Proof of ID? Policing the night-time economy
Heather Barrett, Doctoral Researcher, Design Group, Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology
Supervisors: Professor Joyce Fortune, Professor Geoff Peters and Dr Clive Savory

- WHY? The expanding need for the police to address alcohol-related violence and disorder in the night-time economy has led to attempts to have mandatory digital identification scanning on entry to licensed premises, hence the introduction of ID Scanners. However, its successful introduction requires joint working across a range of stakeholders and this can be difficult to achieve.

- WHAT? The ID Scanner technology is able to scan very many different identity document types from all around the world at high speed and with accuracy and can also identify counterfeit and duplicate documents.

- WHO? This study explores a number of sites where the ID scanner is being introduced. Interviews have been conducted with stakeholders including the police, licensees, council members, door staff, suppliers, accreditation and other groups, and the general public.

- HOW? This study, underpinned by systems thinking methods, will compare what happens in practice with academic theory on adoption, technology acceptance, and innovation more generally.

WHAT ARE PARTICIPANTS SAYING?

Police
- ‘The requirement for a scanner is not always included on a club licence; this is a big difficulty and makes it problematic to enforce’.
- ‘One club was really proactive in adopting the technology. This club saw an 80% reduction in offences in the first 3 months of using a scanner’.

Premises
- ‘In contrast to previous experience, work takes place collaboratively with the police’.
- ‘A serious incident took place...just one week after introducing the scanner...within 48 hours the perpetrator had been identified and arrested’.

Council
- ‘Any [conditions on a licence] must be appropriate and necessary to promote the licensing objectives’.
- On challenging a licence proposal ‘the police verbally indicated many incidents had occurred but the evidence showed not all incidents had been recorded’.

Door staff
- ‘In the past groups of undesirables would either be told that the manager/door supervisor did not want them in the venue thus causing personal animosity. Now you can just explain to them, due to the ID system they could not enter without ID and like this blame the machine and manage the potential conflict like that’.

WHAT NEXT FOR THIS STUDY?
- Analysis of data and comparison with relevant academic literature and model building to generate findings.
- Identifying how improvements might be made and supporting the police to understand what happens in practice.

To discuss this project, please contact: heather.barrett@open.ac.uk