

## **Abstract**

*Real Time Crime Centers have become a resource for law enforcement agencies across the United States. These centers are designed to streamline intelligence into one centralized location which can provide critical information to patrol and investigative operations in real-time. These centers also provide investigative leads for cases, and have proven to increase a law enforcement agency's ability to solve crime. They also focus on crime trends in an effort to prevent crime from occurring. The goal of this project was to outline the benefits and challenges an agency will face when developing a Real Time Crime Center, and to provide information in regards to the technology that can be incorporated into a center.*

## **Introduction**

Law Enforcement agencies across the world are continuously trying to keep up with crime trends, crime prevention, and the advancements in technology. This is a continuous obstacle law enforcement must overcome in order to be effective and efficient while serving their communities. Individuals who commit crimes are adapting their methods daily. They are continuously trying to learn new ways to commit crimes in order to stay under the radar and evade law enforcement. Law enforcement is always trying to keep up with the new trends of criminals, which has been combated by the nonstop progression of technology. Law enforcement must also deal with the CSI-effect and how television portrays police capabilities, which is improbable to real-life policing. This unrealistic depiction gives the perception police officers can solve crimes in less than an hour. It became obvious law enforcement agencies needed to step up their game, and work towards a concept in which officers could keep up with the crime trends and be more efficient with how quickly technology was advancing. (Dempsey, 2019)

In the mid-2000s, it became apparent law enforcement agencies needed a centralized location for information to be received, then disseminated out to field units and detectives immediately so there was a more likely chance crimes could be solved faster. In 2005, the New York Police Department (NYPD) stood up a Real Time Crime Center (RTCC) which advanced the agency's ability to solve cases much faster than before. NYPD's police chief at the time described the RTCC as a "super detective help desk" (Heinecke, 2006, p. 50). This concept of a RTCC focused on information gathering into a central point, which assisted detectives and patrol officers by providing information instantly to real-time incidents.

The goal of NYPD's RTCC was to have a database where officers and detectives could access information in one location rather than having to search multiple places. By

having to search several databases for information on an individual or location, investigations were slowed down, causing some information to be missed. The implementation of the RTCC proved how effective and simplified access to information was, and changed the way detectives responded to crime scenes. Essentially, the staff assigned to the RTCC began researching information on a case before the detectives even left their offices. NYPD's RTCC was a game changer for the department and launched them into the future of policing. (Heinecke, 2006)

From the mid-2000s to present day, RTCCs have become a staple for many law enforcement agencies nationwide. According to Bureau of Justice Assistance, the mission of a Real Time Crime Center is to assist law enforcement agencies with the ability to utilize technology effectively and efficiently (Bureau of Justice Administration, 2021). A RTCC can now provide officers with information from numerous databases instantaneously, which allows the officer to have vital operational intelligence immediately. This critical information plays a huge roll in how quickly officers are able to develop crucial leads and drastically increase the solvability rate of the incident.

RTCCs have proven to be instrumental in advancing how law enforcement responds to incidents both with technology and information. In today's world, technology is constantly advancing, which has allowed RTCCs to be equipped with the latest and greatest technology, such as license plate readers (LPRs), Closed-Circuit television (CCTV), facial recognition software, etc. There are many advantages and disadvantages that come with a Real Time Crime Center. This paper is going to analyze the technology and tools that are incorporated into a RTCC, the benefits a RTCC brings to an agency, the challenges of a RTCC, and how important it is to get agency and community buy-in for the RTCC.

## **Literature Review**

### **Technology and Tools**

Technology and Law enforcement go hand in hand. The struggle law enforcement faces is keeping up with how quickly technology is advancing, and trying to keep up with criminals who are continuously striving to stay one step ahead of law enforcement. A RTCC allows law enforcement agencies the ability to have a central location where all information flows in and out of. The concept of a RTCC developed because it was apparent law enforcement needed the ability to streamline the vast amount of information and databases available to them in order to respond to incidents efficiently. RTCC's "allows for the accessing of crucial information in a real-time environment. It turns immense amounts of raw data from disparate sources into a cohesive and understandable "big picture" that can be immediately used by officers and detectives in the field" (Dempsey et al., 2019, p. 472). Most RTCCs use data from various sources of technology. There are numerous tools that can aide the operations of a RTCC, deciding which technology goes into a center is up to the agency and what they want the mission of their RTCC to focus on.

License plate readers are just one of many examples of technology that can be incorporated into a RTCC. LPRs allow law enforcement access to real-time information

regarding stolen vehicles and vehicles of interest. LPR units are outfitted with cameras that have access to state-level data regarding stolen vehicles and other vehicles of interest which provides instant data to officers if a vehicle is stolen or related to a current incident being investigated. (Helms & Madden, 2020) LPRs capture information that can be immediately relayed to the RTCC, once the information is received it can be provided to field units. Departments who have LPRs are able to use this technology to focus on hotspots in order to reduce vehicle thefts, increase law enforcement's ability to recover stolen vehicles, and increase the chances of apprehending suspects actively driving stolen vehicles. (Helms & Madden, 2020)

Another tool that could be housed in the RTCC is a video system management program. This technology allows staff within the RTCC to view camera footage throughout an agency's jurisdiction. These cameras could be through the jurisdiction's traffic cameras at various intersections, or cameras the agency places in public areas known for high crime. Being able to monitor cameras allows RTCC personnel to proactively look for suspicious activity and send units immediately. If an incident is actively occurring, RTCC personnel can access the video management system to see if the incident is being captured and immediately begin providing real-time information to units responding. Having the video system management also provides a huge investigative tool to detectives by allowing them to go back and view camera footage to see what lead up to the incident. Most agencies store the data from these cameras for 30 days or more. Having access to this footage allows officers and detectives the potential to solve crimes that are reported after the fact because the evidence was captured via one of these cameras. (Helms & Madden, 2020)

Closed-circuit television surveillance cameras have been a tool law enforcement has had access to for many years. With the implementation of RTCCs, law enforcement now has the ability to integrate businesses surveillance systems into the RTCC and view them live. Before RTCC's, detectives investigating a crime would acquire business surveillance footage in the hopes the recordings would provide leads to their case. Now, businesses that allow RTCC's access to their surveillance systems are able to view the footage live. This ability allows detectives and field officers to respond to incidents and have real-time information provided to them by seasoned personnel. The RTCC personnel can update units based on what they are viewing from the surveillance video. Having access to this footage is extremely beneficial to responding units who can be better prepare for what they are about to encounter when they arrive on scene. Having the ability to access business' surveillance systems and view them live became available to law enforcement agencies through vendors like FUSUS and Motorola. These companies created software which allows law enforcement agencies to partner with local business, access their surveillance video systems, and stream the footage live. (Motorola, 2021)

RTCCs can also use mapping technologies to focus on crime trends according to geography. Crime analyst are able to research crime patterns within the agency's jurisdiction, and provide pertinent information to field units working a specific area. For example, if a department has a rash of vehicle burglaries occurring over a six month period, the crime analyst can compile a map depicting the areas, times, and trends in which the burglaries are occurring. The analyst can also include on the map, habitual offenders living in the geographical area, which provides officers the potential of

identifying probable suspects who live in the area or close to the area. The information could provide leads to the patrol units or detectives who are investigating the numerous cases. The officers may not have developed this information without the pattern being developed by the crime analyst. Satellite mapping, is another tool which assists patrol units and detectives both proactively and reactively when it comes to solving crime. The information gathered and mapped could identify similarities in trends that ultimately could connect the dots for officers and assist in solving multiple crimes with similar modus operandi. (Datt & Nash, 2013)

The sky really is the limit when it comes to implementing a Real Time Crime Center. There are so many facets that can be incorporated into a RTCC that will aid patrol officers and detectives in receiving information instantaneously. Law Enforcement agencies are able to equip their Real Time Crime Centers with so many different tools that have enhanced technology. Having access to this new technology allows officers to operate with better intelligence, which was never available to responding units before. (Bureau of Justice Administration, 2021)

### **Benefits of a Real Time Crime Center**

Real Time Crime Centers have become the future of policing. The advancements centers provide to law enforcement agencies have been instrumental in solving crimes quickly and proficiently. When most people think of how law enforcement officers solve crime, they often misconstrue their abilities to how popular television show detectives are able to solve crimes in less than an hour. The continuous increase in how popular crime TV has become over time, has created a false expectation from the public. People now expect police officers to investigate an incident and have end results in less than an hour. The reality is, it could take months for a detective to gather all pertinent information related to their investigation and follow up on leads before they are able to determine if they have enough evidence to make an arrest. Law enforcement rarely is able to solve a crime in less than an hour like TV cops can, but with a crime center the chances of solving a crime much faster has become achievable. (Dempsey, 2019)

One of the biggest challenges for detectives and police officers in the field is getting accurate information related to a hot call quickly. This information could make all the difference to an officer responding to an incident that just occurred. The benefit of a RTCC is having a dedicated staff of crime analyst who can quickly access background information about individuals involved, or crime patterns for the area of the incident. These analysts can add the information to the computer-aided dispatch, or the communications officer can relay the information to responding officers as they are being dispatched to a call. The copious amount of information funneled into a RTCC can be streamlined by software created by vendors like Motorola's CommandCentral Aware and FUSUS ONE. According to Motorola, their platform, CommandCentral Aware "supports real-time operations from the command center by combining voice, data, and video into a single, integrated position" (Motorola, 2021, p. 1). By simplifying all of the information into one source, crime analysts are able to locate the information and provide it in real-time to officers and detectives.

Another added benefit Real Time Crime Centers provide to an agency is having personnel dedicated to intelligence gathering, access to multiple databases, and training

on how to navigate these databases to get the information quickly. Often times, officers do not know all the resources available to them. By having a RTCC, detectives and patrol officers have access to these crime analysts who have specific training regarding in-depth investigations. Gathering background information on a case often takes time, which can be critical to a case. Crime analysts are able to sort through a vast amount of information within several different databases proficiently because this is their primary role, and they have more in-depth training regarding these databases. Real Time Crime Centers allow all of the databases available to law enforcement to be funneled into one location. A RTCC also allows for an agency's intelligence resources to be consolidated into one location. An example of how efficient the RTCC concept is can be seen at the New York Police Department's RTCC. NYPD's RTCC personnel are able to provide officers and detectives information extracted from "more than 5 million New York State Criminal records, parole, and probation files; more than 20 million NYC criminal complaints, emergency calls, and summons; more than 31 million national criminal records; and more than 33 billion public records" (Datt & Nash, 2013, p. 21). The concept of consolidating all of this information into one location allows for RTCC personnel to quickly access the information, navigate through all of the data, and then disseminate the intelligence to responding officers or provide the information to a detective who is actively working a priority case.

Real Time Crime Centers are so beneficial to communities. RTCCs have allowed law enforcement agencies the ability to use new technology such as LPRs, gunshot acoustic technology, cameras, etc. in a centralized location with staff who have in-depth training regarding these databases. With all of this technology being funneled into one centralized location, RTCCs have proven to decrease crime and help deter criminal behavior. (Delgado et al., 2021)

### **Challenges of a Real Time Crime Center**

Real Time Crime Centers for the most part are a huge benefit to any law enforcement agency, however, with this benefit comes several challenges an agency must face. Implementing a RTCC is not a small task for any agency and takes time, funding, and support from both the department heads and community stakeholders. In order to stand up a RTCC and it be successful, one of the first challenges an agency must face is developing an implementation plan for the RTCC. The agency should develop a strategic plan for their RTCC, which would identify the mission and goals for the center. (Bureau of Justice Administration, 2021)

An agency should determine the following information in the early stages of standing up their RTCC. Identifying the RTCC's standard operational procedures (SOP) and agency policy is a crucial step in establishing the RTCC. The SOP should identify what the primary purpose of the RTCC will be and what tools and technology will be used in the RTCC. The RTCC should have a chain of command and establish what personnel will be assigned to the RTCC. In general, most RTCCs have crime analyst and detectives assigned to operate the RTCC. It is important for the RTCC's policies and procedures to clarify what the personnel are responsible for while working in the crime center, especially when there isn't anything actively occurring. (Bureau of Justice Administration, 2021)

Another challenge an agency may face is resistance from community stakeholders regarding implementing a Real Time Crime Center. Some people within the community may view the RTCC as “big brother” and not support the concept. A way to overcome the idea of big brother is to illustrate the benefits of a RTCC. This can be done by visiting other agencies who have established Real Time Crime Centers and seeing how the centers operate. Another way to illustrate how a RTCC outweighs the idea of “big brother” is to show any research done by agencies who have established RTCCs. It is important to include what services their centers provide to the community and if they have any crime stats before their RTCC was operational, and stats after their RTCC was implemented illustrating a reduction in crime. (Bureau of Justice Administration, 2021)

Real Time Crime Centers have proven to be an instrumental component of policing. RTCCs allow for data and information to be streamlined into one location, which can be quickly accessed by RTCC personnel. The information and intelligence are then disseminated to patrol officers and detectives in real time. The advances in technology made available to law enforcement agencies has allowed Real Time Crime Centers to be a critical tool for detectives and patrol officers. RTCCs provide essential information to officers in real-time, which increases the chances of solving crimes much faster and produces leads that were not available to officers in the past. Establishing a RTCC is not an easy task for any law enforcement agency, but the benefits this tool provides to police officers and detectives allows them to be proactive instead of reactive to crime. The intelligence a RTCC can provide to law enforcement personnel could save a life, or bring justice to a victim that would not have happened in the past because of the lack of leads.

## **Methods**

The purpose of this research paper is to determine how beneficial a Real Time Crime Center is to a law enforcement agency and the community the agency serves. It is important to identify whether or not agencies who have RTCCs have a reduction in crime, and if their solvability rate for crimes occurring in their jurisdiction have increased due to leads the RTCC was able to provide.

Data was gathered through surveys distributed to law enforcement agencies in the State of Florida. Initially, an email was sent to fifty two agencies in the state of Florida, to identify whether or not the agency had a Real Time Crime Center. Sixteen agencies responded to the initial email advising their agency had a RTCC, at which time the agency representative provided an email contact for the RTCC. An email with a survey link was sent to sixteen agencies with RTCCs. The survey questions focused on what technology is incorporated into the agency’s crime center, manning, and where the crime center is located within their agency. The survey also asked the participant what is the most beneficial aspect and least beneficial aspect of their agency’s crime center. If their agency saw a reduction in crime, and if crime solvability was increased because of the crime center. The survey asked the participant what they considered best practices during the development of their agency’s RTCC and to identify what they would do differently in their crime center if changes could be made now.

The survey was anonymous in an effort to encourage participants to be truthful in their responses to determine the pros and cons of a Real Time Crime Center. A weakness

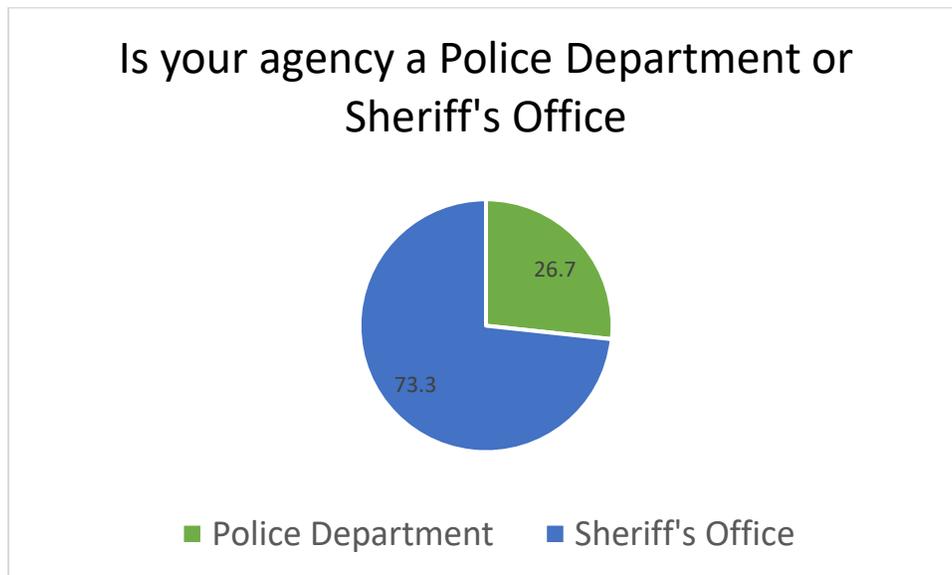
in the data collected is the responses from each participant is subjective to their individual opinions. In addition to this concern, ensuring the participant answered the survey questions honestly also remains a concern.

## Results

The survey was sent to sixteen agencies in the state of Florida who confirmed they have a Real Time Crime Center. Of the sixteen agencies, fifteen representatives participated in the survey, for a response rate of 94%. While taking the survey, the participants were not allowed to skip any questions.

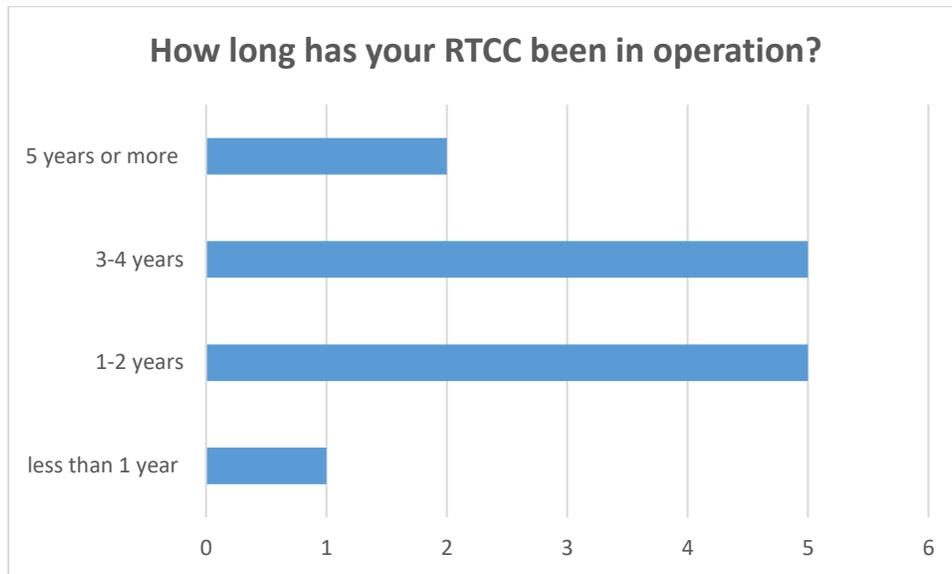
The first question asked respondents if they work for a police department or sheriff's office. Of the fifteen surveyed, 11 respondents (73.3 %) advised they work for a sheriff's office and the remaining 4 (26.7%) stated they are employed by a police department.

TABLE 1: Type of Agency for Respondents:



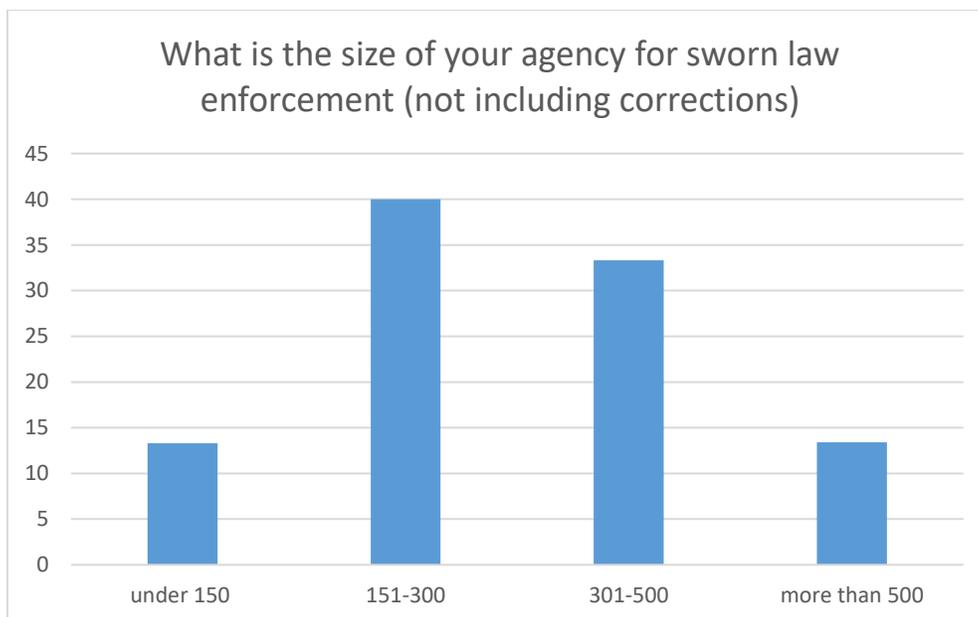
The second question asked participants to indicate how long their agency's Real Time Crime Center has been in operation. Participants were allowed to input their own answer. One participant advised their RTCC has been in operation for less than one year; 5 (33%) participants advised their RTCC has been in operation for 1- 2 years; 5 (33%) participants advised their RTCC has been in operation 3-4 years, 2 (13%) participants advised their RTCC has been in operation for 5 years or more, 1 participant advised their RTCC is not operational yet and another participant did not provide a proper answer.

TABLE 2: How long RTCC has been in operation:



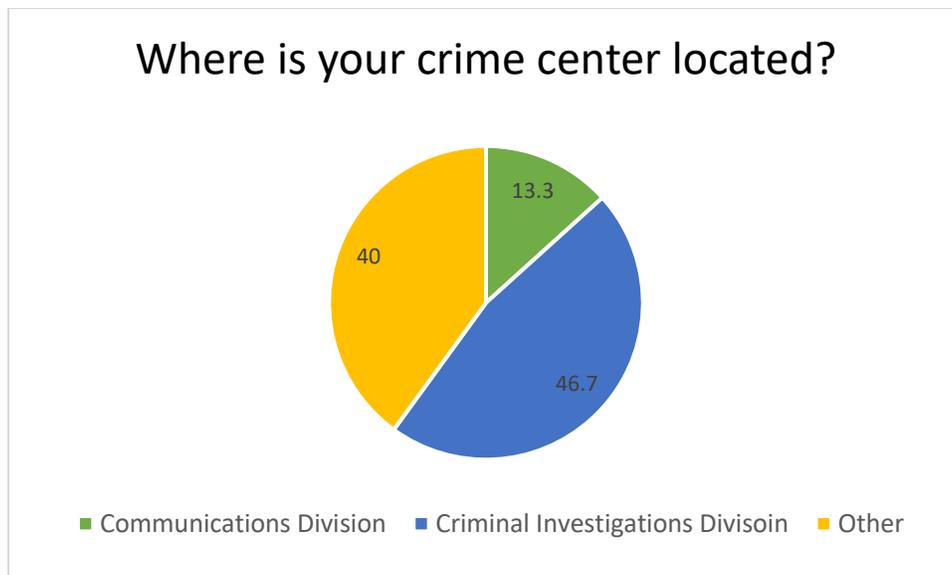
The third question asked participants to indicate the size of their agency (not including correctional staff). Of the fifteen responses, 2 (13.3%) indicated their agency is under 150 employees; 6 (40%) advised their agency falls between 151-300 employees; 5 (33.3%) advised their agency falls between 301-500 employees; and 2 (13.4%) advised their agency has more than 500 employees.

TABLE 3: Size of agency for sworn law enforcement (not including corrections)



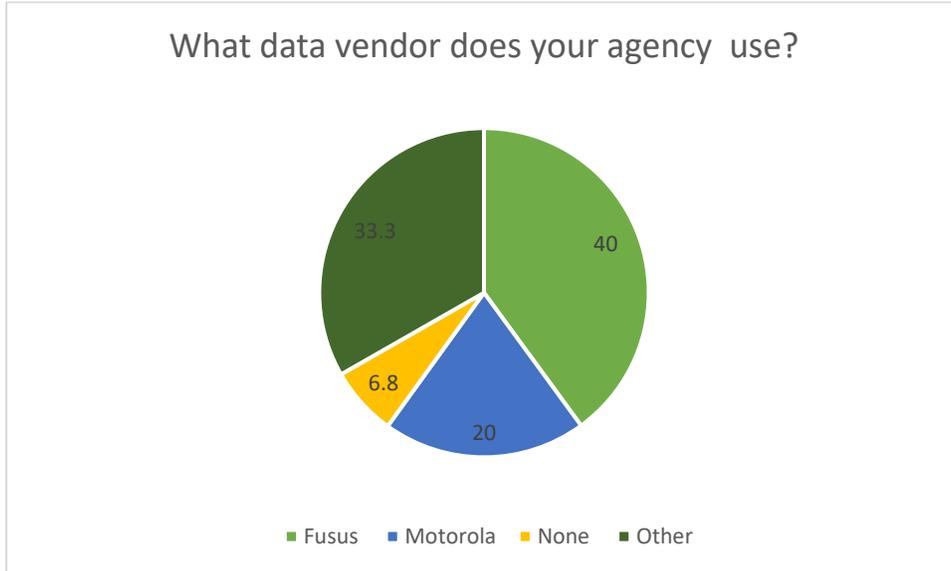
The fourth question asked respondents to identify where their agency's Real Time Crime Center is located. The participants were given the choices of Communications Division, Criminal Investigations Division, and other (comment box). Of the fifteen responses 2 (13.3%) participants stated their agency's RTCC is located within their Communication's Division; 7 (46.7%) participants stated their agency's RTCC is located within their agency's Criminal Investigations Division, and 6 (40 %) participants selected other. Of the 6 participants who selected other, the respondents notated the following locations for their RTCC's: 3 agencies answered their RTCC is located within their agency's headquarters building, two advised their RTCC was located at a location off site, and finally, one answered their RTCC is not operational yet, but will be housed in their agency's Intelligence Unit when it does become operational.

TABLE 4: Location of Real Time Crime Center

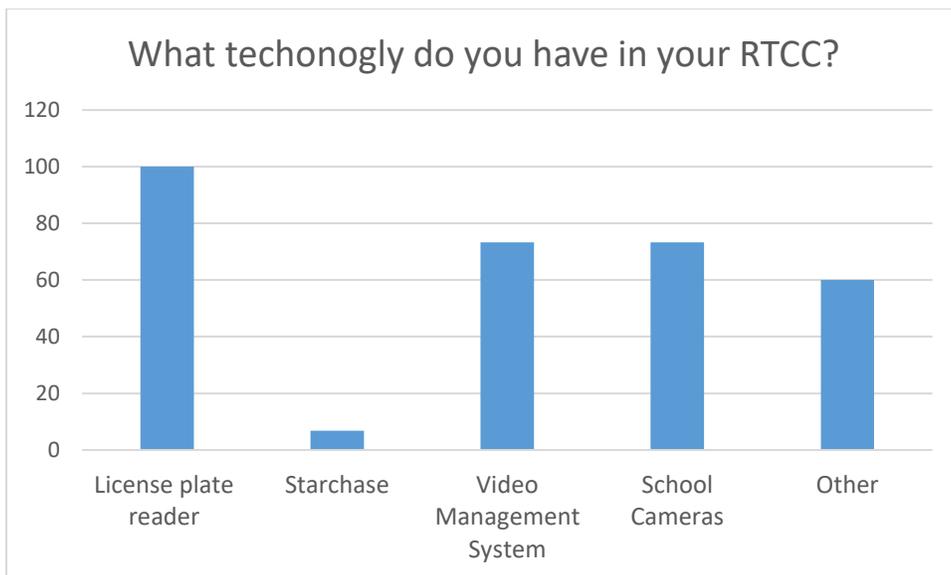


Question 5 asked the participants to identify what data vendor their agency is using in their RTCC. Participants were given the choices of Fusus, Motorola, none, or other (with a comment box). 6 participants (40%) advised their agency uses Fusus; 5 participants (33.3%) stated their agency is using Motorola's software; 1 participant (6.8%) advised their agency does not use a data vendor at all; and 3 participants (20%) selected the other option, and were able to provide a response in a comment box. The following vendors were identified from the participants who selected other: Vigilant and flock, ONESoultion, Strax, Tyler.

Table 5: Data Vendor

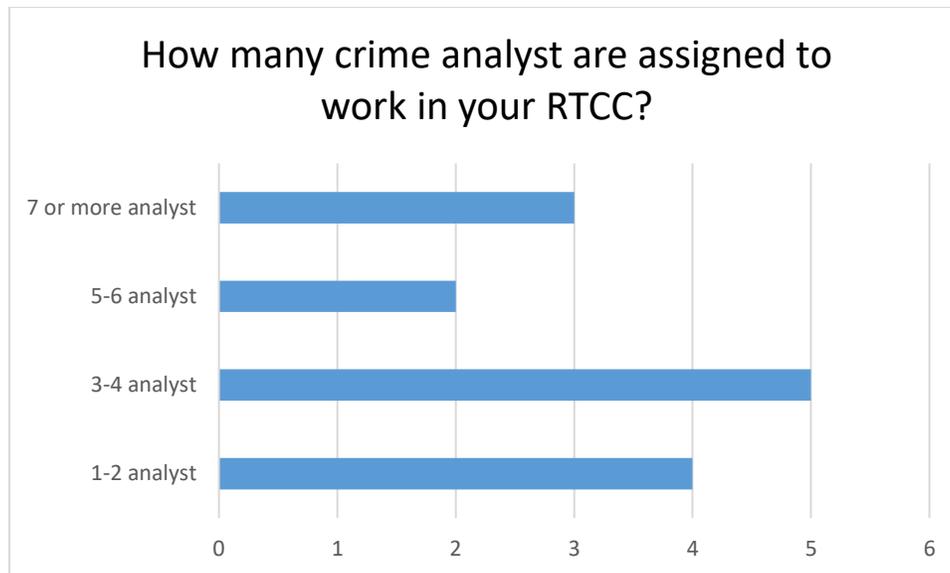


Question 6 asked participants to identify the technology that is currently being used within the agency's RTCC. The survey participants were allowed to select all appropriate choice selections that applied to their agency. All 15 participants (100%) advised their agency is using license plate readers, 1 participant (6.7%) stated their RTCC has Starchase, 11 participants (73.3%) are using a video management system, 11 participants (73.3%) have access to school cameras. Participants were also given the opportunity to identify other types of technology that was not listed in the survey. Participants identified their RTCC's are using drones, DPW cameras at intersections, Intel databases, as well as multiple data mining programs, LE records sources, Briefcam, and Shotspotter.



Question 7 asked participants how many crime analyst were assigned to their agency's RTCC. This was an open-ended question, and participants were allowed to enter their own response. The results were broken down into the following categories: 1-2 analyst, 3-4 analyst, 5-6 analyst, more than 6 analyst. 4 agencies have 1-2 crime analyst, 5 agencies have 3-4 crime analyst; 2 agencies have 5-6 crime analyst; 3 agencies have more than 7 crime analyst, and one agency did not provide a proper response.

TABLE 7: How many crime analyst work in the RTCC



Question 8 asked respondents to identify if their agency has other employees aside from crime analyst assigned to work in the RTCC. This was also an open-ended question and participants were allowed to provide their own response. The following information are the participants' responses:

- Participant 1: 1 sworn supervisor
- Participant 2: 4 sworn (1 sergeant, 1 corporal, 2 detectives) and 1 tech specialist
- Participant 3: currently 1 light duty deputy
- Participant 4: 1 Intel detective (not full time) and light duty sworn personnel are assigned to assist
- Participant 5: no others assigned
- Participant 6: RTCC is augmented with sworn intel detective and sergeant during high profile events
- Participant 7: 1 sworn deputy sheriff
- Participant 8: 4 detectives, 1 sergeant, 1 lieutenant
- Participant 9: 1 Crime Analyst
- Participant 10: 2 sergeants and 2 sworn detectives
- Participant 11: 1 certified LEO and 1 IT liaison

- Participant 12: sworn detectives, sworn supervisor, 1 civilian LPR specialist
- Participant 13: 8 certified LE analyst, 2 domestic security detectives and 1 detective sergeant
- Participant 14: No
- Participant 15: Did not provide an applicable response

Question 9 asked the survey participants what the operational hours were for their RTCC. Respondents were allowed to provide their own response. The following information is what participants provided:

- Participant 1: 0800-1700
- Participant 2: 0700-0000
- Participant 3: Monday- Friday 0800-1700
- Participant 4: 0730-2300
- Participant 5: NA
- Participant 6: 24 hours
- Participant 7: Monday-Friday 0800-1700
- Participant 8: 0600-0230
- Participant 9: 0900-1700
- Participant 10: Monday- Friday 0600-2330
- Participant 11: Monday-Friday 0600-2000 (with on-call schedule)
- Participant 12: Monday- Friday 0800-1700
- Participant 13: Monday-Saturday 0800-2400
- Participant 14: 0800-1700 (with on call schedule)
- Participant 15: Did not provide an applicable response

Question 10 asked the participants what they considered to be the most beneficial aspect the Real Time Crime Center brings to their agency. The question response was formatted with a comment box, and allowed the respondents to provide their own answer. The following information is what participants provided:

- Participant 1 stated the most beneficial aspect of their agency's RTCC is being able to push information out quickly to field units. This enhances officer safety and detection of criminal activity.
- Participant 2 advised the ability to gain real time intelligence for in progress calls and the ability to collect and disseminate "actionable" intelligence before an officer's arrival on scene.
- Participant 3 expressed having the extra set of eyes for deputies and detectives was the most beneficial for their agency.
- Participant 4 advised the RTCC's staff being able to assist patrol during in-progress calls has become the most beneficial.
- Participant 5 stated their RTCC's main focus is officer safety.

- Participant 6 stated the RTCC biggest benefit is providing intelligence quickly, the staff being able to provide investigative research to deputies and detectives while they are in the process of conducting their initial investigation.
- Participant 7 advised situational awareness their RTCC provides.
- Participant 8 stated the RTCC's staffs' ability to assist in investigations, with the use of cameras, LPRs and other forms of technology.
- Participant 9 advised the real time information for in progress calls has been beneficial, but investigative success utilizing the surveillance cameras in conjunction with the LPR is the most beneficial. Participant 9 cited many cases have been solved for their agency by going back through the cameras and LPRs to identify suspect(s) and/or suspect(s) vehicle(s).
- Participant 10 advised the instant evaluation of crime trends occurring with their agency's jurisdiction and the immediate deployment of assets to combat the emerging trends has been the most beneficial.
- Participant 11 advised the real time data, tracking patterns, and real-time monitoring of calls.
- Participant 12 stated their RTCC provides a single-point for all intelligence and technology and then the information can be rapidly disseminated to the field.
- Participant 13 advised the real-time collaboration between detectives, analyst and patrol officers leveraging technology to solve crimes and catch criminals.
- Participant 14 advised the most beneficial aspect their agency's RTCC provides is the information sharing the RTCC provides.
- Participant 15 did not provide a suitable response

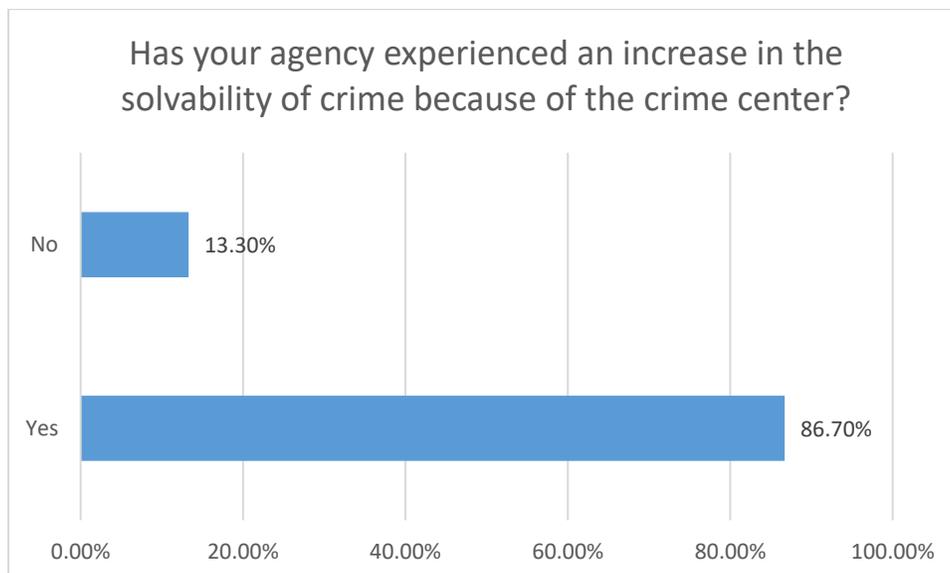
Question 11 asked the participants what they considered to be the least beneficial aspect the RTCC brings to their agency. The question response was formatted with a comment box, and allowed the respondents to provide their own answer. Participant 1, 5, 7, 8,12,13,14 advised they do not believe there is anything not beneficial of a Real Time Crime Center. Participant 2 advised the lack of infrastructure has made it difficult to deploy new resources. Participant 3 stated the least beneficial aspect of their RTCC people not understanding what the RTCC actually does. Participant 4 advised the RTCC is expensive and requires a lot of manpower to run it properly. Participant 6 stated their RTCC has become a crutch for members. The respondent agency members will make request for basic information that everyone has access to, rather than controlled databases/programs or for information that is not readily accessible by field officers. Participant 9 advised the initial costs to set up a RTCC and then the recurring costs for the technology that are required annually. Participant 10 advised their RTCC has experienced an increase of public records requests. Participant 11 stated the center point of information sharing has been the least beneficial. Participant 15 did not provide a suitable response.

Question 12 asked the survey participants with the knowledge they have from establishing their agency's RTCC, what they would do differently. Participants provided their responses in a comment box. Participant 1 advised there is a need for a mix of analyst and investigators assigned to the RTCC. Participant 2 stated having a location

built to suit the needs of a RTCC with space available for growth. This space would need power supply, ventilation, air conditioning, cable and internet connections. Participant 3 stated their agency is building their RTCC based on successful centers throughout the state. Participant 4 advised they would have used a different “buildout” company using a slightly different floorplan and would have used some different software. Participant 5 stated they would have gotten “buy in” from command before starting the project. Participant 6 would have defined what the RTCC’s specific definition of what intelligence products and information can be obtained, rather than being considered an after hour’s intelligence unit fielding any request. Participant 7 advised they would have invested in different technology that runs the room. Participant 8 stated their center was one of the first in the state and had to go through growing pains. They also stated their center is growing each month with new technology. Participant 9 stated it is important to make sure you have your agency’s IT department involved with every decision, and to allocate a specific budget from the beginning and to not rely on forfeiture and UASI funds. Participant 10 stated they would have used a stadium seating style floorplan. Participant 11 suggested to have high horsepower computers with more bandwidth. Participant 12 recommended vetting some of the vendors better, as they discovered some of the vendor’s customer service was not good after they purchased the product. Participant 13 state they would have put their RTCC in a larger facility with a monitor wall and increase their RTCC staffing for 24/7 coverage. Participant 14 advised they were very satisfied with their RTCC and had no recommendations. Participant 15 did not provide a suitable response.

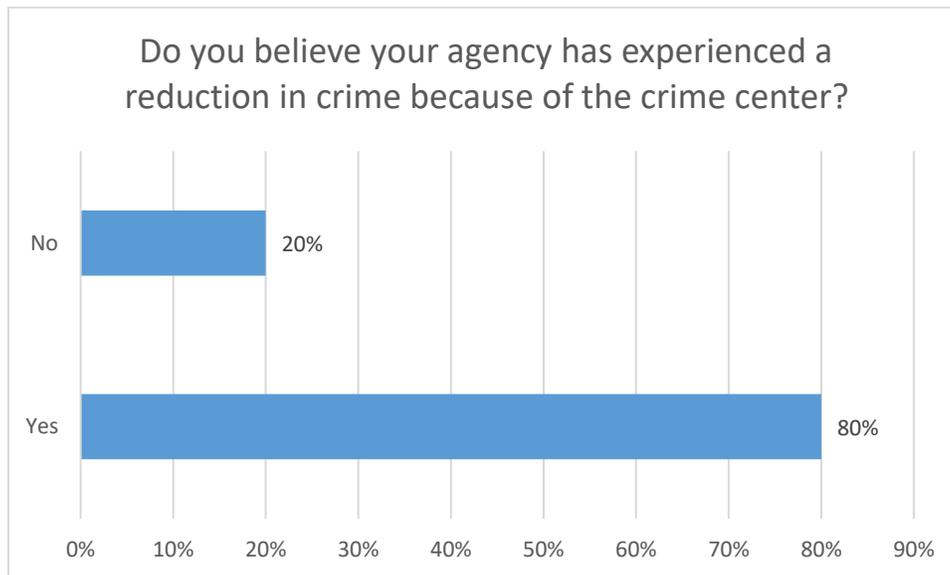
Question 13 asked the survey participants if their agency has experienced an increase in the solvability of crime because their agency has a Real Time Crime Center. 13 participants (86.7%) advised yes and 2 participants (13.3%) stated no.

TABLE 13: Has your agency experienced an increase in case solvability



Question 14 asked the survey participants if they believe their agency has experienced a reduction in crime because of their agency's Real Time Crime Center. 12 participants (80%) answered yes and 3 participants (20%) answered no.

TABLE 14: Do you believe your agency has seen a reduction in crime



## Discussion

The survey results indicated most agencies operating a Real Time Crime Center are extremely satisfied with the results their center provides to their agency. The benefits Real Time Crime Centers brings to the law enforcement agency outweighed any challenges an agency faced while researching and developing their RTCC.

Of the participants polled, 86.7% stated they believed their agency's solvability of crime increased because of their RTCC. Only 13.3% of participants stated they did not believe their agency experienced an increase in solvability rates in regards to their RTCC. The survey indicated 80% of the respondents believed their agency has experienced a reduction in crime due to implementations of their RTCC. Only 20% of participants indicated they did not believe their agency experienced a reduction in crime because of their RTCC. The research conducted indicated most RTCC's allow an agency to develop crime patterns which enhances a law enforcement agency ability to focus on crime-fighting strategies in an effort to prevent or reduce crime.

Based on the research conducted and the survey results, Real Time Crime Centers are a vital asset to a law enforcement agency. Many agencies have advised having some form of a Real Time Crime Center is a game changer for how quickly information is received, processed and disseminated to units responding to high-priority calls. It was also stated RTCCs provide leads for investigations that would not have been available without the technology and data the RTCC provides. Survey participants also noted there were many challenges their agency faced while developing and implementing

their RTCC. Several participants noted having early buy-in from command and involving IT personnel before starting the project was very important. Numerous survey respondents stated they would have chosen a bigger space for their RTCC and suggested when someone is developing a RTCC, allocating a large enough space for the location is imperative.

Survey respondents also discussed the importance of vetting vendors before purchasing any products for the RTCC, and understanding most of the technology purchased for a RTCC has annual recurring costs that should be budgeted for annually. It is also important for an agency to be prepared to purchase new technology that will be developed in order to continue to enhance their RTCC's capabilities.

After researching Real Time Crime Centers and surveying several agencies across the state who currently have a RTCC in operation, it revealed many Florida law enforcement agencies have implemented some version of a Real Time Crime Center. Based on the survey, it appears there are many obstacles to overcome when an agency is creating and implementing a RTCC. This was discovered to be true in both the research and survey conducted with participants who agencies are currently operating a RTCC.

## **Recommendations**

The first recommendation is there must be in-depth planning and research before a RTCC is put into operation. It is imperative an agency conducts in-depth research on the equipment needed, technology that will be used within the center, and what IT support will be needed in order to operate the center effectively. Many survey participants noted having IT personnel on board prior to the development of the RTCC was essential due to the amount of bandwidth required to manage and consume large amounts of data. It is also important to have IT involved in order to access the fiber network required to view traffic cameras and any PTZ cameras an agency chooses to install on their own in strategic locations throughout their county.

The second recommendation is to send agency representatives to other agencies who are operating some version of a crime center. By visiting other departments, agency representatives can see a variety of crime centers and what those agencies have done in their RTCCs. These site visits will allow agency members to discuss what best practices were learned, and any challenges the agency experienced when building their RTCC. It is also important to have command staff personnel attend the RTCC site visits. By taking those involved in making the decisions surrounding the costs and implementation of the agency's RTCC, they are able to visually see the concept of an actual Real Time Crime Center and the benefits the center brings. This will allow for early buy-in and support in building the RTCC.

The third recommendation is to ensure the agency understands the initial costs a Real Time Crime Center requires will not be the only costs associated. To keep the RTCC running effectively, an agency must budget for the yearly recurring costs associated with the different tools and technology incorporated into their center. It is also important for the agency to budget for the future and growth of the RTCC. New and improved technology is always being developed, and the RTCC will likely need to upgrade their technology to

keep up with the crime trends and criminal enterprises always trying to be one step ahead of law enforcement.

Lieutenant Nesli Suhi-Moore began her law enforcement career in January 2006 with the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office. In 2009, she was promoted to the rank of Investigator and assigned to the Narcotics Unit. In December 2010, she laterally transferred to the Criminal Investigations Section, where she found her niche and true passion in law enforcement. In July 2013, she was promoted to the rank of Sergeant and over the next six years she served in the Court Security Unit, Criminal Investigations Section, and Patrol Division. In 2019, she received a promotion to the rank of Lieutenant and is currently assigned to the Communications Section. Lieutenant Suhi-Moore received her Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice with specialization in Forensic Science and her Master's Degree in Criminal Justice Administration both from the University of West Florida.

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## Appendix A

### Survey Questions

#### Introduction:

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. Your participation is greatly appreciated, and is a very important aspect of my SLP research project, which is focused on the development of a Real Time Crime Center for law enforcement agencies.

A Real Time Crime Center is considered to be a unit where information is gathered into a central location often using technology like license plate readers, and video management systems. The information can then be disseminated to detectives and patrol officers in real-time so crimes can be solved faster.

1. Is your agency a Police Department or Sheriff's Office?
  - a. Sheriff's Office
  - b. Police Department
  
2. How long has your RTCC been in operation? (Comment Box)
  
3. What is the size of your agency for sworn law enforcement (not including corrections)
  - a. Under 150
  - b. 151-300
  - c. 301-500
  - d. More than 500
  
4. Where is your Real Time Crime Center located?
  - a. Communications Division
  - b. Criminal Investigation Division
  - c. Other. If other, where? (comment box)
  
5. Which data vendor does your agency use?
  - a. Fusus
  - b. Motorola
  - c. None
  - d. Other, specify which one

6. What Technology do you have in your RTCC?
  - a. License Plate Reader
  - b. Starchase
  - c. Video Management System
  - d. School Cameras
  - e. Other, specify
7. How many crime analyst are assigned to work in your RTCC? (Comment box)
8. Do you have other types of employees working in your RTCC? (Comment box)
9. What are the hours your RTCC is manned? (Comment box)
10. What do you consider to be the most beneficial aspect the crime center brings to your agency? (Comment box)
11. What do you consider to be the least beneficial aspect the crime center brings to your agency? (Comment box)
12. With what you know now, what would you do differently when setting up your RTCC? (Comment box)
13. Has your agency experienced an increase in the solvability of crime because of the crime center?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
14. Do you believe your agency has experienced a reduction in crime because of the crime center?
  - a. Yes
  - b. no