

Facial Recognition Technology

- 1) Facial recognition technology has existed for over forty years but has advanced significantly in the last ten years following improvements to the algorithms.
- 2) Progress in the Policing environment was achieved in 2017 following a successful bid by South Wales Police to the Home Office Police Transformation Fund (PTF). This resulted in the development of two use cases, namely Live Facial Recognition (LFR) and Retrospective Facial Recognition (RFR), although a third use case Operator initiated Facial recognition (OIFR) has also now been defined.
 - a) Live Facial Recognition (LFR) is the use of facial recognition where all persons passing a camera(s) are analysed by the system with results being generated in tandem with events. The use of overt live facial recognition is to locate people on a watch list who are sought by police.
 - b) Retrospective Facial Recognition (RFR) is the use of facial recognition where media is analysed after the event. The result of such analysis would come sufficiently after the event such that they could not shape events to which the media related in real time.
 - c) Operator Initiated Facial Recognition (OIFR) is the use of facial recognition where, media is directly captured of a subject present or, media is otherwise acquired in lieu of capturing it with the intent of subjecting it to analysis by the facial recognition system. The results of such analysis could shape events to which the footage relates in real time.
- 3) WMP actively use RFR and are planning to implement OIFR in the near future **but have no plans to use LFR at this time.**
- 4) In order to achieve this, WMP is a member of the National Facial Recognition Board that is part of the Home Office Biometrics Board. This board works to share best practice and insights from forces to standardise and support them to achieve the benefits of FRT in a legal, ethical and effective way. The board has recently release 'approved professional practice' for LFR and is supporting forces maximise the benefits from RFR from PND as well as develop other related capabilities. This board has recently released a study into demographic performance of FRT which is very encouraging which can be found here

<https://science.police.uk/delivery/resources/operational-testing-of-facial-recognition-technology/>
- 5) RFR is available to all police forces via the Police National Database, however it has not always been effective, however since the software was updated in November 2021 its use across Policing UK has increased significant with many thousands of hits being recorded

6) ACC Welsted, whilst in Cheshire implemented and tested a version of OIFR which lead to a number of recommendations, the main one being that Policing should develop OIFR from PND to maximise the potential for positive hits and to minimise the complexity and costs of the achieving the capability. Lobbying to gain support for this has resulted in ACC Welsted being commissioned by CC Blakeman (NPCC PND Lead) to work with CGI the administrators of PND to develop this capability. Although the specific timeline is to be confirmed, the intention is to roll out the capability in West Midlands Police first.

7) The Expected benefits from the use of RFR and OFIR include

| Description | Comment |
|-------------------------|--|
| Efficiency savings | Positives Hits from FRT allow officers to progress investigations much quick and remove the need for other speculative enquires. The capability on a mobile phone to ID people in front of them allows officers assist vulnerable individuals, such as missing people, and reduce the potential of people being taken to custody to confirm their ID. |
| Improved investigations | Positive hits improves investigations and helps us solve crimes. Criminals fear the technology which increases guilty pleas |
| Reduced crime | Criminal fear of the technology which reduces offending |

The Process for RFR.

- 8) If, during the course of an investigation, an image of the suspect is recovered but their identity is unknown, officers are asked to complete the following process:
- A request form is submitted to Force Intelligence via a SharePoint portal together with the image.
 - The request is allocated to PND trained officers within Force Intelligence who complete a search Nationally via PND.
 - The Officer is notified about the result of the search.
 - Digital Forensic Services have the ability to enhance images to improve the likelihood of a positive hit for serious offences such as serious assaults and sexual crime.
 - **Any positive identification is treated as intelligence only but can be used as the grounds for arrest.**
 - Superintendent Wayne Carter leads a WMP project and the team are currently working on automating the process so it is more user friendly for front line officers with a target date of early November 2023.

Communication

- 9) There have been internal Newsbeat articles promoting the use of RFR within the investigation teams. The move of intelligence teams to our Local Policing Areas will allow us to further showcase the capability and encourage more usage.
- 10) Once WMP secure the capability of OIFR from PND, we intend to instigate an internal and external communications plan. ACC Welsted has experience of this and has attached the press release that was used in Cheshire as an illustration

Date: 15 June 2022

Cheshire Constabulary to roll out facial recognition technology to help identify offenders and take them off the streets

In a boost to victims of crime, Cheshire Constabulary is rolling out facial recognition technology to assist in identifying offenders and taking them off the streets.

In a first for Cheshire, the force will be using two forms of facial recognition –

Retrospective Facial Recognition (RFR) and Operator Initiated Facial Recognition (OIFR).

There are currently no plans to use Live Facial Recognition (LFR) in Cheshire.

RFR is a useful intelligence tool that assists in establishing the identity of a person if their image matches against other images held on the Police National Database.

It is used retrospectively after an incident has taken place and works by comparing still images of unknown faces, for example CCTV, against a reference image database – such as custody photographs – in order to identify them.

Officers will then be able to use this intelligence to further their investigations and bring more offenders to justice.

OIFR is a similar tool that is available to officers in the street or by the roadside.

Officers photograph a person's face and compare it in real time to the same reference image database to assist them to confirm the identity of the person in front of them.

An example of this may be when an individual is believed to have provided false details and cannot provide identification.

This smart tool can also be used if a person is unable to provide their details because they are unconscious, seriously injured or are incapable due to drink or drugs.

In a trial, some officers in the Roads and Crime Unit have been given access to a phone application as part of OIFR with this eventually being rolled out to other areas of the force.

Anyone who does not have an image on the police national database cannot be identified through means of facial recognition technology in Cheshire.

Assistant Chief Constable Matt Welsted said: "Facial recognition is the latest capability that is provided to officers to improve our response in achieving justice more efficiently and making the county a hostile place for criminals to operate.

"Facial recognition will not replace traditional means in identifying those who have committed a crime but adds to our arsenal and modernising the capability of our frontline.

"It's important to remember that officers have always been able to spot a person who is wanted for a crime and stop them in the street but with this technology, we will be able to increase the speed and accuracy in the way in which this can be done.

"This technology will allow us to prevent harm and help those in need in our community and it is just one of the other ways in which we are arming ourselves to target known offenders who are intent on committing crime in Cheshire."

For more information about facial recognition technology in Cheshire, please visit: [Force Website] (the website hosted an FAQ, the policy, the DPIA and a legal mandate)