity to identify risks, assist in solving problems of crime, disorder, safety and crucially contribute to improving the quality of life for everyone in a community. Social Media, on the other hand, due to its high level of infiltration in modern life, constitutes a powerful mechanism which offers additional and direct communication channels to reach individuals or communities. These channels can be utilized to improve the citizens' perception of the Police and to capture individual and community needs, when their feedback is taken into account by Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) in a structured and coordinated manner. This paper presents research conducted under INSPEC²T (Inspiring CitizeNS Participation for Enhanced Community PoliCing AcTions), a project funded by the European Commission's research agenda to bridge the gap between CP as a philosophy and as an organizational strategy, capitalizing on the use of Social Media. The project aims to increase transparency, trust, police accountability, and the role of civil society. It aspires to build strong, trusting relationships between LEAs and the public, supporting two-way, contemporary communication while at the same time respecting anonymity of all affected parties. Results presented herein summarize the outcomes of four online multilingual surveys, focus group interviews, desktop research and interviews with experts in the field of CP practices. The above research activities were conducted in various EU countries aiming to capture requirements of end users from diverse backgrounds (social, cultural, legal and ethical) and determine public expectations regarding CP, community safety and crime prevention.

Keywords : community partnerships, next generation community policing, social media, public safety

Conference Title : ICLPJ 2016 : International Conference on Law, Policing and Justice

Conference Location : Paris, France

Conference Dates : August 22-23, 2016