

Presentation title:

The principled use of technology in policing, for transparency, accountability and improved access to equal legal protection for all

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Equal access to justice for all is a key component of a fair, humane, effective, inclusive, and efficient criminal justice system which is essential for maintaining the rule of law and ensuring the conditions in which individuals and communities can thrive. Meaningful efforts to promote equal access to justice for all require a recognition of both the obstacles and enablers of access to justice at all stages of the criminal justice process, including in all settings where technology plays a role in shaping justice outcomes. The apparent efficiencies of digitalisation have seen a steady growth, in recent years, in the application of new and advanced technologies in the administration of criminal justice. Within this broader field, this presentation focuses specifically on policing, to explore the benefits and potential risks associated with the use of various technologies in law enforcement settings. This presentation examines the potential for the principled application of technology in policing, to assist with resource prioritisation, strengthen transparency and accountability, and mitigate risks of abuse of power. While exploring the positive potential of technology mediated outcomes, such as these, the paper also notes concerns regarding the risk of criminogenic, rights-invasive, and discriminatory outcomes arising from the use of predictive and emerging technologies (such as the Internet of Things and artificial intelligence) in law enforcement settings. Noting the impetus, in jurisdictions globally, towards the deployment of technology in policing, the presentation underscores the importance of a principled approach to ensure that the pursuit of technology-enabled efficiencies does not occur at the expense of human rights, or divert attention away from addressing the root causes of crime, structural discrimination, and an over-burdened criminal justice system.