Peter K. Manning’s *The Technology of Policing: Crime Mapping, Information Technology, and the Rationality of Crime Control* is an in-depth examination of the state of policing and how technology, specifically crime mapping and crime analysis, is changing the way police departments operate. Manning spent significant time researching three different police departments which were implementing CM/CA technology. Manning did most of his fieldwork between 1996 and 2002, completing it in December 2003. Manning carefully chose the three different areas in which to do his research. He chose to observe police departments in Boston, Washington D.C., and one medium sized city he refers to as “Western”.

Crime mapping and crime analysis have at least three components. The technical component involves the software and knowledge needed to take raw data and make tables, graphs, and models. The implementation process involves fitting such materials into planning, strategy, evaluations, and operating procedure. The third is the integration component. This involves being able to implement crime mapping into daily police operations.

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2 Id. at preface x.
3 Id. at 18.
4 Id.
5 Id.
book mostly concentrates on the implementation of this technology and the use of the data by departments.\textsuperscript{6}

Manning admits that these case studies are only snapshots of the organizations, during different stages of development and that the CM/CA programs in the three departments “varied in their coherence, functional capacities, and utility”.\textsuperscript{7} His findings revealed that of the three departments, Boston was the only city with “a well-developed crime analysis process, including department-wide semipublic meeting”.\textsuperscript{8} At the time Manning wrote this book there was not enough information to analyze the actual impact of CM/CA on crime. Instead, much of this book is dedicated to Manning’s observations and analyses during the transition of these departments from traditional styles of policing to CM/CA programs.

In order to present his findings in the proper context, Manning spends the first part of his book outlining a comprehensive history of “policing” in the United States. To be able to understand the transition from traditional policing, the reader must first have an understanding of the theories that drive traditional policing. Most policing that is done today will fall into one of three categories. The three strategies employed by today’s police departments include random patrolling, responding to calls for service, and investigating crime.\textsuperscript{9} Given the available resources, Manning acknowledges that departments have narrowed their focus to these three areas. Currently, police departments are considered “low tech.”\textsuperscript{10} It is true that technology has been introduced to a certain extent. This includes the introduction of computer-assisted dispatch\textsuperscript{11} in the 1970s and the installation of mobile data terminals (MTD’s)\textsuperscript{12} into police cars.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{6} Id.
\item\textsuperscript{7} Id. at preface xi.
\item\textsuperscript{8} Id. at preface x.
\item\textsuperscript{9} Id. at 52.
\item\textsuperscript{10} Id. at 61.
\item\textsuperscript{11} Id. at 52.
\item\textsuperscript{12} Id. at 70.
\end{itemize}
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However, when compared to other organization such as federal agencies and corporations, police departments are far behind. In many instances the technology is readily available but it is vastly underutilized.

The idea of CM/CA began with an NYPD program named “Compstat.” “Compstat” referred to “a program developed to compare crime data and became a general term for the meetings and process of crime analysis based on mapping.” The program involved a twice-weekly meeting between all of NYPD’s higher ups. These meetings included a presentation of data in an attempt to examine different crime patterns. This was the first time informational technology was used and it gained widespread support. It is this program that the three case study cities modeled their own programs after.

“Technology, more than any other means, has been elevated as the source of efficiency in the modern age. The introduction of new technologies raises questions about why and how it works and its impact on the organization.” These two sentences describe what is very much at the heart of Manning’s research. Manning recognizes that “the general features of American policing… are a powerful constraint on change, and they are grounded in the mandate forged in the last eighty years or so.” Manning recognizes that organizations are often hesitant when it comes to change. There are several reasons why the introduction of technology has been met with opposition. One reason is that with every new technology introduced, officers must be educated and trained in its use. Much of the actual technology around CM/CA merely records raw data. The data does not speak for itself. Individuals must be trained to interpret the data.

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13 Id. at 61.
14 Id. at 84.
15 Id. at 40.
16 Id. at 40-41.
17 Id. at 5.
18 Id. at 53.
When presenting his case studies, Manning chose cities that “vary in size, traditions, symbolism, and local political and institutional governance structures.”\(^{19}\) He uses six “analytical dimensions” when presenting his research on each city. These dimensions include key actors or players and their networks, the nature of the information systems, the links between databases, secondary players and infrastructure, users, and clientele, and the ecology of the systems.\(^{20}\) Manning uses these to shape his discussion.

The first case study Manning presents is of the city he calls “Western”. He describes “Western” as a quiet city, of moderate Republican persuasion, where neither crime nor race relations have ever been an issue.\(^ {21}\) At the time of the research, the city was moving to a two-party system after years of nonpartisan Republican conservative government.\(^ {22}\) When a new Police Chief (“Chief A”) was appointed in 1991, he introduced several programs. These included a tracking program for students who were cutting school, a neighborhood watch, and a D.A.R.E. program. At this point, the idea of CM/CA had to do with only things such as “tracking warrants and the occasional mention of using databases to define problem areas and crimes.”\(^ {23}\) However, in the coming years more advanced forms of technology were introduced. In 2004, Western PD became part of a pilot system called “Services.” This program gave officers access to databases that held all jail and criminal records of a large nearby county.\(^ {24}\)

Western’s attempts at introducing a CM/CA system were “one small step in the dance of organizational transformation.”\(^ {25}\) During Manning’s research of Western, they had an “infrastructure of databases and servers, graphics capacity, and some expertise”. Many of the

19 Id. at 89.
20 Id. at 89-90.
21 Id. at 92.
22 Id. at 93.
23 Id. at 106.
24 Id. at 114.
25 Id. at 129.
things they were able to accomplish would not have been possible in larger settings. The department wanted to expand the use of the crime mapping system, but the “capacity for problem solving and actual use remained undeveloped.”²⁶ Western’s use of information technology emphasized a “here-and-now, short-term-results approach” to the way police departments operated.²⁷

The second case study took place in Washington D.C. Manning describes the District of Columbia as a “beautiful, violent and hot city”²⁸ and quotes John F. Kennedy who referred to it as “a southern city with northern charm.”²⁹ Manning’s research in Washington focused primarily on a project called COPSAC (Community-Oriented Problem Solving Analysis Center).³⁰ This project was a form of CM/CA technology which was “intended to integrate data gathering, data analysis, and spatial display through maps and feedback.”³¹ The study in Washington proved to be much different than that in Western. Being in a larger city, which happens to be the Nation’s capital, creates added pressures to policing. The Metropolitan Police Department is highly scrutinized by the media, the courts, the legislative committees, and the public. The study also took place in 2001 which, given the economic status of the District along with the terrorist attacks on 9/11, created a “highly charged” political atmosphere. It is this crisis atmosphere that led to the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) receiving their COPSAC Grant. The idea behind this system was to create databases that “that would permit the flow of information among the public, neighborhood associations, and problem solving analysis (PSA) teams.”³² The project was viewed favorably by the department. They viewed it as a “creative

²⁶ Id.
²⁷ Id.
²⁸ Id. at 131.
²⁹ Id. at 130.
³⁰ Id.
³¹ Id.
³² Id. at 141.
and ground-breaking effort to link information technology, analysis, and problem solving.”

There were ten databases that the MPD used. The goal of this project was to link these databases, making policing more efficient.

However, there were impediments to the program’s success. The aging computers that were in place, the lack of modern wiring, and the sluggish circuits slowed the process of moving to an information-based system. These problems were made worse because of the difficulty in securing federal funding. COPSAC was a good project but there were ultimately too many impediments keeping it from being what it could have been. Overall, Manning analyzes MPDs program as “politicized and problematic.” The lack of funding and the high political nature of the District made progress extremely slow. In addition many of the officers did not buy into the new system of policing. Manning states that “there was little inclination of anyone below the management-staff level to use crime-and-disorder-based information in any systematic fashion.”

The third and final case study took place in Boston. Boston has a population of about 580,000, the city is home to over 40 colleges and universities, and it has one of the oldest police departments in the country. Of the three departments studied, Boston was the only city with “a well-developed crime analysis process, including department-wide semipublic meeting.” In the two previous case studies, Manning illustrated how the departments tried but ultimately failed to

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33 Id.
34 Id. at 148.
35 Id. at 162.
36 Id.
37 Id.
38 Id. at preface x.
maintain a viable CM/CA system.\textsuperscript{39} Boston on the other hand has had success with a system referred to as the “Boston CAMs”\textsuperscript{40} or crime-analysis meetings.

CAM is similar to the NYPD’s “Compstat” meetings. The meetings were put in place in the hopes of completing certain objectives. These objectives included “accurate and timely information; rapid and coordinated deployment of resources to address problems; utilization of effective strategies and tactics; and relentless follow-up and assessment.”\textsuperscript{41} The whole idea of these meetings is to encourage “informed decision making based on widely shared data, use of crime analysis, and innovative problem-solving techniques.”\textsuperscript{42} City wide CAMs are held every 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 4\textsuperscript{th} Friday of the month and each is followed by a post-CAM debriefing, where Senior Command staff provides written feedback to the district that presented.\textsuperscript{43} The meetings create an opportunity for all of the departments to get together, identify and define problems in the area, determine the causes of the problem, how the problems been dealt with in the past, and how they will be dealt with in the future.\textsuperscript{44} The program facilitates successful interdepartmental communication and encourages innovative problem-solving techniques.

The success of Boston’s CM/CA system stems largely from the fact that the police department and the city itself are well organized and well-funded.\textsuperscript{45} Manning concluded that the Boston police department had the most sophisticated data-analysis system in the nation. Much of this has to do with the technology itself, but also the fact that that the department’s upper level management is committed to crime analysis.

\textsuperscript{39} Id. at 164.
\textsuperscript{40} Id.
\textsuperscript{41} Id. at 180.
\textsuperscript{42} Id.
\textsuperscript{43} Id. at 186.
\textsuperscript{44} Id. at 187.
\textsuperscript{45} Id. at 196.
Manning’s extensive research into these three departments illustrate how policing is changing in the United States. Crime Mapping and Crime Analysis is the future of policing. Starting with the NYPD’s “Compstat” program to Boston’s CAMs, we could be seeing the beginning of a wave of changes in how police departments fight crime. CM/CA systems have the potential to be extremely effective because they provide a forum for sharing data and trying to solve problems in new and innovative ways. However, these new systems require departments to change much of the way they do business and as Manning has shown often times the idea of change is resisted by many. Hopefully departments are accepting of change because with new technology being developed constantly, potential innovations are on the horizon in the field of crime fighting.

**About the Author**

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