

I. Thesis

Social media and residential burglaries

1. What role can social media play in the area of crime prevention?
 - a. Advantages and disadvantages of social media for communicating with citizens.
 - i. What impact does social media have on preventive behaviour? Is it necessary to carry out academic research on this subject?
 - ii. Which social media to use?
 - b. Advantages and disadvantages of social media for communicating between partners in the field of security and prevention.
 - i. Which social media to use?
 - c. What is the role of the 'SPF Intérieur' (Federal Public Service Home Affairs) at the level of social media in the area of crime prevention?
 - d. What is the role of the various partners at the level of social media?

Social media allows you to get closer to the citizens.

II. Discussion

Communication with citizens

Advantages of using social media to communicate with citizens

- Proximity to citizens.
- The reactions of citizens are often positive (in part due to the fact that it is the citizens who choose to follow the entity on social media).
- Those who register on social media are ready to receive the information.
- It is a way to promote the entity (commune, police zone, SPF etc).
- Minimal financial outlay is required. However caution is necessary, as this is actually an illusion! Staff are in fact required to follow the social media-> and that also involves a cost.
- Opportunity to react when faced with false press information.

Disadvantages of the use of social media for communicating with citizens

- Not everyone is on social networks-> This must be combined with other methods of raising awareness.
- The messages may increase the sense of insecurity
- **Monitoring social networks requires a lot of time, also at weekends!**
It is therefore necessary to have one or more individuals assigned to this function.

- There are sometimes slips with regard to the information communicated -> someone is needed to prevent this.
- The protection of privacy is sometimes delicate.

The messages

- The messages should be brief. It is not necessary to construct a lengthy message going over all the advice for prevention but rather several messages each containing a practical tip, illustrated as far as possible with the use of a photo or a video.
 - ➔ Divide the prevention advice into several 'capsules' (with a catchy title and a picture/video).
- The messages must not be moralistic
- There should be a mix of educational messages along with more playful elements. Given that social media are followed mainly for entertainment purposes, it cannot be limited to annoying prevention messages.
- Prevention messages can be communicated in connection with a press article-> linked to current events (= dynamic).
- People want media messages (e.g. a suspicious vehicle..., a response team has caught a thief etc). This type of information must therefore be mixed with awareness-raising information.

Which social media?

There is virtually only Facebook that is used to raise awareness among citizens.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN EXPERTS

- The majority of experts do not wish to use social networks to communicate with each other.
- Many experts do not have access to social networks.
- Experts consider Facebook as something playful and non-professional. Moreover, Facebook falls within the sphere of the private.
- The path of the discussion FORUM was raised. But a FORUM had already been launched by the prevention service of Mons, and it did not work. It is necessary to examine the reason and analyse the opportunity to revive a FORUM.
- The use of Facebook among experts could be used to communicate information about specific phenomena (ex: a wave of burglary in such and such a district, a new modus operandi etc). This information is already shared via other channels (RIR, PORTAL) among police personnel but not among those within the communes.

III. Conclusions

- Facebook can be used to communicate with citizens but it is necessary to adapt the messages according to this media-> a mix of entertaining/sensational messages and educational/preventive messages.
- Facebook is not used by experts to communicate among themselves.

IV. Action points

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