San Francisco Open Email

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Project Overview

- Multi-disciplinary group from Berkeley

- Looking at social, legal, ethical, and policy issues around "open email"

- My part: interviews with the SFPD

CPRA

- California Public Records Act

- Passed in 1968

- Gives public access to government writings, including email

Research Overview

- 13 interviews with a mix of SFPD employees

- Participants represent significant range of user types

- Participants selected in coordination with the SFPD

Findings

- Current use

- Openness and transparency

Current Use

Finding:
Email is social

"In the world of police work, we're up-to-date as far as technology is concerned, but my personal belief... being a police officer is a different world. When you're on patrol, after the morning meeting, you hit the ground running." (P7, notes)

Finding:
Trust & reliability are critical

"Anything can be hacked. It might just be a question of when," (P8, notes)

Finding:
Lack of policies and training

"I don't know. We have a computer policy about what you can load on them, but I don't know that they've come out with thou shalt not email this or that." (P8, notes)

Finding:
Technology beyond what's provided

"I prefer to communicate via cellphone... It has tools you can use, maps, navigation... It would help out a lot if the computers in the cars had GPS. My phone alone can do more than the computer can do," (P9, notes)

Openness and Transparency

Finding:
Public Access vs Privacy

"Everybody can't have everything, but my gut feeling is that if there is a legal reason, an entitlement to access, then so be it. Otherwise, maybe everybody should just do their own jobs... However, there is absolutely no justification to hide things that need to be public, even if they're terrible. You have to sack up and own it." (P11, notes)

Finding:
Transparency → Performance

"You definitely want to make sure you have spellcheck on. And what about people who don't have English as a first language?" (P5, notes)

Finding:
Email use would decrease

"Definitely. I would use the phone more than send an email," (P6, notes)

Recommendations

Recommendation: Training

Recommendation: Policy

Recommendation: Open Email

Further Work

- Threat assessment

- In-depth privacy and transparency assessment

- Engineering assessment

Thanks!