

## THE BLOG

# Technology Helps Continued Fight to Bring Down American Crime Rates

02/21/2013 05:36 pm ET | Updated Apr 23, 2013

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Despite frightening news reports we see on a nightly basis, crime rates around the world have been dropping for decades. Property crimes, for example, have fallen by more than 25 percent in the past two decades, despite years of recession and stagnant wages. While this news is encouraging, entrepreneurs and innovators all over the country have been developing technologies to help this trend along.

Many of these new programs and devices are so powerful, they make some extremely uncomfortable. However, they are generally used on a very small scale or sparingly.

Lowering crime rates using next century's technology has been an effort put forth by both [public and private entities](#). Recently the NYPD and Microsoft paired up to develop and implement a new technology known as "the Dashboard" that allows police to mine for data in many different precincts. While it is only used in offices now, many think this technology will be available on officer's laptops eventually.

Another seemingly futuristic technology is the Questionable Observer Detector (QUoD), developed by the University of Notre Dame, that is able to spot criminals once they return to the scene of the crime. Using security camera clips, the program is able to pick out the faces of those who returned more frequently than is deemed acceptable.

## Everyday Technology Fighting Everyday Crimes

However, most crimes are not caught by things so out of the norm — most potential attackers and thieves are fended off or caught by everyday technology used by everyday people. Here are three examples of commonplace place items that have become excellent detectives.

### 1. Social media

## What People are Searching For



Manslaughter charge



Strikes pound Aleppo

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While it might seem strange, social media has proven to be a valuable [tool in the battle against crime](#). Some criminals are smart, but others are either unaware of how easy it is to find information on social media platforms or just plain dumb. As a result, many will give away their criminal activities and post what amount to self-confessions on major social media sites. Law enforcement agents are taking steps to hire professionals who can analyze social media data. In addition, social media is a great way to distribute information, and news of crime can quickly spread across these networks. By sharing a surveillance camera image on social media, law enforcement agents may be able to get tips as to the identity of the perpetrator. Social media can also be a great place to share tips for avoiding dangerous areas and tips for keeping safe against crime.

## 2. Better security systems

Only 15 years ago, home security has lots of room to improve — systems



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systems can now capture video at resolutions higher than professional systems in use only a decade ago. Further, modern systems can be accessed through smartphones and other mobile devices, which allows homeowners to get instant alerts about potential property crimes. Another advantage of modern systems is that they can automatically alert law enforcement agents. Because of this, homeowners may not need to call the cops after a robbery has transpired; police officers may be able to respond while the crime is in progress.

## 3. Tracking technology

In the past, GPS devices were large, unwieldy and expensive. As a result, few law enforcement agencies have access to them. Today, [GPS devices](#) can be produced in small packages that can be easily concealed in a suspect's vehicle. Armed with these GPS devices, law enforcement agents can track suspects and use their locations as potential evidence. In addition, cellphones constantly communicate with cell towers, and detailed logs can reveal where particular individuals were located during particular periods of time. This information can be subpoenaed and used as evidence against alleged criminals. Thanks to this technology, more criminals are behind bars where they cannot commit further crimes.

The battle against crime continues, and law enforcement agents have more tools at their disposal than ever before. However, a continuous reactive cycle against crime will do nothing to eliminate it — it is high-level policy that will ultimately have the most efficacy in eliminating crime. Continuing to improve education and provide opportunities to those without will do far more than tracking chips and better security cameras.

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