Web-based Crime Mapping

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Safety First

Safety is a priority that comes before convenience, comfort, wealth or even health, because of its immediate nature. ‘Safety First!’ is a phrase that governs our lives. Sadly, one of the most severe and frequent safety hazards, is violent crime. Crime can be prevented or avoided with the proper knowledge. Experts say to be safe, first be aware of your surroundings. There is a tactical advantage to having knowledge of crime statistics in the area that you’re in and other areas where you travel. The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) serves as the forum for regional decision-making for the San Diego region. SANDAG has a division called ARJIS which provides websites for tabular data (http://crimestats.arjis.org) and to view regional crime maps (www.crimemapping.com). You can also get automated e-mail alerts of crimes in your neighborhood (ARJIS, Division of SANDAG, 2015)!

Web-based crime mapping, aims to provide crime‑mapping information (crime statistical data) externally to the public. This is different from the traditional purpose of supporting law enforcement’s internal decision-making of crime prevention. The boom of web-based geographic information system (GIS) technologies, is opening new opportunities for using crime mapping to support crime prevention, for all people involved. It is a web-based solution that visualizes crime information on a digital map and is accessible by the public. The crime information is provided by related authorities such as police agencies, public safety bureaus and other government departments. The interface is a public accessible website, managed by related authorities (Leong & Chan, 2013)or outsourced to commercial service providers. Some commercial service providers are Crimereports (www.crimereports.com), Crimemapping (www.crimemapping.com), Spotcrime (spotcrime.com), and so on (Leong & Chan, 2013).

Crime statistics are needed by police departments to allocate manpower resources for crime prevention. The public populous also need crime statistics for an accurate idea of what offenses are being committed and where they are taking place. CrimeReports.com provides law enforcement agencies with an affordable and easy-to-use Web-based service for managing and controlling crime data in near real-time. It is a very inexpensive way to get real-time crime mapping. The crime mapping details the date and time that the crime occurred, the type of crime, the location, the incident identifier number, plus which police agency and neighborhood that the crime occurred within. CrimeReports.com presents the data on a Google-style map, with each type of crime location marked with distinctive flags. Categories include Assault, Breaking & Entering, Homicide, Proactive Policing (Community Policing, Pedestrian Stop, Vehicle Stop), Property Crime, Quality of Life (Disorder, Liquor, Drugs), Registered Sex Offenders, Robbery (Violent), Sex Offenses, Theft, Traffic Enforcement, - Theft from Vehicle, Theft of Vehicle and Vehicle Recovery. Another product is "Command Central” which tracks, manages and controls incident-level crime data in real time using charts, graphs, maps and other visualizations. CrimeReports.com comes with a free 30-day trial, so a law-enforcing agency can try it out without spending a cent. Since it works with existing RMS and CAD crime records, supplying data to CrimeReports.com doesn't require extra effort on the part of the officers (Careless, 2009).

The web-based crime mapping website, https://www.crimereports.com is a product of the company called PublicEngines™, a Motorola Solutions Company. The website will immediately ask your permission to access your geographical location so it can load the crime map of your area. CrimeReports™ is marketed as a product for law enforcement agencies and advertised as:

“CrimeReports™ auto-publishes crime data from your RMS or CAD systems. Citizens can access and browse crime information as shown on a map from any computer or mobile device and are able to submit anonymous tips through the platform.”

PublicEngines' mission is to help prevent, reduce, and solve crime with easy-to-use, cloud-based solutions that facilitate crime analysis, supply actionable intelligence, and increase public engagement. The company's products include CrimeReports - the #1 most popular online crime mapping solution available; CommandCentral - a rich, intuitive, and affordable crime analytics and data visualization engine; and TipSoft - the industry's most widely adopted anonymous crime tip submission and management platform. PublicEngines services more than 2,500 customers worldwide (PublicEngines, 2015).

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) regularly publishes statistical crime reports and publications, detailing specific offenses and outlining trends that can help you better understand crime threats both nationally and locally. The FBI’s annually publishes several reports. *Crime in the U.S.* is the most comprehensive analysis of violent crime and property crime in the nation. *Hate Crime Statistics* presents yearly data regarding incidents, offenses, victims, and offenders in reported crimes that were motivated in whole or in part by a bias against the victim’s perceived race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disability. *Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted (LEOKA)* gathers data on felonious and accidental line-of-duty deaths and assaults of law enforcement officers. Tabular presentations include weapons used, use of body armor, and circumstances surrounding murders and assaults of officers (Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), 2015).

# References

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