



HOW TO EVALUATE A CRIME ANALYTICS SOLUTION

Selecting the right crime analytics platform for your agency is a big decision. To help you make the most informed choice, we have developed this document, which contains a series of targeted questions that are designed to help you properly evaluate all of your options. After you answer all of the questions below, you will have the information and the confidence you need to select the solution that best fits your agency's requirements.

THE 7 MOST IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS FOR SELECTING THE RIGHT CRIME ANALYTICS SOLUTION ARE:

1		DATA INTEGRATION
2		DATA MANAGEMENT AND CLEAN-UP
3		CRIME DATA VISUALIZATION AND REPORTING
4		POLICING METHODOLOGIES SUPPORTED
5		INTER- AND INTRA-AGENCY INFORMATION ACCESS
6		SECURITY AND SUPPORT
7		PRICING AND IMPLEMENTATION

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DATA INTEGRATION

Is the initial data integration from my computer aided dispatch (CAD) and/or records management system (RMS) seamless?

Most analytics packages require many weeks to transform your data so that it conforms to their platform. The right solution should be up and running and integrated with all of your data in your format within a timeframe of just 1-2 days, not weeks.

Does the solution automatically integrate with a public crime-mapping solution?

Seamless integration with a public crime-mapping solution, especially one of the same product family, ensures that your internal intelligence matches what you are reporting to the public.

Does the solution enable us to customize or allow changes to city or county boundaries or annex lines?

Crime locations that may have recently become part of your city or county may not display if your map cannot be easily updated to account for changes to boundaries or annex lines. Also, various mapping technologies such as GIS or latitude and longitude may be inaccurate or a crime location may have been entered improperly during the data entry process. You need a solution that's flexible enough to allow you to make changes on the fly.

Does the solution work with multiple file extensions such as xml, csv, shp, txt, xls and/or is it able to accept information straight from my database?

If an analytics solution doesn't accept multiple file types, then you may need to augment your data manually or possibly even leave out certain critical data. If your solution is lacking this flexibility, it may compromise your ultimate goals of making decisions based on what your data is telling you over time with all points taken into consideration.

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DATA MANAGEMENT AND CLEAN-UP

Does the solution enable our agency to quickly and easily modify data sets and terminology in a way that works for us, instead of having to adjust to the limitations of the system?

Most software companies expect you to adjust your data to their solution's specifications. This is a time-intensive, manual operation that changes the way you do things. The right platform should be flexible enough to conform to your agency's terminology and standard operating procedures.

Does the solution allow us to create our own custom reports, data sets, and visualizations?

Analysts want to focus on tactical planning that enables them to effectively reduce crime. The ability to customize reports any way you want without making compromises due to a solution's built-in limitations means you can focus on getting specific information (traffic, burglaries, etc.) out to the proper tactical staff and patrols for the quickest possible response.

Does the solution give us the capability of setting our own map points to a location not recognized by the mapping software or misplaced due to improper data entry?

This is a critical feature that ensures you can relocate all mistakenly located "outside" addresses to the right locations within your city or county. Without this capability, you wouldn't be able to properly analyze your crime data.

Is the solution a cloud-based, hosted system (i.e., SaaS) as opposed to an on-premises system?

A pure cloud-based solution requires no major IT expenses, no additional hardware (e.g., no server space required) to purchase or ongoing scheduled maintenance. Read more about the value of the cloud in our Deploying Smart Public Safety Solutions in the Cloud Solution Brief.

Does the solution allow for automatic updates from our data (RMS and CAD)?

With automatic updates of your RMS and CAD data into a real-time platform, you don't have to endure the time-consuming tasks of manually uploading your data multiple times per day to ensure that your data is fresh.

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CRIME DATA VISUALIZATION AND REPORTING

Does the solution provide a customizable, executive-style dashboard that allows us to see multiple reports at once or the same report multiple ways?

Different types of visualizations enable you to understand what happened, where it happened, when it happened, and how often it happened – all from one screen.

Does the solution support unlimited remote access to our data regardless of the platform?

Agency personnel need to have access to real-time data wherever they are and whenever they need it. The solution should be able to support a wide range of today's most popular mobile devices and deliver actionable intelligence from the cloud to the patrol car – instantly.

In a crisis, can the solution pull up real-time, tactical and historical data by crime type and in the format we prefer (e.g., maps, charts, reports, etc.) – at the push of a button?

Crisis situations call for immediate action, not time wasted on compiling data, manufacturing charts, and creating the tools you need for the job at hand. Your solution should be able to give you the information you need, just how you need it, with a minimum of keystrokes.

Does the solution enable us to pull the data needed to create quarterly or annual UCR reports that meet FBI standards in just minutes?

Creating UCR reports for the FBI in most crime analytics solutions is a very time-consuming and arduous task, often taking days to complete. Make sure that your solution is flexible and powerful enough to turn that regularly scheduled report into an easily managed routine that is accurate and takes only minutes to complete.

Does the solution support scheduled reporting with automatic email deployment to multiple recipients?

You shouldn't have to waste time building custom reports piece by piece. If your solution can automate this process, your analysts can spend more time putting actionable intelligence to work. You can also use this feature to create and deploy custom reports for neighboring agencies or other local government leaders.

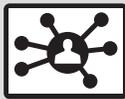
Does the solution enable us to create custom reports by crime type and area (beat) in just seconds?

Your solution should be able to generate reports just the way you want, immediately when you want them. If it's taking you 10 to 15 minutes, it's taking too long.

Does the solution allow us to instantly access multiple report types such as Roll Call and Time of Day/Day of Week, along with multiple visual formats such as bar graphs, pie charts, heat maps, etc. – all from one screen?

If you have to switch screens to see different visualizations of your crime data, then perhaps it's time for an upgrade. You should be able to change report visualizations in seconds by whatever data sets you choose, so that you don't have to waste time switching from screen to screen to get the visualization you want. This capability improves analysis and enables more proactive responses to problem spots.

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POLICING METHODOLOGIES SUPPORT

Does your solution support the basic tenets of CompStat, DDACTS, and Intelligence-led-Policing (ILP)?

Crime analytics solutions need to be flexible enough to adapt to whatever policing methodology you use – you should not have to change the way you police to conform to limitations in your solution.

Does the solution provide a fully interactive data map that displays points from which we can click to get detailed crime-related information such as location, crime type, date, officer, case number, plus a narrative about the crime?

Your solution must provide more than just a rigid pin map if your goal is to implement policing tools that help better protect your community. Seek a solution that quickly and easily displays all of the necessary information from a single screen. It should contain coded "icons" that designate crime types and include a synopsis of all relevant data for that crime (or crimes) in that location. If you have to switch screens to access all that information, you probably don't have the right system.

Does the solution deliver real-time actionable intelligence that can be put to use instantly by every division of our agency? In other words, do our patrols, command staff, detectives, support services, and community outreach personnel all have access to the same real-time data, so that immediate action can be taken?

The right analytics platform enables an analyst or intelligence officer to focus on actionable intelligence that helps reduce crime, as opposed to responding to ad hoc requests. For example, if your patrol officers want to have the latest detailed information on all crime-related activities that occurred on their beat during their off days, they should be able to access this information on their own within seconds.

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INTER- AND INTRA-AGENCY INFORMATION ACCESS

Does the solution allow for instant, organization-wide access?

Officers out in the field need real-time, actionable intelligence that they can put to use in any situation. This means no wasted time calling in to the dispatcher to retrieve the information they need or rummaging through their RMS or CAD system to access it themselves.

Does the solution automate the creation of Roll Call/Shift Briefings?

If creating Roll Call briefings is a time-consuming process, you may need a different solution. Make sure your software offers fully automated Roll Call briefing functionality, so that you can spend more time protecting the community and less time on paperwork.

Does the solution support an unlimited number of users accessing the system at the same time?

Some solutions slow down or worse yet, block access to the platform because they can't support a large number of people on the system at the same time. Large tactical operations require that everyone has access to the same data set at the same time – they can't afford to be restricted or shut out due to constraints of a solution that caps simultaneous access.

Does the solution allow you to collaborate with neighboring agencies by sharing data.

Crime doesn't respect jurisdictional boundaries. If your solution does not allow you to view data from surrounding agencies on the same platform, you may not be fully understanding trends and patterns within your own jurisdiction.

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SECURITY AND SUPPORT

If the solution is cloud-based, is all of our critical data encrypted and certified to the most stringent security standards?

When it comes to the security of your sensitive data, you can't afford any compromises. It's imperative that your solution delivers optimal protection and meets the highest international accreditation standards such as SSL Encryption and SSAE 16 SOC 1 Type I & Type II level certification.

Does the solution enable us to track usage for every person who has login access?

Your solution should provide a log that tracks system usage by every authorized person. Administrators can use access logs for training opportunities as they teach agency personnel how and why to utilize an analytics solution. If someone isn't using the system, an administrator can train them on how to leverage the technology for their benefit.

Does the solution include automatic software updates?

Automated, cloud-based updates ensure you're always working with the latest features and the most secure version of the software. It also eliminates the need for additional IT resources to manually update individual servers or machines.

Does the solution give us direct access to the highest level of support when we need it?

As a law enforcement agency, you can't afford any second-class support or runarounds when you need help right away. If you don't have instant access to a support professional (not an automated robot), then the support isn't good enough.

Does the solution provider offer after-hours support?

Crime prevention is a 24/7, year-round service. Law enforcement never shuts down and neither can support for your solution.

Does the solution provider offer advanced training, if requested?

Advanced training for officers and management on tactical crime analysis and resource allocation is integral to the success of your departments' crime-fighting efforts. If your solution provider does not offer advanced training beyond the initial product deployment, then they have failed to provide all the tools you need to get the job done effectively.

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PRICING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Does the solution provider give you full transparency of pricing and any additional costs that may be incurred from implementing the solution, including, but not limited to, training and support?

Transparency of pricing means that law enforcement agencies can budget more effectively and not be victim to the "let's make a deal" approach.

Is the solution's pricing based on agency size?

Pricing based on your service population is predictable, unlike pricing based on transactions.

Does the solution provider offer product training post integration?

Some solution providers charge excessive fees for multi-level training offerings. You should go with a solution provider that will make sure you understand how to use all of the solution features and offer basic training free of charge.

Does the solution provider charge extra for support calls?

Phone support shouldn't cost anything. If you need help utilizing the solution, your provider should be ready and willing to help you be successful.

Does the solution provider offer 24/7 support?

Police work never stops and neither should your solution provider in their support of your agency. If their support is limited to "9-5," then chances are so is your ability to rely on their solution.

Is the solution easy to learn and use right "out of the box?"

Lots of crime analytics solutions require time- and cost-intensive training before you can be up and running with confidence. Your solution should be highly "intuitive" and easy to get up to speed without any extensive or costly outside training.

The decision to implement an analytics solution within your operations requires significant consideration to ensure you get the greatest amount of value from your purchase. For a personal consultation with our experts please visit motorolasolutions.com/analytics to sign up today.

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