

Next Generation Community Policing Conference 2017

Abstract title: Ethics...What ethics? New technologies, citizen engagement and ethical dilemmas

Authors: Dr Bina Bhardwa (b.bhardwa@bbk.ac.uk), Gillian Hunter (g.hunter@bbk.ac.uk) and Paul Turnbull (p.turnbull@bbk.ac.uk)

Institution: Institute for Criminal Policy Research (ICPR), Birkbeck, University of London

Abstract

Collaborative technological development reliant on the use and feedback loop of its users presents a number of practical and ethical challenges in action-research. The *City.Risks* project is aimed at increasing citizen perceptions of safety and security in urban environments through the use of innovative technologies and social media. The iterative development of these technological platforms means cultivating an understanding of citizen needs, expectations and experiences. Drawing on empirical research conducted as part of the *City.Risks* project, this paper looks at how the academic encouragement of 'interdisciplinarity' *can* paradoxically create disciplinary divisions between computer scientists (viewed as innovative and progressive) and social scientists (viewed as restraining and questioning). Citizen engagement via the use of technological platforms has raised some interesting ethical questions for our study including what we ask of our research participants and the potential consequences - both intended and unintended - of technological developments; questions not routinely asked by those producing technological innovation. From Use Case selection to user-piloting (short-term and long-term), we highlight the importance of positive collaboration between the technical and social partners to help ensure ethical considerations are an integrated part of the collaborative research process.