



In Partnership with...

## Advances in Technology Are Taking Neighborhood Watch to the Next Level

For years, USAonWatch, the national face of the Neighborhood Watch Program, has been the leading organization in uniting communities through communication and partnership with local law enforcement for safer neighborhoods. Today the advent of new technology is changing the way these organizations communicate with their own members and with law enforcement agencies. Social media has gained prominence in many aspects of our lives, from businesses reaching new customers to people keeping up with old friends. Now organizations and law enforcement agencies are using social media to come up with innovative ways to make communication between Neighborhood Watch groups and law enforcement easier and more efficient to improve communities.

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## Albuquerque, and Social Media

### *Summary*

The City of Albuquerque, New Mexico is now utilizing media tactics by means of instant two-way communication to improve communication between the Albuquerque Police Department (APD) and Block Captains (BC's) of local Neighborhood Watch associations. The website "Neighborhood Watch Block Captain," also enables pictures to be shared between law enforcement and the BC's rather than information only traveling one way (and thus being less informative). APD has been running these web-based two-way communication sites with banking/financial institutions, retail stores, construction companies, hotels/motels, and restaurants for the past 5 years. For each of these businesses utilizing the website for communication with the police, the APD hosts a monthly meeting to discuss crime and strategies for communication.

### *How it Works*

Registered BCs of a Watch receives a username and password that allows them, and only them, to log on to a secure website that is linked to the police department. The BC and APD can then send and receive instant information and pictures, and the BC can exchange that information with the members of their group via email. For example, if the police receive a "be on the lookout" (BOLO) for a white truck in a certain neighborhood, they can message the information and a picture to their block captains; the block captains can then in turn email the members of their watch to look for it. As a result, the police department has effectively notified an entire neighborhood to be on the lookout, instead of one patrol officer.

This program, the first of its kind, is a prime example of how technology can help law enforcement and local communities strengthen their communications and relationships; giving us a preview of community policing of the future.

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## **Collier County, Sheriff's Office Video Website**

### *Summary*

Have you ever logged onto YouTube to watch a video and then an hour and 16 funny videos later discovered that you haven't moved from your spot? The Collier County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) in Florida, understands the feeling, so in 2010 they launched CCSO.tv, a multimedia video sharing website created to complement their existing YouTube channel."We wanted people to stay on the correct videos and not get distracted with other unrelated videos on YouTube," Corporal Efren Hernandez explained. "Users are more likely to explore the CCSO site and be exposed to more helpful information rather than getting carried off topic on YouTube."

### *How It Works*

CCSO.tv hosts a number of videos created by the CCSO and provides a means for the Sheriff's Office to communicate with the public through audio and visual channels; part of the thinking behind the site concentrated on the correct videos to ensure that they were getting all the necessary information. The site gets more than 400 hits a month and has been viewed internationally in Russia, the United Kingdom, and other countries. The CCSO.tv site offers something for everyone, with videos for kids, teens, and adults, on topics that can range from helpful hints to bulletins regarding criminals on the loose.

### *Spotlight Feature*

An interesting feature of CCSO.tv is the "On Scene" video library which chronicles 24 hours of the CCSO, following the different divisions of the department including the K9 Patrol Unit, the Youth Relations Unit, and the SWAT Team. This provides a good picture of the work CCSO does, and provides public information and tips for a safer community.

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## **Santa Cruz Police Department Launches iPhone App**

### *Summary*

In an effort to connect with the citizens of Santa Cruz, California, more quickly and more easily, the Santa Cruz Police Department, working with UC Santa Cruz graduates Kushyar Kasraie and Jamieson Johnson, developed what is believed to be the country's first consumer-focused law enforcement iPhone application (app). The mobile application is free and available via the Apple store.

### *How It Works*

The mobile app gives users access to online crime maps, videos, photos, and a new departmental blog. Users can also tune into the police department's scanner feed and listen to what activity is happening in the community. In addition, consumers can submit crime tips from their mobile phones. Through the app, users also have the option of signing up for Nixle Connect updates, which will send alerts about anything from adverse weather conditions to the specific locations of crimes in progress. (Nixle is a company that enables law

enforcement to communicate and exchange multimedia content in a secure way with the public.)

More than 4,600 public safety agencies currently use Nixle Connect to communicate with residents by text and email at no cost, making this a quick, easy, and affordable way to increase community awareness.

More information is available on [www.nixie.com](http://www.nixie.com)

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## **Crimedat.com - Crime locating website**

### *Summary*

Crimedat.com, newly established website, enables Watch groups and citizens to stay informed and learn about crimes in their immediate area 24/7 through monitoring and publishing online when and where specific crimes happen. Crimedat functions as a global online neighborhood watch, reducing crime and bringing law enforcement and citizens together.

### *How It Works*

An online neighborhood watch compiles crime data from law enforcement agencies and displays it on a local level, all the way down to the street on which a crime occurred Using Microsoft Silverlight Technology, Crimedat visibility pinpoints where and when crimes occur; and when used with RSS feeds, members of specific Watch groups can be instantly notified when a crime is reported. Crimedat displays theft, burglary, robbery, assault, arson, vandalism, gunfire,

and suspicious activity. The website will also typically list the outcome of

the crime and arrest information. Crimedat is currently used by police

departments in Michigan and Virginia.

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## CrimeMapping.com

Wouldn't it be nice to see exactly what types of crimes are happening around you? With CrimeMapping.com, it is possible to see information compiled by local law enforcement agencies, listed by location, on the computer or smart phone. Developed by the Omega Group, this tool is available for free of charge online and as an iPhone app. Crime data is extracted on a regular basis from each participating law enforcement agency's records, so the information being viewed by the public is the most current available. The date is always verified for accuracy, and all address information is generalized by the block in order to help ensure privacy.

## CrimeReports.com

Similar to Crime Mapping's services, Crime Reports.com works with thousands of law enforcement agencies to offer public crime maps, alert messaging, anonymous tipping, and data analytics.

## CrimeWeb.net

CrimeWeb.net offers a free subscription service that compiles data gathered by local law enforcement agencies and distributes alerts by these agencies to citizen subscribers in the area. These alerts, sent via-email, include Missing Child Alerts, Missing Adult Alerts, Major Crime Alerts, Homeland Security Alerts, School Information Alerts, and Community Information Alerts. The service will also allow citizens to provide feedback to the subscribing law enforcement agency if they have any additional information or details regarding an incident that has been entered into the system.

## SeeClickFix.com

SeeClickFix.com allows citizens to report and track non-emergency issues in their neighborhoods. It then provides services that allow government agencies to track issues. This encourages community engagement and empowers citizens to improve their neighborhoods.

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## Alert ID — Crime Tracking and Alerting Website

### *Summary*

Alert ID is a free, Nevada-based service that partners law enforcement agencies and members of the public via two-way communications. This open channel of instant two-way communication can bring Watch groups together and/or advise law enforcement on criminal activity in their areas.

### *How It Works*

Alert ID is different from similar services because it connects members of the public with state and federal agencies (if needed) rather than with only local law enforcement agencies. Alert ID has partnered with law enforcement agencies and media agencies in Nevada, including the Washoe County Sheriff's Office, Sparks Police Department, Nevada Counter Terrorism Center, MyNews4, and, most recently, the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. [**Spotlight Feature:**] The Washoe County Sheriff's Office has online e-reports that allow a resident to electronically file a report (which is significantly quicker than physically filling a report at the station)

## Resources

*Albuquerque Neighborhood Watch Block Captain Website:* Contact Contact Karen Fisher (Strategic Divisions, APD) at 505-768-2419 or Steven Sink (Crime Prevention Manager, APD) at 505-924-3600 or via email at [ssink@cabq.gov](mailto:ssink@cabq.gov)

*Santa Cruz Police Department's iPhone Application:* download the application [here](#) or contact the Santa Cruz Police Department at 831-420-5800.

*Collier County Sheriff's Office CCSO.tv Website:* View [CCSO.tv](http://CCSO.tv) or contact them at 239-774-4434 or via email at [pio@colliersheriff.org](mailto:pio@colliersheriff.org).

*Crimedar.com:* For more information, contact founder Pete Collins at 248-506-7851 or send via email [here](#).

*Alert ID:* For more information, contact founder Keli Wilson at 702-433-4337 and enroll [here](#).

*CrimeMapping.com:* Visit [www.crimemapping.com](http://www.crimemapping.com), register [here](#), or contact them [here](#).

*Crimeweb.net:* Contact CrimeWeb at 1-800-716-6521 or register [here](#).

*USAonWatch on Social Media:* Visit our [page](#) on creating social media sites, “like” us on [Facebook](#), and follow us on [Twitter](#) (@USAonWatch).