

Theme: Technology, data and knowledge management

Title: Building sustainable policing-practitioner communities online

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OU location: Institute of Educational Technology

Lead Police Partners: To be confirmed

Summary

Community policing is essential for dealing with community issues, yet it entails challenges such as time and effort to develop and maintain personal relationships with citizens. An online policing community can provide constant information about community issues and work as a live and synchronous portal of interaction between the public and practitioners. It could generate practitioner-based research questions and begin to produce data through 'citizen inquiry' methodology (the use of scientific method by the public to raise and resolve problems).

The OU has supported the development of the ground breaking 'nQuire-it' platform (see <http://www.nquire-it.org/>), which will be used to create practitioner communities able to produce questions and data of direct relevance to the ongoing research projects, and that would greatly augment the collaborative model already being used in these projects through the Centre for Policing Research and Learning. Although the academic and research staff within these projects can and will progress ways of collaborating, it would be very useful to develop sustainable connections with practitioners and the general public for the ongoing report of police-related issues and communication with police representatives that will last over and above the project duration.

The key aims of this project are:

- a) to identify the sorts of inquiries that are of most interest and benefit to the police and the public and create respective "missions" on the nQuire-it platform
- b) to share these inquiries widely for the community to participate
- c) to invite both practitioners and members of the public to initiate their own "missions" giving them the opportunity to report on issues they would like to investigate, and d) to provide ongoing support to the community evolved around the nQuire-it platform by facilitating active participation and engagement.

These aims will be implemented through a participatory approach to research involving the academic and research team, police practitioners, and the public. Missions created online will be grounded on real-life events and experiences and emerge from continuous collaboration and reflection with the police and the public.