

Crime in the future

The foresight crime prevention panel consists of experts from range of disciplines that have identified possible directions of crime in the future. Material innovation, technological developments and subsequent social changes have been at the forefront of these discussions by subject leaders in their field.

Some of the most relevant future predictions for the future, with relevance to bag theft suggest:

Reduction in (physical) property crime:

The number of CRAVED items will not decrease, however, technological innovation will tie the use of object to legitimate users and stolen property will be tagged and traceable – reducing the payoff the thieves. Personal property can be registered and mobile consumer electronics can be traced with an identification number and be inactivated when reported stolen – again reducing the payoff.

Violent crimes:

“Heterogeneity and blurring of human/device boundary – including small portable gadgets, wearable devices, and implantable devices”¹ could lead to violent crimes on the body in order to access wanted goods. People themselves become the target.

Loss of privacy:

Because of our interdependence with technology, the theft of electronic property - services, knowledge and identity - is on the increase. It will increasingly be sold cheaply or even given away free and in this case it is the service that will have the value. Consequentially illicit access to these services will become a ‘new’ crime area. Databases of information will be sold and personal information will be held against individuals in order to discriminate based on medical records etc. The difficulty in finding anyone accountable lies in the anonymity of Internet users. Limits

¹Cremonini, L., Rathmell, A. and Wagner, C. (2003) ‘Cyber Trust and Crime Prevention: Foresight Overview’. Foresight Directorate, Office of Science and Technology UK [online] Available at: http://www.foresight.gov.uk/Previous_Projects/Cyber_Trust_and_Crime_Prevention/Reports_and_Publications/Foresight_Overview/cyber_trust_foresight_overview.pdf [Accessed 27th November 2007].

are placed on governments' abilities to authenticate identity and thus they cannot prosecute. In addition, the internet's transnational nature brings into question whose laws, rules and regulations apply to internet criminals.²

Biometric spoofing:

With the increase of security access via face scans, retina scans, fingerprint recognition, and voice recognition there will be a new demand for thieves to steal our fingerprints. Bori Toth, biometric research and advisory lead at Deloitte & Touche warns us that "many people are trying to regard biometrics as secret but they aren't. Our faces and irises are visible and our voices are being recorded. Fingerprints and DNA are left everywhere we go and it's been proved that these are real threats."³

Personal surveillance:

Today CCTV is part of our everyday lifestyle in the UK. The future could bring us personal black boxes⁴ which will record our daily events as they happen. They will keep records of people we encounter, conversations we have, and any attacks on our physical being. This personal surveillance could reduce the anonymity of any criminal wishing to commit a crime against an individual.

Crime future conclusions

As long as we are interdependent on future technologies, TRUST is at the heart of any future transaction / interaction. Designing out opportunities for criminals will reduce crime. Trust will be gained by consumers by designing secure products which will reduce opportunities for theft and criminal misuse.⁵

DAC Team

² *Ibid*

³ Ranger, S. (2006) *Crime of the future - biometric spoofing?* [online]. Available at: <http://www.silicon.com/financialservices/0,3800010322,39160561,00.htm> [Accessed 23rd January, 2008].

⁴ Neild, I. and Pearson, I. (2005) *BT Technology Timeline*. Available at: http://www.kerignard.com/blog/images/BT_Technology_Timeline_2005.pdf [Accessed 27th November 2007].

⁵ Cremonini, L., Rathmell, A. and Wagner, C. (2003) *Op. Cit.*