

SPOTLIGHT ARTICLE

SME AND SITE RESEARCHER DR. FOX OFFERS GUIDANCE FOR SITES TO ADDRESS VIOLENT CRIME



Dr. Andrew Fox, an assistant professor at California State University Fresno, serves as a Subject Matter Expert (SME) for Bureau of Justice Assistance’s Smart Suite. Throughout his partnership with Smart Suite, Dr. Fox has offered many sites his expertise on topics such as social network analysis, fatal and nonfatal shootings, hot spot strategies, deterrence, and the cycle of retaliatory violence.

Dr. Fox’s interest in criminal justice began as an undergraduate sociology major when he was drawn to a criminal justice course that focused on the death penalty, racial disparities, and how society responds to crime. Upon graduation, he moved to Los Angeles and started working with homeless populations in a church basement. He quickly learned that the path to homelessness is complex and caused by many invisible, interconnecting factors. He worked closely with his homeless clients, a process that at times entailed inviting them to stay at the one-bedroom apartment he shared with his three roommates.

Looking back on these experiences, Dr. Fox realized that homelessness and crime did not have a simple panacea. Providing temporary housing to homeless individuals or harsher jail terms did not address the root cause of these complex issues. “What brings people to shoot each other cannot be solved by a simple solution like longer prison sentences,” Dr. Fox reflected.

This epiphany, along with his passion for reform and research, led him to Arizona State University where he obtained both his Master’s and Doctorate degrees in Criminology and Criminal Justice. During graduate school, he received an assistantship from Violence Prevention and Community Safety with Dr. Charles Katz. He began working with law enforcement in the United States, Caribbean, and Central America to study gang violence, including the infamous MS-13 gang with roots in El Salvador.

Dr. Fox began working with criminal justice practitioners directly after receiving his PhD. He quickly discovered that breaking down barriers—often involving simple things like explaining office lingo— is a key strategy to effective practitioner/researcher partnerships. Although not every researcher can be located within the office of a criminal justice practitioner, both can learn to relate and communicate. Dr. Fox says simply meeting practitioners and attending criminal justice conferences together leads to a shared understanding and communication between practitioners and researchers.

Underscoring this point with a personal experience, Dr. Fox recalled when he began working as a researcher with police and prosecutors in Kansas City in 2012. He did not always understand practitioner lingo while law enforcement partners did not understand his research language. However, after setting up a desk in the local Kansas City prosecutor’s office, sharing coffee breaks and water cooler office banter with prosecutors and law enforcement, everyone began understanding each other and speaking the same language over time: practitioners understood the research, and he understood the reality of their jobs and their perspectives on safety.

Read about Dr. Bruce Perry’s training on trauma informed care in Harris County on page 3

Turn to page 4 to read about the Kings County District Attorney’s Office stakeholder meeting

Learn about how the San Diego City Attorney’s Office is planning to implement Kiosks for client screening on page 4

On page 5 learn about how Jackson County prosecutors participated in a neighborhood cleanup for an abandoned housing block

In addition to his professional support of BJA's Smart Suite of programs, Dr. Fox also lends his expertise as a research partner/evaluator to the Jackson County Prosecuting Attorney's Office's (Kansas City) Smart Prosecution Initiative, the Kansas City's Police Department's Smart Policing Initiative, and King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office's (Seattle) Police Prosecutor Partnership Initiative (3PI). He has helped both jurisdictions develop social network analysis to address violent crime specific to each jurisdiction.

For the Kansas City initiatives, Dr. Fox is working with Dr. Kenneth Novak from the University of Missouri-Kansas City and with police and prosecutors to identify fifteen micro hot spots in the East Zone, an area encompassing 0.25 square miles where the most violent crime occurred in the city in the past two years. The 15 hot spots have been separated into three categories: the control group with standard policing; an increased patrol group where police presence is increased during certain times; and a network based group, where law enforcement works with analysts to approach crime reduction from a network focus. This research design allows team members to look at case processing, efficiency, and crime reduction.

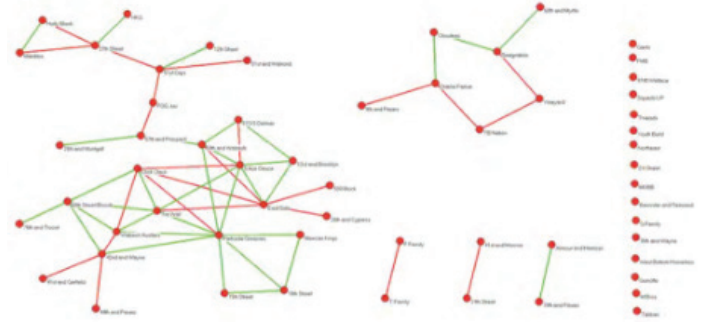
Dr. Fox is assisting King County, Washington to create a Crime Strategies Unit (CSU) and is working with seven local law enforcement agencies to collect and reduce nonfatal shots fired within the jurisdiction. CSU's goal is for law enforcement practitioners to use data for case prioritization and informed decision-making specifically, with this initiative, Dr. Fox will study arrest and police stop overlaps within the seven local jurisdictions to focus on specific crime drivers and types of crimes committed. Later in the project, Dr. Fox will set up bi-yearly qualitative interviews with 20 stakeholders to determine how Smart approaches are changing practitioner attitudes toward crime data, and the challenges of data sharing across agencies.

Dr. Fox is well known for his expertise in Social Network Analysis (SNA). He explained that the process examines how people are connected socially by identifying group membership and group dynamics. Researchers then map networks visually to identify centralized players who hold crime networks together. For example, a group of seemingly unrelated arrestees in a city could be linked through SNA showing not only their accountability, but other associates, other crime-drivers, "beefs and alliances", other party associations, and identifications of other connected and influential individuals within proximate networks. SNA is also critical (and can be predictive) for mapping the complex problem of retaliation that turns victims into offenders, an issue with which most jurisdictions with violent crime can relate. He concludes that this analysis is important in law enforcement processes because it provides "an epidemiological pattern that [researchers and practitioners] can quantify and predict, thereby allowing case prioritization, as not every [criminal defendant] is an influencer."

According to Dr. Fox and other researchers, "Crime, delinquency, and victimization are not distributed evenly

across the entire population; rather, they are highly concentrated amongst select individuals."¹

To successfully work on crime deterrence, prosecutors must understand the data they currently have and then use that data to make important charging decisions. Dr. Fox explains this data will not always be perfect, and that a lot of prosecutors, especially in violent jurisdictions, can be easily overwhelmed. However, prosecutors have a responsibility—



A graph depicting SNA "beefs and alliances" interconnectivity between crime groups (credit to Fox Andrew M, Kenneth Novak, and Joseph McHale. "Using Social Network Analysis to Guide Law Enforcement Strategies." Translational Criminology. Fall 2015)

like criminal justice researchers— to reduce crime, and oftentimes a prosecutor's singular action will translate into a crime reduction strategy. Dr. Fox notes the work of Jean Peters Baker, Jackson County (Kansas City) Missouri's elected prosecutor, who has done "a great job communicating with and being active in the community." Prosecutor Peters Baker initiated a GoFundMe page for a slain teenager, which as of May 22, 2017, raised \$1,635 for the teenager's family (<https://www.gofundme.com/help-for-kansas-city-murder-victim>). Dr. Fox says these actions show the prosecutor's understanding of the complexities of her jurisdiction's crime problem; in addition to showing the community prosecutors will assist victims of crimes, community outreach and victim engagement simultaneously allows prosecutors to feel greater empathy for crime victims and their families.

Dr. Fox offers these tips and best practices for new researchers:

- *Spend time with the practitioner team- although this is more easily done through co-location, researchers can learn practitioner-speak at conferences, lunch, or happy hour.*
- *Understand what practitioners need and a willingness to work on a much shorter timeframe- the research world tends to spin slowly, and practitioners may not find a 100-page evaluation useful 2 years after the program, but may find a 2 or 3-page report useful if generated within a few weeks.*

For criminal justice practitioners without a co-located researcher and/or grant funding, Dr. Fox recommends connecting to a local university. Most universities are interested in reducing crime in the area, and have a shared interest in cross-pollinating. Dr. Fox started working with the Kansas City No Violence Alliance (KC NoVA) in 2012 before KC NoVA received federal funding.² At the time, Jackson County Prosecutor Jean Baker asked the chancellor of a

local university for help, and received funding for faculty and graduate students to work on a crime reduction program.

Dr. Fox says he enjoys his partnership with Smart Suite programs because “it is action-oriented and allows researchers and practitioners to try new things and see the results in real time.” He enjoys being part of a “valuable process that uses scientific methods within context to identify crime reduction

¹Fox Andrew M, Kenneth Novak, and Joseph McHale. “Using Social Network Analysis to Guide Law Enforcement Strategies.” *Translational Criminology*. Fall 2015 ²KC NoVA is a collaboration between researchers, police, prosecutors, probation, parole, and federal agencies including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). KC NoVA focuses on focused-based deterrence. Dr. Fox assists KC NoVA with Social Network Analysis to help building networks identifying gangs. Read more about KC NoVA here: <http://kansascitynova.org/about.php>.

strategies.” He encourages all his students to make their coursework applicable to the real world.

Recently, Dr. Fox has begun meeting with the Fresno Police Department, even without grant funding, as he finds the relationship mutually beneficial and helpful to both his professional and his affiliated university’s work.

SITE ACTIVITY

FY ‘14 SMART PROSECUTION SITES

HARRIS COUNTY (HOUSTON)

PROJECT: *SURVIVORS ACQUIRING FREEDOM AND EMPOWERMENT (SAFE) COURT*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

The SAFE Court program continues to utilize supervised, targeted intervention and treatment designed upon a therapeutic-based model for young adults between the ages of 17 and 25 years old, engaged in sex work and charged with misdemeanor prostitution. Safe Court meets twice monthly.

On April 5, new team members met research partners Dr. Muftic of Sam Houston State University and Rita Blackwell, Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department, to discuss SAFE Court. Dr. Muftic explained the reasons for specific data to be collected and provided to her for evaluation of the program.

On April 7, Dr. Bruce Perry presented a “Trauma Informed Care” training to 250 members of the community, including: prosecutors from all units of the Harris County District Attorney’s Office; the Safe Court judge; members from Community Supervision and Corrections Department; and graduate students. The presentation focused on how trauma affects a survivor’s brain.

As of April 25, Safe Court enrollment remains the same as last month with 23 participants. However, several more people have completed assessments and are in the process of enrolling into the program.

The site reports that the Governor’s office is interested in adolescent human trafficking and has invited Safe Court staff to various work groups to discuss the issue.

NEWS:

Local investigation uncovers international human trafficking ring...[READ MORE](#)

LOS ANGELES

PROJECT: *INTRODUCING NEW TOOLS USING EVIDENCE AND RISK ASSESSMENT TO CONFIRM ELIGIBILITY FOR PROSECUTION TREATMENT (INTERCEPT)*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

The Los Angeles City Attorney’s Office continues utilizing best practices and evidence-based tools to successfully develop better-informed engagement plans for pre-filing restorative justice diversion participants. Each participant’s obligations are based on their own unique history and needs.

Fellow research partner Justice and Security Strategies (JSS) is currently working on a more thorough program outcomes evaluation anticipated to be completed in June 2017.

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Business owners struggle with homeless, crime along Orange Line in Van Nuys...[READ MORE](#)

SAN FRANCISCO

PROJECT: *CRIME STRATEGIES UNIT (CSU)*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

CSU promotes predictive analytics for strategic prosecution, using analytic tools to make connections between criminal events, defendants, witnesses and victims to facilitate more effective investigations, charging decisions, and case dispositions.

The site hosted three members from King County (Seattle) Prosecuting Attorney’s Office from May 3-5. Topics discussed during this site visit included: CSU’s Gun Enforcement Unit and its ability to review every gun case, forensic analysis including cell phone technology, analytical software programs, and arrest alert system. Two team members had an opportunity to meet with the neighborhood prosecutor

assigned to the Bayview District to discuss case prosecution and community engagement. A third member of the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office had an opportunity to meet with a San Francisco prosecutor, crime analyst (both assigned to CSU) and police officer to discuss human trafficking including: large scale data analysis, innovative strategies to address the demand-side of human trafficking, and opportunities for collaboration among a small national working group of cities.

There was a recent operation between the San Francisco District Attorney's Crime Strategies Unit, Berkeley Police Department, and San Francisco Police Department. Through a data-driven, problem-solving, collaborative approach, CSU Prosecutor Asha Jameson was able to help Berkeley Police identify a major fencing operation. Click below to read the news coverage on this operation.

NEWS:

Police arrest two, recover \$500,000 of stolen goods in breakup of Bay Area-wide theft ring...[READ MORE](#)

FY '15 SMART PROSECUTION SITES

BALTIMORE

PROJECT: *IMPLEMENTING EVIDENCE-BASED RISK ASSESSMENT DURING THE PRETRIAL PHASE*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

The site continues to develop an automated, risk assessment for Charging Prosecutors to determine appropriate release or hold recommendations for the Bail Commissioner and Court; The State's Attorney's Office, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS), and research partners are exploring a potential collaboration to develop a uniform risk assessment to be used by both agencies. Throughout April, the team has been meeting with officials at DPSCS to discuss acquiring necessary data to develop the pretrial risk assessment for use by the State's Attorney's Office and Pretrial Services.

On April 7, the team attended a Post-Arrest Committee meeting hosted by Baltimore City's Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) and provided an update of the site's initiative.

The team continues to develop a plan for stakeholder buy-in and has discussed key issues, strategy, and a timeline with Site Champion, Brenidy Rice.

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KINGS COUNTY (BROOKLYN)

PROJECT: *THE BROOKLYN YOUNG ADULT JUSTICE INITIATIVE*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

The site reports 1,460 open cases pending in the Adolescent Diversion Court Part, which offers diversion instead of prosecution to young adults, 16-24 years old, charged with misdemeanor offenses, who are at the greatest risk for re-offending and/or are facing more serious criminal consequences. The site credits the reduction with ongoing training designed to target and divert cases at arraignment—and not later in the criminal justice process.

This month, the site has rolled out its program that screens participants at first appearance (arraignment) to see if they qualify for diversion. As of April 27th, 34 defendants pled at arraignment and were deferred to the program. Brooklyn Justice Initiatives (BJI) provides treatment service referrals to program participants. Pleas are taken at arraignment and immediately thereafter, and the new participant goes directly to the courthouse-based office to sign up for services at BJI. Client participants are also given Procedural Justice surveys (available in both Spanish and English) at arraignment.

A stakeholder meeting occurred on April 11, with the discussion focusing on the arraignment rollout. The site reports that judges are being trained on the rollout, and some are implementing the practice outside the Adolescent Court Part.

The Center for Court Innovation (CCI) continues identifying high risk individuals in the program through an impact analysis.

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SAN DIEGO

PROJECT: *THE COMMUNITY JUSTICE INITIATIVE (CJI)*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

CJI uses data and evidence-based practices to restore justice and increase effectiveness and efficiency through a post-plea, city-wide diversion initiative to provide accountability, early intervention and swift consequences for participants charged with eligible misdemeanor offenses.

As of March 29, the site reports that 4,868 cases have been filed; 3,640 offers made; 2,444 offers accepted; 1,196 offers rejected; 1,840 offers completed; and 383 participants failed out of the program.

The site continues researching a software platform /Kiosk for client screening. In April, the team reviewed a demo from a manufacturer and then ordered two flat-screen TV-sized kiosks, which they plan to mount outside two of the courtrooms. As of April 26, the kiosks were shipped from the

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manufacturer and will “be up and running soon.” The kiosks will administer the proxy screen to determine high, medium, or low risk scores for program participants.

The San Diego City Attorney’s Office launched its San Diego Misdemeanors At-Risk Track (SMART) Second Chance Program in December. The program will provide in-house recovery treatment for 70-100 individuals per year. The site is developing strategies with the city and Mayor’s office to acquire funding for a 100-bed treatment center. Read more about the SMART Second Chance Program here: <https://www.sandiego.gov/cityattorney/divisions/criminal/smart>

On April 28, the site co-hosted a Community Engagement Advisory Board meeting, at Urban Corps. Attendees included stakeholders from the police department, community members, Urban Corps, Alpha Project, and will include Public Defenders in the future. The site reports the first meeting was a success, and members asked to meet monthly.

On March 27, the site hosted a brown bag lunch for the City Attorney’s Office staff with local SME Christine Brown Taylor, Re-Entry Services Manager at the San Diego Sheriff’s Department. The “well-received” discussion centered on risk needs assessment, an overview of “why we’re doing what we’re doing.” Twenty people attended.

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FY ‘16 SMART PROSECUTION SITES

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

PROJECT: *USING OUR BRAINS: REDUCING RECIDIVISM AMONG YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

The site is furthering collaboration with the DC US Attorney’s Office (USAO). Both offices plan to develop a diversion-based initiative, using restorative justice, for youth (ages 12-17) and young adults (ages 18-24) who commit certain crimes, such as theft, destruction of property and non-injury simple assault cases with victim consent. The team is evaluating data from the DC United States Attorney’s Office (USAO) for potential program development.

On April 19, the site received budget approval to hire two full-time facilitators for its restorative justice panels.

On April 19, the team met with members of the DC USAO to discuss details for a restorative justice program for young adults. The two offices continue to collaborate on a potential joint initiative.

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JACKSON COUNTY (KANSAS CITY)

PROJECT: *JACKSON COUNTY MISSOURI PROSECUTOR’S OFFICE SMART PROSECUTION INITIATIVE*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

The site’s geographic-based initiative will target the “East Zone,” the most violent area within Kansas City. Team members will collaborate with law enforcement, community partnership specialists, and community members to assess crime-related problems in the East Zone and implement strategies to address them.

On April 19, prosecutors participated in a neighborhood cleanup for the abandoned housing block. The office is partnering with Community Backed Anti-Crime Tax (COMBAT) who receives sales tax for drug and violence reduction. More information about the initiative is available at: <http://www.kansascity.com/news/local/article145322544.html>

The site is looking at community-based trauma informed care training for Stakeholders and is consulting with SME Janet Fine, Project Director for Northeastern University’s Vicarious Trauma Toolkit Project, for a potential training.

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ESSEX COUNTY (NEWARK)

PROJECT: *ESSEX COUNTY SMART SOCIAL MEDIA INITIATIVE*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

The initiative continues to develop a specialized unit to investigate and prosecute cases based on suspects’ usage of social media. The site envisions a systematic, proactive approach to social-media mining that will reduce crime, empower victims, promote fair and impartial justice, and instill the public’s confidence in criminal justice.

The site completed a test run of its initiative in March and the Unit is up and running as of April.

On April 21, prosecutor and site team member Joseph Giordano presented a social media analysis overview with detectives focusing on juvenile crimes.

From May 1–5, two prosecutors from the initiative attended the Social Network Analysis for Law Enforcement Symposium at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), Monterey, CA. SME Dr. Fox, who is also a research partner for the King County Prosecutor’s Office (Seattle) 3PI and the Jackson County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office (Kansas City, Missouri) initiative, presented at the Symposium.

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Essex County Prosecutor’s Office to host conference for boys...[READ MORE](#)

CHATHAM COUNTY (SAVANNAH)

PROJECT: *THE CHATHAM COUNTY SMART PROSECUTION PROGRAM*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

The initiative aims to reduce gun violence by focusing on group and gang violence by: identifying local hot spots for gun violence in the Savannah area and most violent offenders within these hotspots; tracking and prioritizing prosecution within hotspots and individuals within those hotspots; diverting non-essential cases (e.g. theft and simple drug possession) to alternative programs; and, engaging with community groups within the hotspots through meetings, social media forums, and other outreach strategies.

On March 29, the site's researcher, Dr. Chad Posick, discussed social network analysis with SME Dr. Fox. The call assisted Dr. Posick as he reviews last year's arrest data.

On April 24, the site submitted its Strategic Plan to BJA.

The site continues its collaboration with federal partners. On March 24, members of the initiative and Savannah police detectives assigned to the gang unit met with the head of the criminal division of the US Attorney's office, to share information and talk about gang prosecutions. On April 26, the team participated in a roundtable discussion with US Attorney's office where the team presented cases to determine if federal prosecution is appropriate.

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Police save lives with drug meant to save officers from accidental overdose...[READ MORE](#)

MIAMI

PROJECT: *THE GUN VIOLENCE REDUCTION INITIATIVE*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

The Gun Violence Reduction Initiative places a team of prosecutors, investigators, and a community outreach and a victim witness specialist to work directly with police and the community to combat shootings and homicides at the Northside District Station. Two prosecutors and one investigator are co-located in the Northside District Station. The initiative includes a victim witness advocate involved in all Northside cases.

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FY '16 3PI SITE

KING COUNTY (SEATTLE)

PROJECT: *SHOTS FIRED*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

The team continues its work to establish a Crime Strategies Unit (CSU) for its "Shots Fired" Initiative aimed at addressing

increased firearm violence in the jurisdiction, through institutionalizing standardized intelligence gathering and sharing to concentrate resources on reducing shots-fired incidents and identifying those involving chronic victims and offenders in hotspot locations.

On April 20, approximately a dozen analysts attended a first working group and discussed Social Network Analysis (SNA) and shared information about gangs. Earlier, the site's research partner, Dr. Fox, had provided three days of SNA training for fifteen crime analysts. SNA allows the team to identify major crime drivers.

On April 24, the site submitted its Strategic Plan to BJA.

As of April 28, the site's onsite analyst, Rafael Serrano, updated the site's Shots Fired database with data from 7 regional law enforcement partners. The improved database allows for easier information sharing between partners.

As of April 28, the site obtained all the data needed from seven local police department jurisdictions. Dr. Fox called this data "an incredible amount of information" and "a gold mine." Dr. Fox is working to parse down the data for an initial analysis.

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CONTACT US

Tammy Brown, Senior Policy Advisor, Bureau of Justice Assistance
US Department of Justice
tammy.m.brown@usdoj.gov

TTA Providers:

Beth Merachnik, Director, Smart Prosecution Initiative
beth.merachnik@APAInc.org

Margo Badawy, Staff Attorney, Smart Prosecution Initiative
margo.badawy@APAInc.org

Kristi Barksdale, Project Associate, Smart Prosecution Initiative
kristi.barksdale@APAInc.org

Association of Prosecuting Attorneys
11 DuPont Circle, Suite 240
Washington, DC 20036

Connect with us on the web:
SmartProsecution.org | APAInc.org
@APASmartPros | @APAInc

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