Chapter X
The Case of Police Investigations

1. THE CASE OF POLICE INVESTIGATIONS

An investigation is an effective search for material to bring an offender to justice. Knowledge and skills are required to conduct an effective investigation. Investigative knowledge enables investigators to determine if a given set of circumstances amounts to a criminal offence, to identify the types of material that may have been generated during the commission of an offence and where this material may be found. It also ensures that investigations are carried out in a manner, which complies with the rules of evidence, thereby increasing the likelihood that the material gathered will be admitted as evidence.

In this chapter we use police investigations as an example to show interoperability at different levels. First, we give an introduction to how police investigation work. Then, we cover topics such as information systems in police investigations, stages of growth model, filtration of knowledge, value creation in investigations, and how detectives work.
1.1 The Case of Asset Recovery Investigations

Police investigations often require access to a variety of information sources to be successful. Some of these sources are manual, like when interviewing a suspect or a witness, or when collecting evidence at the crime scene. However, more and more information sources are becoming electronic in terms of digital information (Gottschalk, 2007).

For a criminal, it is impossible to move, to live, to operate at any level without leaving traces, bits, and seemingly meaningless fragments of personal information, fragments that can be retrieved and amplified. Successful asset recovery requires the combination of these information fragments. An information perspective on asset recovery recognizes that financially related, personal information is the raw material of successful investigations (Kennedy, 2007). While jurisdictions create rules to protect information pertaining to their citizens, criminals seek to benefit from those rules to prevent information regarding their criminal proceeds from falling into the possession of financial investigators. The result is according to Kennedy (2007) an information war.

Financial investigations are information intensive. They involve both public and private sector material, for example taxation records and bank account information, which demonstrate money movements, together with any relevant information as to lifestyle. Any record that provides information concerning money may be significant. The investigator seeks to discover where money came from, who obtained it, when it was received and where it was stored, deposited, or transformed into other forms of property (Kennedy, 2007).

While investigators will wish to obtain information, they must ensure that they do so in a lawful manner. There are a number of legal barriers, which restrict the transmission of information in most countries. The typical obstacle is some kind of confidentiality, often defined in terms of a human rights act and a data protection act (Kennedy, 2007).

According to Kennedy (2007), information from foreign jurisdictions is often a hurdle. Criminals may try to hide assets overseas, and crucial information may also reside overseas. Investigators therefore require a means of obtaining information from overseas. However, cross-border criminal organizations attempt to use legal and organizational gaps and inadequate communication between national authorities to their advantage. An example of such difficulties is that the courts in one jurisdiction are inevitably reluctant to enforce information-gathering orders issued by courts in another jurisdiction.

Shared databases have improved law enforcement access to information resources. In the past, public sector information was held on discrete databases, which were effectively isolated from other sources of information. It has been recognized that
The Wireless City
www.igi-global.com/article/wireless-city/2061?camid=4v1a