

Watermark Leaves Criminals High and Dry

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Criminals have admitted that a hi-tech invisible liquid, which can only be seen under ultra violet light, is the most effective in stopping them in their tracks.

Burglars are automatically sprayed with a DNA-style code that lasts for months – linking them directly to a crime scene. The forensic technology is also used to ‘code’ valuables.

Findings from a study into crime deterrents are announced today by the University of Leicester following research by the University’s spin-out company Perpetuity Research and Consultancy International.

The study led by Martin Gill, a Professor of Criminology at the University, identified SmartWater as being more effective in deterring experienced criminals than security guards, burglar alarms, ink dye-tags and CCTV. The impact of SmartWater as a criminal deterrent even topped high-visibility police patrols.

The study of over 100 criminals revealed that simply displaying signs that goods and premises were protected by SmartWater was sufficient to put off most of the criminals the team interviewed.

Professor Gill said: “According to our sample, SmartWater provided a strong projected deterrent value in that 74 per cent of the offenders interviewed reported that they would in the future be put off from breaking into a building with a SmartWater poster/sign displayed.

“Overall, the findings indicate that crime reduction strategies using SmartWater products have a strong deterrent effect. In particular, one notable finding of the study was that whilst ‘property marking’ in general acts as a reasonable deterrent, the combination of forensic products which SmartWater uses in its holistic approach increases the deterrent factor substantially.”

When scored out of ten by respondents in regard to deterrent value, SmartWater was awarded the highest average score (8.3 out of a score of 10) compared to a range of other crime deterrents. CCTV scored 6.2, Burglar Alarms scored 6.0 and security guards scored 4.9.

According to South Yorkshire Police, who assisted with the report, it has used SmartWater within covert operations to trap car thieves, and has secured no fewer than 24 criminal convictions on separate occasions. At present, 15,000 homes in Doncaster – where the research was carried out - use SmartWater forensic property coding within their homes, whilst all 117 sites run by Doncaster Education Authority also use the technology.

Although outside the remit of this piece of research, SmartWater technology is currently being used in a variety of ways-including protecting lead on church roofs, ‘cash in transit’ robberies and business break-ins. In Leicestershire, SmartWater vials have been made available by Ecclesiastical Insurance to protect churches targeted by lead thieves.

SmartWater Chief Executive Officer, Phil Cleary, said: “Over many years, we have gathered anecdotal evidence from throughout the UK that The SmartWater Strategy™ has led to vast reductions in various types of crime. We are pleased therefore that this piece of research, from such an eminent academic body, lends weight to our claims. The SmartWater brand is well known to the criminal fraternity and many major companies, such as Scottish Power, G4S and Ecclesiastical Insurance now use its deterrent power to protect their assets.

Source: University of Leicester

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