SaTC: Core: Small: Collaborative: Understanding Law-Enforcement Cyber Investigations

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Synopsis:

Despite strides made by law enforcement agencies, numerous challenges remain to cybercrime investigations including under-reporting by victims, jurisdictional conflicts and limitations, insufficient resources, training, and expertise, as well as organizational constraints. Each of these issues presents challenges for orchestrating adequate law enforcement responses to cybercrime issues. This study seeks to garner further insights on these challenges as well as investigate other experiences and perceptions held by cybercrime investigators through an exploratory study utilizing in-depth qualitative interviews.

Challenge:

- Little academic research exists on cybercrime investigations from the perspective of investigators
- Cybercrime investigations are plagued by problems such as under-reporting of crimes, jurisdictional conflicts and limitations, insufficient resources, training, and expertise, as well as organizational constraints.
- Need for solutions to enhance law enforcement cybercrime capabilities

Scientific Impact:

- Produce basic and applied knowledge about the state of cybercrime investigations including:
  - Role of computers in structuring cybercrime investigations
  - Case selection criteria used among investigators
  - Investigator perceptions of their work including cases, offenders, and victims
  - Potential differences in operational capacity among units and departments
  - Investigator perceptions of support and fit within their organizations
  - Career trajectories of cybercrime investigators

Solution:

- Exploratory study using qualitative semi-structured interviews to examine perceptions toward and experiences with cybercrime investigations among relevant practitioners.
- Novel approach given that most research has tended to be top-down in its approach, neglecting to consider the unique contributions made by those with the most direct experience in cybercrime investigations.

Broader Impact on Society:

- Generate basic and applied knowledge about the state of cybercrime investigations and the challenges therein for producing a secure and trustworthy cyberspace.

Broader Impact on Education and Outreach:

- Findings to be disseminated among key academics and practitioners through professional and academic publications.
- Results to lead to suggested changes in policies and procedures among law enforcement agencies.
- Education and training opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students.