Inspiring CitizeNS Participation for Enhanced Community PoliCing AcTions

Press Release
The Preston pilot concludes the INSPEC²T solution testing phase

INSPEC²T app used to apprehend "suspect" during the Preston test case, November 2017
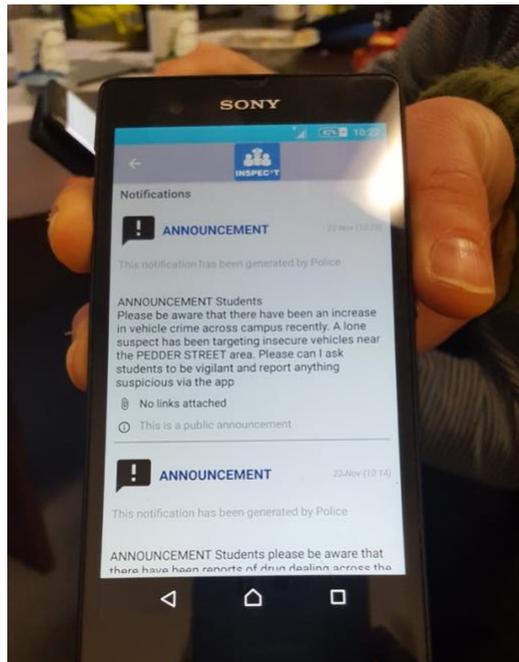
The INSPEC²T project is a three-year EC funded project that is developing a new tool to facilitate communication and collaboration between Law Enforcement Agencies and communities. This innovative technological solution has been tested in five European cities with the last INSPEC²T pilot taking place in Preston, UK. Lancashire Constabulary led the test case as part of their objectives to use the latest technology to enhance their engagement and community policing practises.

The test case was held 21-23 November 2017 following a social media campaign which raised awareness about the INSPEC²T project and encouraged students to participate in the pilot. The Preston test case involved over 60 participants including senior and community level police officers from Preston Police, representatives from Preston City Council, Environmental Health, University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) security, and students.

The pilot of the new INSPEC²T solution involved:

- Day 1: Training sessions for representatives from Preston Police, partner organisations and students. The training sessions were followed by a scenario focusing on burglaries taking place at student accommodation
- Day 2: Three scenarios were run to test the INSPEC²T solution focusing on theft from vehicles, drug dealing, and missing/vulnerable persons
- Day 3: The drug dealing scenario from day 2 continued, and two additional scenarios focused on fly tipping and anti-social behaviour

The pilot was run in and around the UCLan campus and involved students acting out the different scenarios. Once an incident had occurred, police officers used the Secure Portal of the INSPEC²T solution to broadcast messages to the citizen participants and asked them to send any information, videos and images capturing suspicious activity via the INSPEC²T app. During the three-day test case participants sent over 200 reports. Police officers collecting information through the app would then respond to the reports, resulting in suspects being apprehended.

Notification of suspicious activity received on the INSPEC²T app

Based on the Preston test case, officers commented on how the app is easy to use, enables more two-way communication, and how they liked the chat feature and the ability to receive videos and images. Some of the Preston Police officers, who had also participated in the [first test case held in Belfast](#) in April 2017, were impressed with the improvements made to the INSPEC²T solution since then. Whilst the pilot gave the opportunity to receive more feedback and suggestions (e.g., new incidents appearing at the top of the screen, removing previous jobs that have been completed), consensus was that the INSPEC²T solution is well suited for dealing with lower level crimes and incidents, particularly those which would typically be handled by the local council.

Student participants were very enthusiastic about the INSPEC^{2}T app and, once the technical issues had been resolved, they enjoyed using it. They particularly liked the feature of the INSPEC^{2}T app which allows them to upload images and videos instead of detailed descriptions. Furthermore, using the app made students feel like they were contributing to making their community safer.

Inspector Swift, leading the Preston test case commented how "Lancashire Constabulary is seeking to use the latest technology and policing practices to enhance its engagement methodology and processes. We became involved in the project in order to build upon our established ways of engaging with and sharing information with our communities. In Preston, and across the County, we are already actively using both social media and the 'In The Know' messaging service to engage with our communities with almost 700,000 people currently following Lancashire Constabulary across these channels. The Preston Pilot has enabled us to see if INSPEC^{2}T could provide us with an additional platform to build upon our engagement between the police, agencies and the public, improve our understanding of issues, promote safety messages and increase the sharing of information and intelligence".

Further information on INSPEC^{2}T is available on the project website. To stay updated on INSPEC^{2}T's activities and events, please subscribe to our mailing list here.