The public sector is turning to knowledge management, having recognized that they too face competition in funding and from alternative services. Increasingly, customers of the public sector are demanding higher service quality, particularly in the area of e-government. Services, particularly e-services, are expected to be available all the time with immediate response, simplified, and with one-stop processing. According to Luen and Al-Hawamdeh (2001), knowledge management is thus a natural solution to improve operations and enhance customer service. Large organizations around the world are implementing knowledge management.

Knowledge management is a crucial element of policing that is subject to a wide variety of laws and regulations governing crime, evidence, legal precedent, and rules of police behavior and that needs to be shared. At the same time, police forces are increasingly accountable to government at various levels and to the community at large for various aspects of their performance, and are expected to communicate with government and the public about what they are doing (Collier, Edwards, & Shaw, 2004).

The activities and work carried out by police forces are increasingly in the areas of crime prevention as well as incident management, investigation, and community policing. Crime prevention implies activities such as surveillance, patrolling, and guarding. These activities can be carried out through both reactive and proactive means. Reactive measures such as roadblocks, spot-checks, and
showing police presence are routinely carried out by police officers as part of their investigative duties. Proactive measures include public education to help prevent crime. Police forces routinely use mass media as a means to convey crime prevention advice relating to current crime trends. In Singapore, police officers also reach out to the community via grassroots and community agencies to educate the public on the latest crime trends and threats (Luen & Al-Hawamdeh, 2001). Police officers, performing both reactive and proactive measures effectively, will need to know the latest legal and policy directions regarding these functions, as well the latest information on crime trends and the corresponding knowledge about the detection and prevention of crime.

In their study of the Singapore Police Force, Luen and Al-Hawamdeh (2001) found that the vast knowledge that police officers need in order to perform their normal duties required them to be proficient knowledge workers, being able to access, assimilate, and use knowledge effectively to discharge their duties.

In a UK study, five mechanisms for acquiring and maintaining knowledge in police forces were identified (Collier et al., 2004):

- Formal training and on-the-job experience
- Knowledge sharing through briefing and debriefing
- Knowledge structures including paper-based manuals and computer databases
- Hierarchical redundancy through the command structure that supports the cascading of knowledge
- Amortization through the loss of skills due to promotion, retirement, or tenure policies, and through legislative, policy, and technological change

In a study in Sweden, Holgersson (2005) found that police performance is determined by professional knowledge and motivation. Work of police officers is knowledge-intensive. Sometimes, a police officer lacks the required knowledge to be able to take action in a policing situation.

The functions of police in different countries vary. For example, the police in Norway also have administrative functions, apart from regular police work, that involve law enforcement, order maintenance, and service. This makes them similar to their counterparts on the European continent, but in contrast to the USA, where these activities are under the purview of Secretary of State offices or municipal courts. In the administrative office of the police in Norway, people
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