

# TechBeat

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by JTIC

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## About TechBeat



TechBeat is the monthly newsmagazine of the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center System. Our goal is to keep you up to date on technologies for the public safety community and research efforts in government and private industry.

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The Justice Technology Information Center (JTIC), a component of the National Institute of Justice's National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center (NLECTC) System, serves as an information resource for technology and equipment related to law enforcement, corrections and courts and as a primary point of contact for administration of a voluntary equipment standards and testing program for public safety equipment.



JTIC is part of the NLECTC System, which includes the Justice Innovation Center for Small, Rural, Tribal, and Border Criminal Justice Agencies, which focuses on the unique law enforcement challenges faced by those types of agencies; the National Criminal Justice Technology Research, Test and Evaluation Center, which provides technology-related research and testing and operational evaluations of technologies; and the Forensic Technology Center of Excellence, which supports technology research, development, testing and evaluation efforts in forensic science. In addition, a Priority Criminal Justice Needs Initiative exists to assess and prioritize technology needs across the criminal justice community.



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The National Institute of Justice is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the Office for



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# Officers, Students and Community Join the T.E.A.M.

## Officers, Students and Community Join the T.E.A.M.

In recent years, school safety has taken a more prominent place in the national conversation, and states and municipalities are turning to a variety of resources to find the best way to approach the issue.

In Michigan, they've found that the T.E.A.M. approach works well — and it has for the past 20 years.

T.E.A.M., or the Teaching, Educating, and Mentoring School Liaison Program, is a school-based law related education program taught by specially trained law enforcement officers. T.E.A.M. is a proactive effort to make schools and communities safer, promote responsible citizenship and encourage positive character traits. The program can be tailored to something as brief as one session on an area of particular need for a school or expanded to a longer series of sessions on a variety of topics.

Sgt. Martin Miller of the Michigan State Police Grants and Community Services Division,

who oversees T.E.A.M., says MSP considered using one of several established school safety curricula in the late 1990s, but a desire to devise a new approach led to the 1998 creation of T.E.A.M.

“We wanted to have a program that would be very interactive to help us build community and develop citizenship and positive character traits in our young people,” Miller says. “We wanted it to focus on more than just drug and alcohol prevention, and we wanted to present scenarios that would let the kids make their own decisions.”

During 20 years of T.E.A.M., community perceptions of law enforcement have cycled up and down, he says. Prior to the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001 (also referred to as 9/11), officers had a mixed reputation; after 9/11, police and firefighters became heroes; at present, perceptions have once again become mixed. Throughout, T.E.A.M. has helped Michigan students understand that citizens and law



enforcement are on the same team, Miller says, and, “It’s been a great program during all of the ups and downs. Kids know they can turn to us and feel connected to us. When we meet their parents, they say, ‘my child talks about you all the time’ and they feel connected to us too. It’s a way to build a relationship with the whole community. The school administrators know they can call on you if they’re having an issue. I personally saw it when I was an instructor. It helped us build relationships in communities that were unfamiliar with the services of the Michigan State Police.”

To be certified as a T.E.A.M. instructor, officers participate in a four-day training to learn how to teach the curriculum. MSP trainers work with fellow troopers and with sworn officers from municipal police departments and sheriff’s deputies, as well as some police officers from other states, such as Pennsylvania.

Miller adds, “In some of our major metropolitan areas, schools have school resource officers, and T.E.A.M. training gives them an additional tool they can use in performing their jobs. In more rural areas, particularly in the Upper Peninsula, not many schools have SROs, and T.E.A.M. gives these troopers and officers an opportunity to reach out to schools and communities they may not otherwise have contact with on a regular basis.”

Whatever the topic, a key characteristic of T.E.A.M. instruction is the use of interactive scenarios, and Miller says the students always lead the discussion rather than the instructor giving a lecture. For example, when working with elementary students, a scenario may start with the officer asking the students what they would do if they were approached by a stranger asking for help finding a lost puppy. Sometimes a student says, “This happened to me” or “I heard this happened to a friend,” which leads the discussion in a different direction.

Elementary school lessons last 30 minutes, and middle and high school sessions last 45 minutes, or longer if the school requests it. Although the interactive approach never changes, T.E.A.M.’s content does.

“When we started the program, social media wasn’t even in play, and now we have a whole segment about it,” Miller adds. “Bullying has been part of the curriculum since the beginning, but it’s at a peak now and we focus an entire segment on how to address bullying and how to get along with other students. We’ve always started drug education at a young age, but now we look at the opioid epidemic, especially at the high school level. Sometimes athletes are prescribed opioids following an injury, and we teach them why its use is regulated and how it can become a problem. We constantly try to keep up with the times.”

For more information on T.E.A.M., contact Sgt. Martin Miller [here](#).

*Article photo: Teaching, Educating, and Mentoring School Liaison Program*

*Main photo: iStock.com/Steve Debenport*



## **New Resource Center Offers Stalking Awareness and Prevention Resources**

### **New Resource Center Offers Stalking Awareness and Prevention Resources**

Tweets, Facebook posts and press releases reminding law enforcement officers that January 2019 is National Stalking Awareness Month may also remind them that they may lack knowledge and information about how to investigate and handle stalking cases.

A new online resource center funded by the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) can help them meet that need. OVW is part of the U.S. Department of Justice.

The Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center (SPARC) website launched on Nov. 28, 2018 with a goal of ensuring first responders and other allied professionals have the specialized knowledge needed to identify and respond to the crime of stalking. SPARC Director Jennifer Landhuis says that OVW has funded SPARC as the national resource on stalking and “as such, we provide professionals with access to information on stalking as well as updated resources and trainings.” Those resources include a section specifically tailored to law enforcement, which includes resource documents and a link to information on law enforcement-specific training.



“Rather than just suggesting that victims keep a journal of incidents that have been occurring, the incident and behavior log can assist victims in determining what information is important as well as discerning where an incident occurred. Because stalking often occurs in multiple jurisdictions, this allows for a responding officer to determine if there may be reports at other law enforcement agencies,” Landhuis says, adding



that the resources on the law enforcement page are only the beginning of what SPARC plans to make available.

“Additionally, many law enforcement agencies have specific protocols on responding to domestic or sexual violence crimes, but often do not have those same types of protocols in place for stalking crimes,” she says. “The Safety Planning document, as well as the SHARP risk assessment, the only risk assessment specifically for stalking crimes, allow officers to provide additional information to the victims they are working with, as well as providing insight into items they may want to map. The Response Tips is a brief document that agencies can share during a roll call training to remind officers of key pieces of information that are important in stalking investigations.”

Stalking investigations differ from those into other types of crimes because rather than requiring a single incident to establish probable cause, stalking requires a pattern of behavior or course of conduct consisting of two or more incidents, according to the website. To further complicate stalking investigations, incidents in that pattern, such as sending gifts, may not be criminal acts on their own. Rather, these incidents only become criminal when considered along with context and intent. In many states, stalking statutes also require that the incidents invoke fear or emotional distress in the victim, which can be difficult to determine because stalking behaviors are often contextual in nature.

Also, there is a distinction between stalking and harassment: Generally, the element of fear separates the two. Harassment is typically irritating and bothersome, sometimes to the point where a victim feels deeply uncomfortable. However, victims of harassment are not typically afraid of their perpetrators, Landhuis says.

While SPARC offers in-person training on those issues and more, the website also provides

two self-contained training modules that can be downloaded and used by anyone.

“As the only Office on Violence Against Women comprehensive training and technical assistance provider, it isn’t possible for SPARC to provide training everywhere in the country,” Landhuis says. “We wanted to provide ready-to-teach modules that organizations could just download and use in their training efforts. As a nation, we are still struggling to have the gender-based violence field and society as a whole understand exactly what stalking is and why it is a crime. Our training allows for the information and resources to be shared in a way that increases the likelihood that information is getting out, increases awareness and we hope leads to increased resources and information for stalking victims.”



The training consists of “Know It, Name It, Stop It: Public Awareness Training Module,” intended for a broad audience that can be offered in a variety of settings, and “Stalking Identification and Response,” a session targeted toward criminal justice practitioners and allied professionals. The website also offers resources for victims, victim service providers and prosecutors; an FAQ; resource materials for

National Stalking Awareness Month; and links to upcoming webinars. Landhuis says that in addition to the current National Stalking Awareness Month offerings, more webinars will take place throughout the year, and all webinars will be recorded and archived for on-demand access.

“We plan to add resources and information on an ongoing basis, so law enforcement agencies and other first responders can check back frequently for new information,” she says.

Visit the Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center [here](#). Resources specific to National Stalking Awareness Month can be found [here](#).

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*Main photo: iStock.com/MachineHeadz*



## Beagle Will Sniff Out Email Fraud

### Beagle Will Sniff Out Email Fraud

Law enforcement investigators who are organizing their calendars for 2019 might want to make a note for sometime this summer to look for information on Beagle.

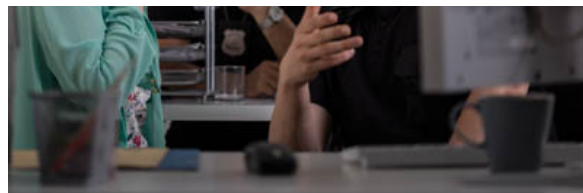
It's not a trip to the animal shelter or pet store; it's information on the beta release of Beagle, an open-source software tool that developers say will help with analytics and email investigations.

Developed as part of a doctoral dissertation for Jay Koven, an engineering graduate student at the New York University Tandon School of Engineering, Beagle is a “visual analytics tool that dramatically speeds up forensic email investigations and highlights critical links within email data” that can be used to “trace the trail of email scammers,” according to a November 2018 press release from the university.

Koven and others on the development team collaborated with Agari, a data security company, which provided access to tens of thousands of emails for research, to obtain a



dataset of 3 million emails to use during development. The result is a user-friendly interface that helps investigators and others quickly search huge numbers of emails and find commonalities, including keywords and patterns in content, and also less commonly used factors such as sent time and the physical locations of email recipients.



The team is working with several law enforcement agencies to further refine the tool, with a goal of releasing it for more widespread law enforcement beta testing this summer. Koven's goal is to continue to distribute the tool free after the beta test completes; agencies may need to incur some relatively low costs for training focusing on how to get the emails into the system.

"There's been very little work done in the area of forensics for large document datasets, especially for emails," Koven says. "Many of the available tools aren't up to the task, and the ones that might be are prohibitively expensive."

Two of the major differences between Beagle and other tools are searches that include all results, rather than screening for what the tools deem the most relevant, and the ability to search huge datasets rapidly. When Koven started laying plans for the research, another student who had interned at Agari helped open the way to accessing tens of thousands of emails, and even the research team was surprised at Beagle's ability to handle that amount of data.

"My original thoughts when starting the research were to create a tool that could help mainly with corporate and financial crimes, but it's proving useful for cybercrime in general," Koven says. "It would be exciting to say you could use it for murder cases, but generally those aren't cases where you have to look at large datasets. It's most helpful with cases where there are a lot of emails and you have to separate the noise from what is useful."

A request from law enforcement agencies that were having difficulty dealing with cases that involved large amounts of email led Koven to take the project on for his dissertation. One of his advisers (Nasir Memon) works with multiple agencies in New York City, and he found they wanted a way to deal with large email datasets. Then came the connection with Agari, and as word spread that the project was underway, other agencies offered additional datasets.

Feedback about ease of use from those "alpha" agencies has been positive, Koven says: "It's

basically gives them a few minutes of instruction and off they go. The whole idea was to make it user-friendly, because it's not set up for technical users, it's set up for investigators."

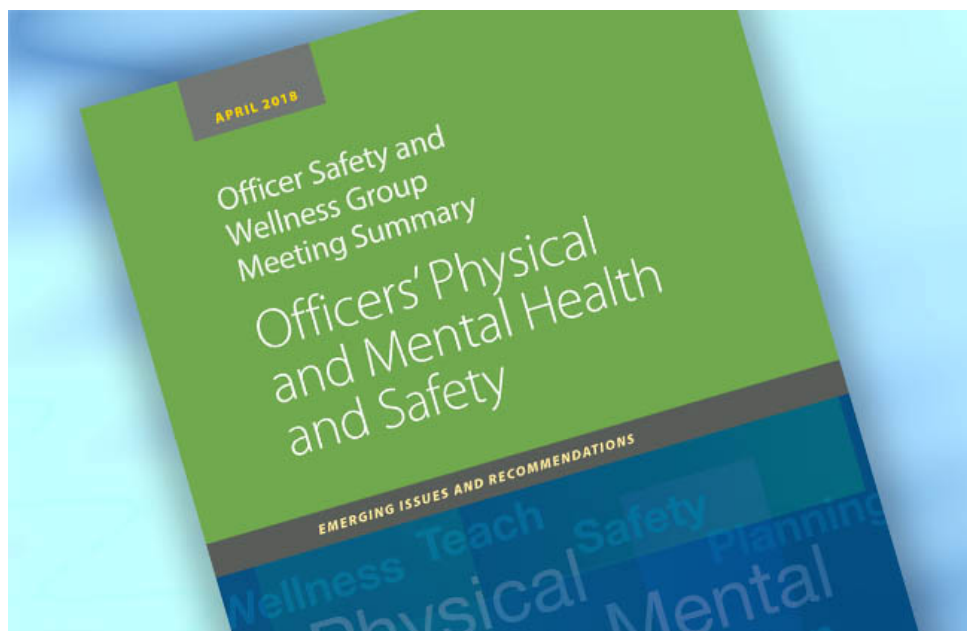
In addition to the positive feedback from law enforcement partners, Koven reports that Beagle helped Agari find ways to improve its client services as well. He says that when the team looked at the Agari dataset, they found evidence of scams previously unknown to them.

"We thought scams would fall into three or four different categories, and it was at least eight, maybe more. In addition to the common ones involving romance or kidnapping a relative, we found scams involving purchase of medical equipment that was never delivered, and one where criminals were intercepting payments between escort services and clients," he says. "So in addition to helping the research and helping Agari, we were able to pass some of our findings on and help law enforcement as well."

*For more information, click [here](#).*

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*Main photo: [iStock.com/KatarzynaBialasiewicz](#)*



# Officers' Physical and Mental Health and Safety

*Office of Community Oriented Policing Services and Bureau of Justice Assistance*

The Officer Safety and Wellness Group's April 2018 meeting expanded on previous discussions of ways to support officers' emotional health and organizational wellness. The meeting focused on line-of-duty deaths in felonious assaults as well as in accidents, mental health and suicide, and crisis hotlines and other programs.

The meeting summary report, [Officers' Physical and Mental Health and Safety: Emerging Issues and Recommendations](#), includes research findings and recommendations for reducing line-of-duty deaths and addressing mental health issues.

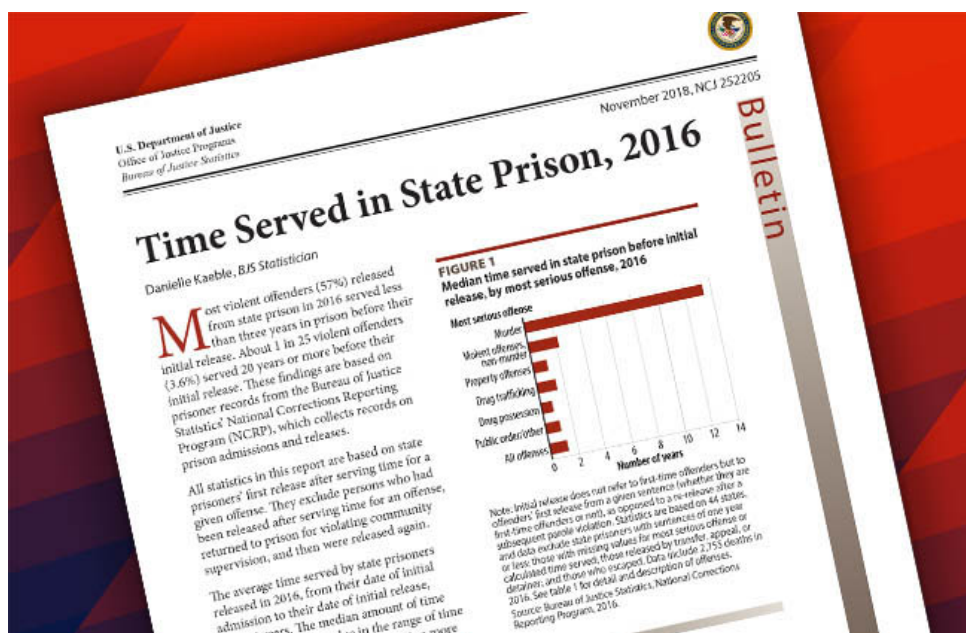
The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services and the Bureau of Justice Assistance formed the national Officer Safety and Wellness Group in 2011 to bring attention to the safety and wellness needs of law enforcement officers. The OSW Group regularly brings together law enforcement practitioners, researchers and subject matter experts to help

amplify new and existing efforts to improve officer safety and wellness in the field.

To read the meeting summary report, click [here](#).

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# Time Served in State Prison, 2016

## *Bureau of Justice Statistics*

More than half (57 percent) of violent offenders who were released from state prison in 2016 served less than three years before their release, according to a report by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. About 1 in 25 violent offenders (3.6%) served 20 years or more before their initial release.

The report, [\*Time Served in State Prison, 2016\*](#), presents findings on the time served by prisoners released from state prison in 2016, including mean and median length of time served by most serious offense and the percentage of sentence served by offense before initial release from state prison.

The average time served by state prisoners released in 2016, from their date of initial admission to their date of initial release, was 2.6 years. Statistics are based on prisoner records from the BJS National Corrections Reporting Program and are based on state prisoners' initial release after serving time for a given offense. They exclude persons who had been released after serving time for an offense, returned to prison for violating



community supervision, and then were released again.

To access the report, click [here](#).

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