

FINDING THE GREY IN THE BLUE: TRANSPARENCY AND DISCLOSURE IN POLICING

Paul Sturges and Louise Cooke
Department of Information Science
Loughborough University, UK

The Police and Communication

- The UK's Police Forces communicate with the public highly effectively
- This is a comparatively new situation, based on:
 - Government policies on police transparency and accountability
 - Senior Officers who accept openness
 - Police who are able and willing to communicate
 - The Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Police forces use a variety of techniques and systems to deliver grey content to the public.



Case studies

- This study is based on two case studies from the English Midlands:
 - Derbyshire
 - Leicestershire
- It describes how police forces communicate with the public and offers some initial analysis based on:
 - Interviews
 - Participant observation
 - Examination of police publications and web resources.

Structures for communication

- UK police forces now employ professional communications staff with a range of specialisations
- They use a mixture of technologies
 - Print
 - Telecommunications
 - Internet
- But first they recognise that face to face contact between the police and public is the foundation of good communication.

Police and Public, Face to Face.

- ‘Neighbourhood Policing’ requires local teams to meet the public informally
 - Street briefings
 - Visits to schools, local councils, etc.
- There are also special events
 - Consultation meetings on the budget
 - Other consultations e.g. ‘Have your say’
 - Campaigns dealing with certain types of crime
- All backed by grey literature and electronic communication.

Print communication

- Print materials are integrated with the whole communication strategy
- In the recent past little more than an Annual Report was available
- Glossy, illustrated newsletters written by professional journalists are now aimed at the whole area, or specific local communities
- In addition to hard information about services, contacts, successes, there is much material featuring individual officers.

Examples of grey publications



Electronic media

- Police websites present high quality grey content to high professional standards:
 - Reports, newsletters, minutes
 - Features on aspects of the work and personalities
 - Freedom of Information services including 'Publication Schemes'
 - Access to databases and message services
 - Young people's content.



Home

Stay Safe

The Police

Fun Stuff

Welcome to Young Space

Welcome to the Young Space police site for Derbyshire! Here, you can read advice from the police, find out what we do and play games.



[top]

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This is the official website of the Derbyshire Constabulary.

Freedom of Information

- Mandatory FOI publication schemes provide an inventory of grey content
- Police work requires well-organised records and this should permit retrieval in response to enquiries from the public
- FOI enquiries received are in addition to high volumes of press enquiries
- FOI enquiries have produced some ‘unwilling’ revelations from police, but also some information that is less revealing.

Conclusions

- Police transparency and disclosure is a good basis for enhanced relations with the public
- High quality communication to the public is now a norm in UK policing
- There is a high financial cost
 - Providing an FOI system
 - Professional standards in print and electronic communication
- The costs of communication call for additional budget allocation so as not to limit policing budgets.