

# New York cracks down on social media gangsters

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Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly said Tuesday that he's doubling the number of detectives assigned to combating local teen gangs and that increased surveillance of social networks will be a major part of the strategy.

The gangs under scrutiny are not the big, established outfits like the Bloods and Crips, which are well known around the United States, but neighborhood groups fighting over loyalties often to just one part of a

housing project or other limited turf.

"Under a program we've named Operation Crew Cut, the Department intends to double the size of its Gang Division from approximately 150 detectives to 300 phased in over a period of time," Kelly said in prepared remarks to a police conference in San Diego, California.

The propensity of the [social media](#) addicted youths to use [Facebook](#) and other networks to "brag about their murderous exploits" means detectives will be watching their screens, as much as the streets.

"In addition to tracking the admissions of criminal conduct and plans of future crimes by crew members on Facebook, You Tube and elsewhere, the division will be responsible for maintaining a dictionary of sorts with a continually updated lexicon employed by crews as a kind of code," Kelly said.

Officers will infiltrate gangs under online aliases registered with their superiors. They will also be allowed to use untraceable Internet cards on their laptops.

Kelly, who runs one of the world's most technologically advanced [police departments](#), with a rapidly growing surveillance capability, said measures were being taken to ensure that monitoring the networks does not go too far.

"Recently, we issued new guidelines for officers using social media as part of criminal investigations. We did this to instill the proper balance between the investigative potential of social network sites and privacy expectations," he said.

The initiative reflects a shift in crime away from murder, which is down 18 percent so far this year, Kelly said.

However, overall crime is up four percent, largely due to a wave of teen-on-teen thefts, especially involving iPods and other Apple products.

"Like the impact on the economy itself, the allure of Apple devices has affected New York City's crime rate," Kelly said. "In 2002, we recorded a total of 86 thefts of Apple products in all of New York City. Last year that number was 13,233."

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