



‘Peer-to-Peer’ information-sharing: building regional and national intelligence resources through local crime reduction partnerships

SUMMARY

Business Crime Reduction Partnerships (BCRPs) play an increasingly important role in tackling low-level crime and anti-social behaviour. They are self-funded by their Members – usually retailers and licensees – to reduce low-level crime and ASB in their immediate neighbourhood. They deliver local solutions to local problems, managing local troublemakers in defined geographical areas.

It is because BCRPs deliver local benefits to their Members that they are willing to fund local BCRPs through subscriptions to cover the employment of a part- or full-time Administrator and the use of online information sharing and partnership management systems.

However there are at least four important benefits to be achieved by encouraging individual BCRPs to link together to share their information with other BCRPs:

- **If an individual is excluded or banned from one locality, he/she is likely to move to another locality to misbehave;**
- **An individual may be seen only as a very occasional offender by one BCRP, but sharing information between BCRPs may indicate that he/she is active in more than one BCRP and is possibly prolific, or a ‘Level Two’ offender;**
- **‘ID-Sought’ images may be positively identify when shared with other Partnerships where they may be known;**
- **The more data can be shared across BCRPs, the more intelligence can be made available to police both to identify Level Two offenders and target resources on them, and also to analyse data to identify trends and patterns which can be used to support broad crime reduction strategies.**

This White Paper shows how individual BCRPs, working at local level to address local problems with local offenders to the benefit of local Members, can link together with other BCRPs efficiently and effectively to deliver the above benefits.

**THE BENEFITS OF
BUSINESS CRIME-
REDUCTION
PARTNERSHIPS**

Business Crime Reduction Partnerships (BCRPs) reduce low-level crime and anti-social behaviour that impacts local businesses – mostly retailers and licensees. Because this reduces losses/increases business for the Members, BCRPs are financed by Members’ subscriptions. Reducing low-level crime and anti-social behaviour is a key part of neighbourhood policing and for this reason, constabularies around the country are keen to support the work of BCRPs. And because reduction in low-level crime and ASB in specific locations generates social benefits within and around the areas covered by BCRPs, public safety agencies and local authorities are also keen to support BCRPs.

New technology, in the form of online systems for information-sharing and partnership administration are available. These new systems, such as DISC, make BCRPs more efficient and effective, enhance their services to Members, and allow closer interworking with police.

**THE CHALLENGE:
ENABLING BCRPs TO
SHARE DATA BEYOND
THEIR IMMEDIATE
LOCALE**

Locally-administrated BCRPs’ prime purpose is to reduce low-level crime and ASB in the locations in which they operate, to the benefit of the local Members that fund them. However there are real benefits that can be achieved by enabling different BCRPs to work together – not only for each participating Partnership but across the wider community beyond their boundaries. How can BCRPs remain local, and focussed on local priorities, yet participate in a broader role delivering potential benefits to other Partnerships representing other Memberships?

Information-sharing cannot be enforced on Partnerships, and top-down pressure to do so may be resisted by Partnerships where funding is predicated on the Partnership’s focus on delivering local benefits to the local Members that pay for it.

This White Paper describes how BCRPs equipped with the DISC online information-sharing and partnership management system can set up their own individual bi-lateral sharing agreements with each other so that each DISC-enabled BCRP can access data from any number of other DISC-enabled Partnerships.

**THE SOLUTION:
‘PEER-TO-PEER
SHARING’**

DISC-enabled local BCRPs can link with neighbouring DISC-enabled BCRPs for the purpose of sharing information - especially useful for identifying travelling offenders. This shared information is not only of benefit to the Members of participating BCRPs - it also provide invaluable intelligence on low-level crime and anti-social behaviour for police use, and for early intervention by community safety agencies. This information-sharing can extend not only between neighbouring BCRPs but between all BCRPs in a police force area and, where relevant, more widely.

The DISC Peer-to-Peer sharing system is available, free of charge, to all users of DISC, currently installed in over 100 local crime reduction partnerships throughout the UK.

The 'peer-to-peer' system is unique, allowing individual Partnerships to decide for themselves who they want to share their Offender Profiles and images with, thus enabling them to create their own customised networks to suit their own needs and priorities.

Peer-to-peer sharing enables individual DISC partnerships to decide for themselves who they are prepared to share their Offender Profiles and images with. The only constraint is that both parties sharing must mutually consent to do so.

Partnerships can decide on any basis for that consent, but compliance with the Data Protection Act, and 'Best Practice' - so important where sharing sensitive personal data is involved - should be key considerations. Peer-to-peer is extremely flexible, allowing Administrators to set up any kind of network for sharing their Offender Profiles and images.

Put at its simplest, if the Administrator of Partnership 'A' is only willing to share its own data with Partnership 'B' but Partnership B is willing to share its own information with Partnership 'C', the DISC peer-to-peer system makes this possible: A can access data only from B; B can access data from A and C; C can access data only from B - but not from A.

Some crime-reduction partnerships may not be willing to share their Offender Profiles and images at all, while others may be willing only to share with one or two neighbouring partnerships. DISC's peer-to-peer sharing system enables this. Further, it also enables Partnerships to share their Offender Profiles and images, for example, with all other Partnerships within a county-area, or across a region, or more widely still.

DISC's peer-to-peer sharing system is 100% scaleable, unconstrained by geography or volumes. For example, with currently over 30 DISC implementations in the London/Metropolitan Police area alone, a London-wide information-sharing network is a practical reality, currently controlling in excess of 17,000 live Offender Profiles and images, most of them gathered quite independently from the police; all can be displayed in a single Dataview.

DISC's Peer-to-Peer sharing system comes with a set of tools to make sense of the shared Offender Profiles and images.

Each participating Administrator has access to a 'Dataview' displaying all the Offender Profiles and images he/she has access to. With the Dataview comes a set of tools to enable Administrators to make sense of that data: in addition to search-and-sort tools, each Offender Profile can be filtered by ethnicity, gender and build in order to drill down to smaller and smaller data sets to make visual or textual matching practical and easy.

These tools are essential because some of the networks which can be created will generate a large volume of Offender Profiles and images. They are an important focus for Littoralis; the company continues to develop further analytical tools and eagerly awaits practical advances in and applications of automated facial recognition techniques.

With this new functionality, DISC will enable close integration with the National Business Crime Solution which will provide the overarching national network for central intelligence-gathering, analysis and modelling.

For more information about DISC

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