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Surrounded by Crime: This I Know, for the Internet Told Me So

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SURROUNDED BY CRIME: THIS I KNOW, FOR THE INTERNET TOLD ME SO

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Philip Wagner

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

May 2015

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This study examined the relationship between members of Generation Y and their usage of the internet for the purposes of being informed about crime; as well as how this would influence their perceptions of possible likelihood of victimization utilizing a pair of scales developed by Crowl (2013). The framework for this examination is that of Gerbner and Gross's (1978) cultivation theory, in which the more time a person spends absorbed in a type of media, the more they will come to rely upon it for facts and snap judgments.

To the knowledge of this researcher, no previous study has examined these internet variables, nor the internet as a tool of cultivation of a worldview in relationship to crime. The current study has expanded previous work in the field of cultivation theory research by utilizing the internet as a medium of cultivation, an expansion of mediums which has precedent, such as Williams (2006) and Van Mierlo and Van den Bulck's (2003) work in video games. This study found that cultivation effects appeared to be present in the use of the internet for crime news and view formulation in the form of sex and in the number of hours spent online.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Crime is more than a violation of law, it is a source of entertainment. A desire for news of crime and justice has existed in the United States from its earliest days (Surette, 2007) and has remained an appetite to be sated as both time and forms of popular media have marched on (Anderson, 2004). Whether crime is being used for information, entertainment, or both, it has continued to be an issue that has never strayed far from the headlines in all forms of media.

Media consumption and access has been a driving factor throughout the history of the United States (Heyer, 2003; Surette, 2007). During the colonial and early days of the nation, the pamphlet and the sermon were the primary form of information and entertainment. Newspapers became king and influenced society's views by providing information to a public that wished to be informed around the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. Radio supplemented the newspapers in helping to shape public opinion and discourse as it came of age in the 1920s and 1930s (Heyer, 2003). Television supplanted both in the 1950s and 1960s and changed the way Americans consumed their information (Dowler, 2007). The internet is a new and unexplored media format in terms of delivery of information about crime, having appeared for public use on August 6, 1991 (Ward, 2006) and widespread home adoption by the end of the decade, with over half of Americans using the web (Spiegel, 1999).

Despite the relatively new nature of the internet as a medium of communication, it is already becoming a source that is both widely accessible and readily accepted, especially among the youthful segment of society (Lenhart, 2009). Young people are more likely to read or view their news online than they are in a newspaper or television news program or channel (Tumber, 2001; Tewksbury, 2003). In one recent study, 59% of Americans had used the internet on their

smart phone as a source of information and 32% had used a tablet or other handheld device (Purcell, Entner, & Henderson, 2010). The Pew Center working with the New York Department of Health and Mental Hygiene found in a recent study that 63% of teens age 12-17 go online to find news and that 75% of Generation Y, those who are of relevant age to this study at ages 18-31, locate their news online (Lenhart, 2009).

Generation Y and its reliance on the internet in addition to or in replace of traditional media sources is a little explored avenue of research at the current time. A great deal of prior research in the use of other forms of media and people's perceptions of crime and justice has been done. Previous research has shown that a correlation exists between media consumption and fear of crime (Gunter, 1987; Cumberbatch, 1989; Chiricos, Eschhol, & Gertz, 1997) and media consumption and beliefs regarding the level of violence in American society (Gerbner & Gross, 1975; Gerbner, 1976; Gerbner et al., 1977; Gerbner et al., 1978; Heath & Gilbert, 1996).

While prior research has focused upon television and newspapers specifically, there has been little in the way of the internet and its role in crime news and opinion of crime formulation. The purpose of this study is to add to the literature by examining the role the internet plays as a medium for young adults in gathering their news about crime and how it influences their perceptions. The importance of this research project is therefore to add to the vast body of literature regarding media and crime, of which the new medium of the internet is currently underrepresented in proportion to its importance in daily life.

Chapter Two, the literature review, will first offer an overview of the history of media and crime's relationship in the United States stretching from the colonial era to the modern day. During the discussion on this relationship, the evolution of various forms of media will be discussed in depth from the printing press and dime store novels to the expanding use of smart

phones and tablets by Americans as access devices for the internet (Lenhart, 2009; Purcell, Entner, & Henderson, 2010).

Chapter Two will also introduce Gerbner's cultivation theory, which he first began to propose in the late 1970s. Gerbner hypothesized in cultivation theory that the television viewer is subjected to continuous and repeated images on television that "cultivate" their perception of that subject in the real world away from the screen. Those who watch a significant amount of television, several hours per day, are more likely to exhibit signs of cultivation effects, while those who do not watch significant amounts of television seem to lack signs of "cultivation". Gerbner concluded that those who are heavy viewers of television will normally answer questions about the real world based, at least in part, on their experiences with television; Cohen & Weimann (2000) summed up the theory thusly, "The primary proposition of cultivation theory states that the more time people spend "living" in the television world, the more likely they are to believe social reality portrayed on television" (p. 99). Though as it is applied to other forms of media ranging from books and newspapers to video games (Van Mierlo and Van den Bulck, 2003; Williams, 2006) it may be more appropriate to replace "television" in that definition with "form of media".

Chapter Three, the methods section, will offer the reader a description of the methodology employed in this study. This chapter will furnish a description of the methods of collection and analysis of the data. This data was collected through survey instruments distributed to undergraduate students at a small to medium sized university in a primarily rural area in the north-eastern United States. Chapter Four explains the findings of the research. It will include the quantitative results, models, and analysis. Chapter Five will tie the previous chapters together with an in-depth discussion of the findings of the study. This chapter will

discuss reasons for the results which have been found, what the results mean in the context of this study and the larger discipline, the limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research in the area.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Chapter two will display a summary of the evolution of forms of media and their link to the reporting of crime and criminal justice in the United States as well as how current generations have begun to experience what Kuhn (1962) would refer to as a paradigm shift in how they exercise their media consumption habits. This chapter will contain a history of media and crime's relationship in the United States, which details the evolution of media throughout the history of the nation, the period before the birth of the country, and how crime has continued to be a topic of consumption no matter the format. As this discussion enters the modern era, it will touch upon the advent of what many call infotainment (Anderson, 2004; Surette, 2007); where facts and entertainment cross over to create a new product for public consumption. This historical discussion will conclude by addressing the rise of new media and the rapidly changing methods of consumer access to media, especially among members of Generation Y, who will predominantly make up the sample for the study.

Prior to the historical underpinnings, this literature review will provide an overview of Gerbner and Gross's (1976) cultivation theory. This is a theory which posits the substitution of reality for that which has been observed through the lens of media and underpins the current study.

Cultivation Theory

There has been an old adage used by many chiding parents and others which informs children "you are what you eat". If one is to replace the word "eat" with "watch", then the genesis of Gerbner's cultivation theory can be found. Gerbner, a communications theorist by

trade, was interested primarily in the inter-locking relationship between television viewership and how it impacted the viewer's perception of their real world.

The more time spent in front of the television set would be more time for the consumer to “cultivate” an idea of the world which was based upon the on-screen images. Those who spent a significant amount of time watching television, several hours or more per day, were more likely to show increased signs of cultivation effects, while those who did not watch significant amounts of television programming would lack “cultivation” (Gerbner, 1976).

Gerbner (1976) and his fellow researcher Gross (1976) argued, in promoting this theory, that the centralized nature of television programming in the modern era allowed individuals not only to experience life vicariously through the images that were on the screen before them, but also because individuals are responsible for their own programming, to create an almost ritual use in which certain channels and programs were more likely to be watched on a continuing basis. Those individuals who viewed more television on the whole, would “cultivate” or more readily substitute their reality with that which has been experienced from what was viewed on television.

This “cultivation” effect would occur through two different means, primary and secondary effects, and it is important in cultivation research to distinguish between the two (Hawkins & Pingree, 1982). The primary or first-order cultivation effects examine and assess the relationship that has been put forward between a prolonged exposure to television and the estimate of the probability of an event observed on-screen occurring in reality (Nabi & Sullivan, 2001). Shrum (2004) states that first order judgments are, at their core, judgments about probability. In addition, these judgments are based on what has been “learned” and stored in an individual's long term memory (Shrum, 2004). Therefore an appropriate question to judge a

first-order effect might be based on an actual percentage, such as, “What percent of Americans have been involved in a violent crime” (Shrum, 2004, p. 329)?

Second-order cultivation effects are those which Shrum (2004) states capture the relationship between exposure to television programming and general attitudes or judgments of value about the state of the world. These attitudes are more likely to be “snap” judgments, made without first consulting one’s memory and occur at the outset of encountering information for the first time (Shrum, 2004). One appropriate example of a second-order cultivation effect could be, “How afraid of are you of being murdered?” (Van Mierlo & Van den Bulck, 2003).

When Gerbner and Gross (1976) introduced cultivation theory in the mid-1970s, cable television was still a relatively new experience and had yet to expand to fill the numerous niche markets of today (Surette, 2007) and these first and second-order effects had yet to be developed. Modern cable television is no longer condensed to a handful of networks which showed a variety of programs, but has splintered into hundreds, if not thousands, of channels which usually focus on particular interests for different groupings of people.

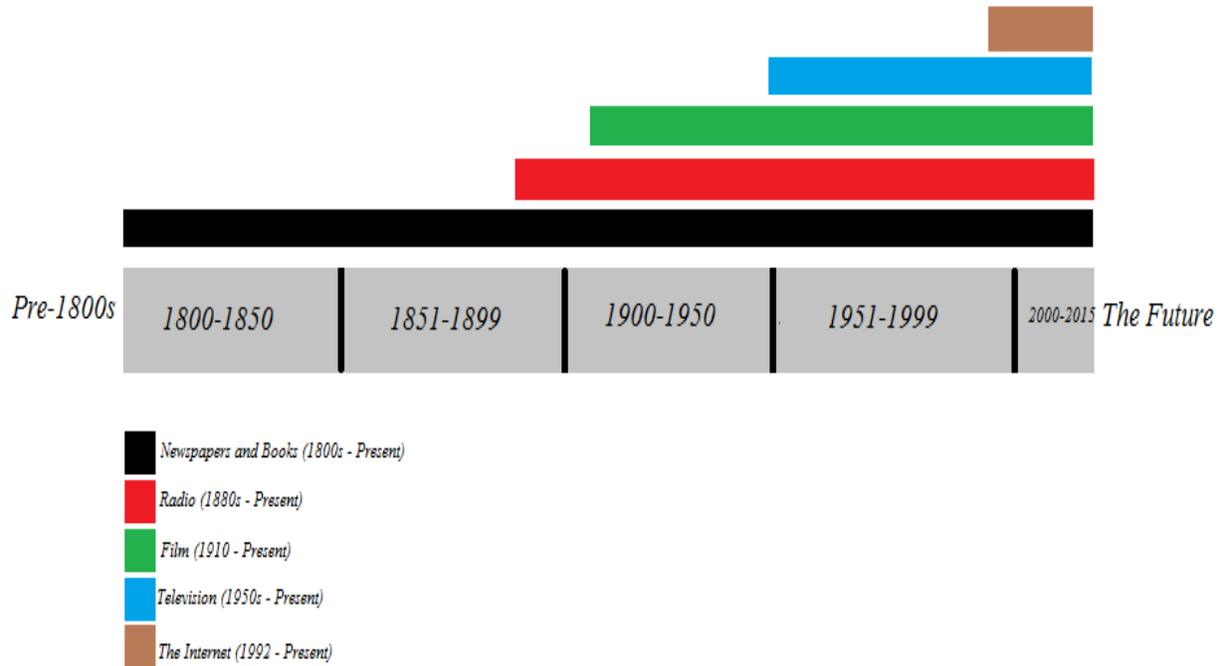
Those interested in news may turn their televisions to any number of networks. Similarly, those interested in crime are able to view a number of channels germane to their interests: Sleuth, Investigation Discovery, and TruTV (formerly Court TV) to name but a few examples. Individuals, in the current era, who watched the same programming types and channels, would be more likely to “cultivate” the popular ideas experienced and transpose them into the real world setting. As this proliferation of crime and criminal justice related television channels would imply, crime is one of the topics in which cultivation effects are said to occur most often (Romer, Jamieson, & Aday, 2003).

Most people have a personal view on crime and justice, even if they have not been a part of the criminal justice system as a victim, an employee of a criminal justice agency, or by having been accused of an offense. This uninformed view is often moderated by what individuals absorb through the news or other crime related programs. When people informed primarily through media and not experience are asked questions about the real world, this vicarious experience through television programming, or more recently the internet, is used much of the time to respond (Romer, Jamieson, & Aday, 2003). This logic would highlight, however, that not all television channels and shows, nor websites viewed, have an equal impact on their viewers' and consumers cultivation of ideas.

Not all cultivation research focuses on television use alone. The section which follows will expand upon cultivation theory in the context of the type of media being discussed. These types of media will be framed within their historical period in which they experienced a golden age.

A history of media and crime in the United States

Table 1: A Timeline of Modern Media in the United States



The criminal justice system has a long and sordid history with the media and its reporting of crimes in various manners (see Table 1, previous; see Table 13, Appendix A). Theater, folk tales and myths dominated antiquity when there were few methods of data transmission for distribution (Surette, 2007). Stories of great heroes who would right the wrongs committed against the gods and against society were told and retold across most cultures, whether it be in the form of oral traditions or in written text with such works as *The Illiad*.

Folk tales and myths continued to be the primary method that could be most closely linked to what current society would call media until the year 1200 of the Common Era to the year 1500 of the Common Era; at this time ballads began to take their place with tales of vengeance and mayhem (Surette, 2007). In a ballad, the myths of older eras were retold or embellished with new names. Often, a new hero was at the center of a ballad, one which stirred

feelings against an offending clan or ethnic group who had committed some crime against the society in which a person held membership.

Overlap between the era of ballads and the era of print could be found between the year 1400 of the Common Era and the year 1500 of the Common Era, as the printing press began to dominate the way people spread information. This revolutionary new technology allowed for the printing and distribution of pamphlets describing the crime and need for repentance at gallows sermons of the condemned offender who was about to die (Surette, 2007).

It is in this period of time that the United States came into existence. During the colonial and early days of the nation, the pamphlet and the sermon were the primary form of information and entertainment (Dowler, 2007). Capital punishment was the primary medium for the beginnings of America's love affair between media and crime. In the late 1700s and early 1800s it was common for pamphlets to be handed out as men stood upon the gallows, awaiting their execution by hanging, to describe the acts the men had committed; meanwhile preachers would speak at length about their various sins. When the men were finally condemned and left to hang, the public had heard of their crimes, the literate among them might perhaps read of their crimes, and witnessed a spectacle that captured the imagination in a morbid fashion (Surette, 2007).

The year 1830 of the Common Era brought with it the beginnings of the penny press among print media that dominated the period. During this time, print was quickly becoming available to the general public and it was soon adapted to crime coverage. The penny press allowed for the first daily newspapers, a staple of the American media landscape for more than a century after, to appear and begin to circulate in the major cities along the eastern coast of the United States. *The New York Sun* was among the first of these new and inexpensive dailies to take note of the popularity of the human interest stories that related to crime. *The Sun* became the

first newspaper in the nation to include a daily column reporting the police and courts news since the last issue (Gordon & Heath, 1981), and solidified the newspapers as a fount of public knowledge about crime (Ericson, Baranek, & Chan, 1987).

The *Sun* and other daily papers were quick to adopt the lesson that had already been displayed in the previous centuries; the more violent and sensational the crime, the more readers would buy their product to be informed (Habbermas, 1979). Soon, most of the *Sun*'s competitors proceeded to run their own police and courts columns, however, they were swift to notice that the public needed more than facts to keep interest focused on a story. The daily newspapers, not wishing to lose their new audiences with reiteration of the same crimes, began to run arguments and opinion pieces on crime which often focused on the inequality of the classes. These arguments usually involved a narrative which is still found in the press today, that the rich and powerful were more likely to hold sway over the court system than the common man's honesty (Papke, 1987).

The success of the daily newspapers in their factual reporting and opinion columns related to crime and the courts would lead to the creation of the first monthly and weekly crime magazines. Among the first of these magazines was the *National Police Gazette*, which continued to publish its stories into the modern era, though it has been noted to be drifting toward less crime related matters in its second century of operation (Gorn, 1992).

This fascination and perhaps even exploitation of the public's interest in stories of crime and punishment was reflected broadly in the journalism of the era. Crime statistics had yet to be compiled in a noticeable way (Harris, 1932) and the interest in a topic determined if the topic was worth running; crime was an important topic and therefore was often given a larger "inch count" (the amount of inches of space allowed for a story) (Fenton, 1911). This method of

determining space was almost cyclical in nature, as a topic became more popular, it gained inches and as it gained inches, it garnered more attention.

Newspapers continued to run crime stories at a rapid pace and created the first media made crime wave (Frankfurter & Pound, 1922). In January of 1919, reporters at a Cleveland newspaper noticed that a small number of individuals they had spoken with were concerned by crime. They then decided that the best thing to do for the paper was announce that the city was in the grip of a crime wave and editors drastically increased the paper's coverage of crime during the second half of January. This resulted in a public outcry for local officials and police to do more to protect society from the perceived menace (Frankfurter & Pound, 1922). This demand was made by members of the public despite the fact that crime statistics were not yet in use (Harris, 1932), instead it was based on the verbal reports of officers and neighbors which provided the closest thing to official data for the newspaper to report, a trend continued in many papers in the modern era (Welch, Fenwick, & Roberts, 1998). The paper also faced a need to fill a certain number of inches in each issue, based on an industry standard formula of the time (Fenton, 1911).

Newspapers continued to be a relevant source of information about crime and justice in the decades that followed. They would also serve a vital role in the spreading of a message to the masses, be it at a local level, or a national one. Therefore it comes of little surprise that criminologists and sociologists would engage in content analyses of newspaper coverage in the 1970s through 1990s, to look for possible ideological bias in reporting about social issues based on a paper's conservative or liberal political leanings.

McCombs & Shaw (1972) polled individual voters from five precincts in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, at random and asked about what they felt to be key issues in the upcoming

elections and then compared that to the candidates' positions and the amount of front page newspaper coverage provided for those issues during the campaign season. Actual issues the voters cared about, such as crime or social welfare were hardly touched during the content analysis. Most coverage in the newspapers focused on the management of the campaign. The researchers determined that the newspapers created their own agenda, rather than pursuing that of the public (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

Barlow, Barlow, and Chiricos (1995) engaged in a content analysis of primarily news magazines, with an emphasis on the issues of crime and justice. A five year period was selected for investigation, chosen for its high unemployment rates. The period was selected to test a hypothesis that during times of greater poverty, a greater amount of crime reporting would take place (Barlow et al., 1995). They found that the higher the unemployment rate was, the greater the increase in reporting on crime; however the crime rate was not actually higher than usual, only the reporting of the subject. Most of the articles focused on violent crime (73%), even though it was inconsistent with the proportions of violent and nonviolent crimes known to police. Furthermore, minorities received a disproportionate amount of coverage as a criminal (74%) while the percent of Caucasians arrested (72%) was drastically higher (Barlow et al., 1995). These news magazines were, perhaps, continuing to play to a stereotype that sold well to many in America, the narrative that minorities are the cause of crime and social problems; even if this narrative is not factually correct.

Welch, Fenwick, and Roberts (1997, 1998) engaged in two content analyses of a similar theme asking how state managers, people in positions of power as practitioners or politicians, were used to inform the public about crime. Welch et al. (1997, 1998) also sought to define that those who actually studied crime, were often relegated to a secondary status when informing the

public. Their samples for the analyses were drawn from four major newspapers: *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Chicago Tribune*. These were chosen due to their large circulation, their reputation for offering readers national coverage of the news and because combined they would contribute to an overall sense of geographic coverage. These four papers provided a total of 105 feature articles about crime in the mid 1990s: 42 in *The New York Times*, 24 in *The Washington Post*, 23 in *The Los Angeles Times*, and 16 in *The Chicago Tribune* (Welch et al, 1997, 1998).

The researchers found that only one of the 47 topics found in the articles dealt with white collar crimes and the rest primarily focused upon street crimes. Most of those individuals quoted in the articles were police officers or other official agents of the criminal justice system. These practitioners almost uniformly endorsed views supporting the need for hard crime control strategies. The researchers stated that it was evident there was an ideological component in newspaper coverage that was evident in crime and media reporting, as well as a need to meet deadlines which may stop from more broad coverage of the issues (Welch et al., 1997, 1998).

The newspapers of the modern era face declining readership (Irwin, 2013), but are still a relevant form of media. Unlike the gallows sermons of the 1700s and 1800s, they have not faded from view, but rather, have worked to reinvent themselves by offering electronic editions in addition to their print versions (Irwin, 2013).

While the history of news coverage was continuing, it was not yet at an end, as other forms of media would be introduced. The next innovation in media, which has also lasted into the modern time, came within fifty years of the innovation of the penny press, the first dime store novels began to appear featuring detectives. These novels quickly found a growing niche in the marketplace thanks to the efforts of newspapers to chronicle and promote a view of rampant

crime. Heroes in these dime store detective novels were akin to their criminal prey; cold and calculating loners who would do what was absolutely necessary to bring the criminal to justice. Never giving up or backing down, these detectives reminded their readers that crime was an inherent moral weakness and not the result of any societal stressors like the daily newspapers might try to state (Surette, 2007).

The common view presented in the novels held that the status quo was maintained by these men of duty, keeping the criminals in the dark where they belonged, and the upper class ensconced within their rightfully earned wealth and power. The common working man was a decent individual and was in need of protection by these men of authority, for his possessions may not be as great as the wealthy industrialist, but their protection from the dark forces that prowled the streets was still to be considered sacrosanct (Surette, 2007).

Kadonaga (1998) noted that the crime novel would stay an important component of culture from its inception into the modern day. Dependent upon the author, Kadonaga (1998) pointed out, certain details about non-criminal matters would be quite accurate and reflect the attitudes and educational level of the society in which a crime novel was set. The modern mystery novel still has a detective at its heart, but now features varying realism in terms of the science behind these tales (Friedman & Rosen-Zvi, 2001). Where once the hard boiled detective might have been armed with wit and a gun, the new detective is armed with a knowledge of science (Friedman & Rosen-Zvi, 2001).

The next major form of media to be developed was radio, in the late 1800s, though it would not see public sale until the 1920s. This innovation remains ageless, being broadcast into homes, automobiles, and across the world via the internet. During its introduction, it was a revolution in the world of communications. The word revolution and the massive change it

implies would adequately describe the mass production of radios for home usage, along with the introduction of the first commercial radio networks. These networks allowed for the delivery of media in an immediate manner, allowing for the first time for individuals to hear words as they were spoken (Lippmann, 2007). The radio was also on the scene and reporting straight to people's homes from the front lines of the news stories of the day, a claim that the movie theaters could not make with their sometimes weeks old coverage of events, shown prior to commercial films.

Crime news swiftly became a favorite of the population at large, both for its intrigue and for a level of violence that could not be displayed in the films available at the movie theater. The violence and descriptions were far more visceral in nature when dealing with murders and the emotional pleas of victims added a dimension that silent films could not. The coverage of the Lindbergh baby kidnapping, for example, tugged at the heartstrings of America in a way no text prior to soundless footage could (Surette, 2007).

Even non-violent crime related news could bring about good ratings. In the early 1900s, Americans turned the dial to listen in great numbers to the Scopes Monkey Trial in Tennessee, where a teacher was placed in the national spotlight over his breaking of a law in that state which forbid the teaching of Darwin's theory of evolution to impressionable students (Surette, 2007). Crime, and therefore, the drama that accompanied it, was a swift way to garner an emotional investment by consumers into the radio business.

Realizing people's emotions were in tune with what they heard on the radio in the form of crime news and dramatic events, both violent and court related, gave rise to popular crime dramas as the years progressed, such as *Dragnet* and *The Shadow*, where the public was presented with fictionalized accounts of crime, and in the case of *Dragnet*, accounts that were at

least loosely based on true events. *Gang Busters*, during this period, became the first reality-based program and served as a forerunner of modern television shows such as *America's Most Wanted*, with federal agents giving descriptions of the physical appearance of gang members and their crimes, appealing to the public for aid in stopping their reign of terror across the countryside (Surette, 2007).

It was in this way that the radio would dominate as an information and entertainment medium for years to come. Orson Welles, the famous author would discover just how much of an impact this medium had, following his 1938 *War of the Worlds* radio broadcast. Unfortunately, some Americans believed the Martian invasion to be true, having missed the disclaimer at the beginning. Welles had accidentally created the first major social panic induced by radio as people around the United States of America found themselves believing that Martians had invaded (Heyer, 2003), causing him to remark about radio that he supposed, "hearing is believing" (Surette, 2007).

Currently, radio does not usually utilize dramas to the extent it did in years past. Chadee and Ditton (2005) found that there was no direct link between radio listening and a fear of crime, but failed to look at perception, beyond fear. This is in direct contradiction to a study by Chiricos, Eschholz, & Gertz (1997), which found that radio listening did have a strong correlation with an individual's fear of criminal victimization. Furthermore, Chiricos et al. (1997) acknowledged that conservative talk radio, in particular, spends a large amount of time discussing crime related topics as compared to other radio sources. Conflicting results such as these leave the question of the impact of modern radio on perceptions of crime unanswered.

The next major innovation in media technology came during the 1930s, as the silent films began to give way to films with sound, and in a period where the banks were failing and bankers

were seen as individuals to be distrusted, the gangster quickly became an on screen folk hero and society could be truly blanketed with content across all social and economic strata. These “talkies” as they were sometimes referred to, found an eager and willing audience who were filled with desire to watch moving images that spoke as well. By the 1930s, 88 million out of 122 million, or two out of every three Americans would go to see at least one movie a week (Armour, 1980). Nash Information Services (2013) places the modern love affair of Americans with their movies at 1.32 billion purchased movie tickets per year.

It was also concurrent with the era of the first sound films that the form of media known as comic books reached their height with gruesome tales of crime ranging from beheadings to the hero Superman fighting war criminals (Heyer, 2003; Surette, 2007). This golden age of comics lasted from the 1930s through the 1950s and was filled with a number of crime related stories from the beginning. The most popular of these crime related ventures were told from the point of view of the criminal himself and almost always portrayed how twisted the individual was inside and gave graphic descriptions and imagery of heinous crimes. During the golden age and into the modern era, comics would come under attack multiple times, with a particularly virulent moral crusade in the 1950s due to the gruesome depictions of criminal acts (Nyberg, 1998).

The next major revolution in media came with the introduction of the home television in the 1950s. This innovation gave the viewing public the chance to be affected in a visual and live way in their homes and marked the beginning of pixelated media (Heyer, 2003). The radio, though surviving into the modern day, was swiftly supplanted by the ability to see and hear the news and entertainment programming inside of an individual’s own home.

Existing radio networks were swift to capitalize on the arrival of the television, with businesses such as NBC and CBS adapting their most popular programming into the newly

arrived format. This led primarily to two branches of the new format, the first being soap operas and crime dramas, such as *Dragnet* being adapted to viewing audiences with great acclaim. These were different from most programming of the era, which felt the need to be as non-controversial as possible to maintain high viewership, leading many programs to be made of mediocre, but inoffensive content (Leishman & Mason, 2003). This high viewership would become reflective of television's rise to prominence as a dominating factor in the lives of American citizens. Watching TV has become many individuals' third most practiced activity, after sleep or work/school (Surette, 2007; Reiner, Livingstone, & Allen, 2003). According to one study, the typical American spends one of every ten years of life staring at a television screen (Perlmutter, 2000), a figure which is partially created by the diversification of programming to curry favor with more niche audiences in the second decade of home television use.

During the 1970s, two milestones were reached by the newest major shift in media consumption; the first milestone was the television set reaching one to one parity in American homes with radio ownership, a rate which never declined (Stevens & Garcia, 1980). The second milestone was that cable television first became widespread, which led to the narrowing of audiences and the creation of specialized niches where different interests were catered to with their own networks (Heyer, 2003). As a result of this fragmentation of programming into certain niches, there became a need to fill in the content on these individualized networks, resulting in an uptick in both crime news and related programming (Garfalo, 1991) and a style over substance approach. Unfortunately, in these niches, unlike its forerunners, television did not only focus on crime, but did so at a higher rate which many researchers believe led to an increased fear of

violent crime (Altheide & Snow, 1979; Cumberbatch, 1989) especially in older populations (Gunter, 1987).

Crime related media saturation on the new cable television networks reached a zenith in 1975, when the three major networks of the time (ABC, CBS, and NBC) devoted around 40% of their prime time programming space to shows related to crime and law enforcement (Lichter, Lichter, & Rothman, 1994; Surette, 2007). With this niche approach to interests and additional programming, Hawkins & Pingree (1981) would stipulate that individuals who viewed game shows were more likely to cultivate and engage in a comedic form of humor. Those who watched adventurous crime programs and local news reports that highlighted criminal activity were more likely to cultivate a fear of becoming the victim of a criminal act.

Crime program dominance remains, with critically acclaimed crime dramas such as *CSI*, *Law and Order*, and *NCIS*, along with no less than 9 spinoff series, dominating portions of prime time programming. The American media landscape is a morass of easily solved crimes and pithy statements, as the forensic detective heroes scrutinize crime scenes for useable evidence while conducting the work of seasoned detectives (Turkel, 2009).

One impact of watching so many crime relate dramas is known as the C.S.I. Effect, where citizens are more likely to believe in scientific impossibilities in crime solving due to heroes of the programming (VanLaerHoven & Anderson, 2009). This anecdotally referenced effect, is named for the popular television program *C.S.I.: Crime Scene Investigation*, which has served as the progenitor of the modern forensic crime drama. This supposed effect describes how individuals, particularly those on juries have cultivated the view, from such programming, that every crime must contain a certain amount of forensic evidence of wrongdoing in order for the proof to be great enough to convict a defendant (Byers & Johnson, 2009). In order to better

represent that amount of people who hypothetically are influenced by the program, please refer to the viewership numbers for this program which can be found in Table 18 in Appendix A.

While widely noted, the C.S.I. Effect remains largely anecdotal in nature, with much of the research on it, conducted in an informal manner. Harvey & Derksen (2009) conducted informal surveys of real life crime scene investigators and found in their small sample, that these individuals felt people expected things from them that were impossible, given the realities of processing times and the limits of technology. The investigators felt that these unrealistic expectations were based upon information provided by forensic crime dramas such as C.S.I.

At the time of this writing, there have been three empirical studies of the C.S.I. Effect (Brewer & Ley, 2009). Two of these studies show that C.S.I. viewers are comparable to non-viewers when voting “not guilty” as part of a jury (Podlas, 2006; Shelton, Kim, & Barak, 2006). The third study found that students provided with a transcript of a simulated trial, were more likely to be impacted by forensic evidence. They also stated that the jurors are ultimately the ones who will decide what to use or not use from their television viewing habits (Schweitzer & Saks, 2007).

The resurgence of crime related programming dominance also owes its existence, in part, to infotainment, which in contrast to the previously mentioned crime dramas, is a type of television program where the lines between information and entertainment are blurred (Anderson, 2004). One of the fastest growing forms of this hybrid is that of crime-based programming (Dowler & Flanning, 2006), which sometimes makes truth and fiction about crime hard to discern. Surette (2007) goes as far as to say it is difficult for a consumer of crime and justice news to find a source that reports merely the facts and not the facts with an attempt to make even the most violent crimes have an entertaining slant. Surette (2007) states, “today’s

gyrating stew of journalism, entertainment, and infotainment makes establishing what is real news regarding crime and justice a haphazard process” (p. 20).

Partially due to the infotainment stance regarding crime and the news, recent years have seen the rise of the reality-based crime show. While most of these programs are not the highest rated on television, they do remain profitable for networks to utilize as time filler given their low production costs. Despite being a type of reality program and its low budget, the quarter century old program *COPS* continues to enjoy relatively high ratings (Surette, 2007).

Cavender and Fishman (1998) refer to this high rating for America’s oldest crime reality show as a forerunner of the idea of crime as entertainment; where hundreds of hours of boring footage is excised in favor of the thrilling scenes of police officers performing take downs of criminals. Doyle (1998) agrees with this assessment in saying that the producers of the show seek to influence views of the justice system and create a hyperreality by, “blurring of mediated representations and the ‘real’ world itself” (p. 96).

This idea of hyperreality is demonstrated by the *COPS* series at one point, when the production crew was used to blur the lines between reality and entertainment even further by doing a pseudo-crossover episode with Fox’s supernatural conspiracy drama *The X-Files* by filming the episode of the fictional show in the style of the reality-based crime program. While this sort of crossover would seem to be counter-intuitive, being that one program was fiction and the other was nonfiction, an effort was made by the studio to take the actors from the X-Files and have them interviewed by the production crew of *COPS*, using the *COPS* crew for filming the episode in the style the reality show had pioneered. Titled “X-Cops”, the episode was one of the most highly praised of *The X-Files* franchise for its innovative style (Shapiro, 2000).

Reality-based crime shows have managed to corral a viewing audience by sensationalizing crimes and by utilizing real footage or by showing the questioning of actual subjects (Cavender, 2004; Oliver, 1994). Many times these programs have claimed to be the purveyors of actual stories about crime with the hosts being labeled as reporters or correspondents (Surette, 2007). There has been an almost exponential growth in this format of programming since the creation of *COPS*, examples of which are located in Appendix A, Tables 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18. These shows often reinforce the preconceived notions of individuals regarding crime and criminals and are more likely to receive disproportionately large amounts of television and newspaper coverage due to how it resonates with members of society (Shelley & Ashkins, 1981). While reporting about the risk of these crimes, it is almost always couched in the form of “bad news” (Wilkinson, 1999, p. 22), helping to solidify an image that crime is almost always on the rise and might come from where it is unexpected.

Research on Media and Cultivation

It is in the arena of “bad news” (Wilkinson, 1999, p. 22) that much of modern cultivation research can be found. Hammermeister & Brock (2005) engaged in a research study that compared the views of non-television watchers with those who consumed television as their primary form of media. Despite the basic idea of having a non-television watching control group, this had never before been done in cultivation research according to the authors. Hammermeister & Brock (2005) found that there were definitive signs of cultivation effects among those who watched television and expected lack of cultivation effects in those in the non-television viewing control group who were asked to abstain.

A study by Lett, DiPietro & Johnson (2004), examined the possibility of cultivation effects from television news watching prior to the September 11 terrorist attacks and after on the

views of college students towards their Islamic peers. Examining the first order effects there was no significant result in actual “learned” information; however, there was support for the second-order effects, or snap judgments, which showed negative emotions towards Islamic peers was associated with television news viewing.

Other research within the past fifteen years has shown that a number of factors outside of normally accepted first and second-order effects are often at work as individuals cultivate a worldview, including: self-selection (Morgan & Shanahan, 1997; Signorielli, 1999), genre (Chory-Assad & Tamborini, 2001; Cohen & Weimann, 2000), real life experiences (Morgan & Shanahan, 1999), and gender.

Morgan & Shanahan (1997) engaged in a meta-analysis of cultivation studies which spanned twenty years, reaching back to Gerbner & Gross (1976). In the analysis, Morgan & Shanahan found that a number of factors help guide how a person can influence their own cultivation through self-selection by genre, which in turn might be a reflection of an individual’s personality. Chory-Assad & Tamborini (2001) concurred that the self-selection of programming can impact the views of those watching and what effect might be cultivated. In a study of programming featuring documentary-style videos on physicians and medical dramas, the cultivation effects were higher in those who self-selected to watch the drama.

Chory-Assad & Tamborini’s (2001) study acted as a compelling argument that genre makes a difference in the effect of cultivation as well, given that one genre had a greater impact than the other, despite both ostensibly covering the day to day work of physicians in a hospital setting. Cohen & Weimann (2000) conducted a study in Israel, which found that, genres influence the cultivation of individuals in a small way, leading the researchers to state, “If genres

work to cultivate different attitudes, a varied viewing diet is likely to affect attitudes less than a specialized diet” (p. 112).

Morgan & Shanahan’s (1997) meta-analysis also found that gender, as a variable in cultivation research, holds relatively steady across 52 studies. Female cultivation effects were more dependent on topic than males (Cohen & Weimann, 2000), while men’s cultivation effects were stable across different genres. Essentially, women had to be interested in what they were watching to garner a cultivation effect, where men garnered one through enough exposure, despite a level of interest.

Cohen & Weimann (2000) state that, “personal attitudes and beliefs are shaped not only by TV but also through the interaction of directly experienced and mediated reality” (p. 101). Even though television and other forms of media may influence a person and cultivation effects may result, it would be unwise to ignore that there is a very real impact by things experienced personally by individuals, which may lead to the shaping of personal attitudes and beliefs. When media is viewed which conforms to those real world experiences, this merely enhances the point of view that an individual has already held.

However, as with their explicitly crime related counterparts, these cultivation theory based research projects across disciplines continue to focus upon the use of television as the primary medium. This medium has been explored in great depth and is still relevant; however, it does have competition for the attention of people of all age ranges, especially youth. The internet, whose use by college age students will be described shortly, is largely ignored in even the most recent cultivation research. Similarly, the concept of new media as a whole has remained untouched in cultivation.

Contemporary Media

According to Surette (2007), there are three primary features which differentiate new media from the previous several thousand years of media consumption: Small audiences with narrow content, an on-demand nature, and interactivity. Narrowcasting is the term often used to describe the first feature. Small audiences are targeted, compared to the broad strokes which were taken in the past, now there is a specific market catering to niche groups and ideas (Surette, 2007).

Surette (2007) states that new media is partially framed by its on-demand nature. This means that the consumer, not the corporation providing the media, has a more visible role in the control of the content that is being delivered. The increased role of the consumer's level of control is seen in the use of DVR and On-Demand features provided by television providers through cable or satellite services. The third feature that Surette (2007) identifies is that of interactivity. News services, such as CNN, have iReport, a service which encourages viewers to send in their own photos, footage, and descriptions of newsworthy events is readily accessible to interested parties via the internet website of the company. Television networks, such as *USA*, advertise on some commercial breaks for viewers to log on to their website prior to holiday marathons, in order to cast votes for which episodes of a television program will be shown over the holiday.

The move towards this new media, of blending reality, entertainment, and fact are all part of an effort to appeal to the desires of the consumer and stretches primarily across the television and internet domains of media. It is unsurprising then, that the model of new media has arisen as an on demand service where content delivery is controlled by the consumer (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2002). In the new media, the concept of interactivity is key. Interactivity gives the consumer the ability to take part in stories by adding their own comments or by spreading the

stories, and finally the ability to create the news (Heyer, 2003). Some examples are: 1) spreading stories via social networking, or “going viral”, and 2) submitting stories to news sites, such as, the previously mentioned, CNN iReport service.

The nature of interactivity in the new media has assured that traditional news and television outlets universally have a cyberpresence in addition to their brick and mortar locations (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2002). Many of the major media outlets, including CNN, Fox News, and Microsoft National Broadcasting Company (MSNBC) all utilize streaming video and audio feeds to provide live television broadcasts over the internet. These networks also have accounts on Facebook and Twitter belonging to their major television personalities, for their viewers to send in questions that could appear on the air. Social media accounts also act to provide feedback for the networks as to how performance and audience recognition could be increased. Many television programs encourage their viewers to “tweet” a 140 character message on the micro-blogging service Twitter during the course of the show in order to get the topic “trending”. Trending is determined by an algorithm which incorporates the popularity of tags for certain topics (Twitter, 2013) and displays the topic at the side of a user’s Twitter page.

Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, Vine, Tumblr, and the new anonymous geographic based service Yik Yak, are all examples of the evolution of new media in a direction which is as much social as it is informative. However, it is important to remember that the central focus of new media as a whole is, the internet, and not necessarily just its social aspects, nor the latest hardware features of cable and satellite companies. In order to properly understand how the internet is swiftly rising to a position as one of the dominant forms of media, an individual must first understand the growth of the World Wide Web from its humble beginnings to the global spanning network of the modern era.

A new way to access media

The internet, as it is now known, began its life as ARPANET, the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network, a defense contract. The first two nodes of the new system would be connected between Menlo Park, California and UCLA on October 29, 1969 and within two years, the number of nodes connected would rise to fifteen (Gromov, 1995). In 1974, Cerf, Dalal, & Sunshine would first use the term “internet” as shorthand for “inter-network transmission control program” in their paper “Specification of internet transmission control program”.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) would further expand this new network with the creation of the Computer Science Network (CSNET) in conjunction with the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), located in Geneva, Switzerland in 1981. Within one year, thanks to the development of the Internet Protocol Suite (TCP/IP) at CERN, the internet began to emerge on a set of worldwide standardized protocols which still underlie the worldwide network in the modern era (Segal, 1995).

The 1990s would see the first true public access and acceptance of the internet, with the growth rate of data accessed rising an average of 100 percent per year and an annual growth in internet users of 20-50 percent (Coffman & Odlyzko, 1998). According to Miniwatts Marketing Group (2013), as of June 30, 2012 the internet had grown in user base to over 2.405 billion individual users, or roughly 30 percent of the world’s population.

Younger Americans, particularly Generation Y, which is now entering the collegiate setting, are more attached to their technology than their counterparts from previous years. It is rare to see a member of Generation Y who is without a smart phone. Some in conversations will

even express an inability to grasp what it would be like to not have twenty-four hour access to the internet and the ability to look up almost any subject instantaneously.

Before these young Americans' media habits can be discussed, it is important to define who they are. The designation of Generation Y was originally created by the business *Ad Age* to describe the group that was growing up behind Generation X and would see their coming of age in the period shortly after the term of the millennium, leading to their more often used title in media, millennials (Raphelson, 2014). They are young men and women who were primarily born in the late 1980s to early 1990s and have remained well connected to technology during this time period (Lenhart, 2009), leading some authors to even refer to their constant access to the internet as a descriptor for the generation, referring to them as Generation Net (Shapira, 2008).

It is of no surprise then, that a recent study by the Pew Internet and American Life Project found that Generation Y has increasing access and willingness to use technology as a source of information and entertainment. The study found that 93% of American teenagers use the internet on a weekly basis and 63% of those use it on a daily basis; 71% own their own internet capable cell phone (Lenhart, 2009). Though many in previous generations may believe a cellular device to be a tool of communication, a Nokia Research Center study of 547 of the corporation's phones across three countries found that the most common use of the cellular phones the company manufactured was to look up information on the internet, with phone calls and texting as a secondary use (Cui & Roto, 2008).

Among American teens, 81% will go to the websites of television shows or corporations that run their favorite series. The Pew study also found that 65% of the teenagers surveyed use the internet as an opportunity to engage in social networking (Lenhart, 2009). The internet was also used by 63% of these students to engage in research on current events of interest such as

politics or to read the news and 75% of Generation Y, including non-teens who fall into the category, use their mobile internet devices to read the news online (Lenhart, 2009). One study of tablet PC student users at an Ohio University four years prior to the Pew report, found that in classrooms with the mobile devices, 27% of students were engaged in reading the news online during the time period while class was in session (Liu & Young, 2006).

Even among those who are not of the emerging technological generation, the change to digital media and mobile devices has continued to grow. Brown (2005), in a Carnegie Corporation report, stated the continued trend in regards to traditional forms of media. The segment of the population which reads newspapers and watches cable television networks is getting older and media organizations must change to fit the times by continuing to expand their online services. The average age in 2005 of a print newspaper reader was 53 years old. This was also the standard age for those who watched broadcast network and cable news, with Brown (2005) noting that the Baby Boomer generation had read one-third less newspapers than their parents and that Generation X had read one-third less than the Baby Boomers. Using Brown's (2005) statement, one must infer that by the end of Generation Y, there is a chance that print newspapers will cease to be a relevant source of information to young people in the digital era. Furthermore, it lends credence to the idea that if a similar trend holds for television as a news source, that it may also disappear within one to two generations.

What began as a project in California between universities conducting research into the beginnings of computer networking has grown in size and scope to rival the influence of television, radio, and newspapers. Despite this new form of media which shows its power through a meteoric growth from a handful of users in the 1960s to almost one-third of the world's population in 2013, and over two-thirds of generation Y (Lenhart, 2010), there is little in

the way of research into its impact on people's perceptions of crime and justice. It is the purpose of this study to expand the knowledge of the field of criminology by conducting such a study on the use of the internet and the possibility of a relationship between it and students perceptions of crime and justice. This will be done using the framework of cultivation theory, first expressed as a theory on television viewing influencing behaviors and thoughts, by Gerbner & Gross (1976).

Summary

Media and crime have an intertwined relationship which spans the history of recorded civilization and will continue to do so in the years to come. However, while the field of criminology has readily embraced studies of newspaper reporting and use as a source on crime news and views (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Barlow et al., 1995; Welch et al., 1997; Welch et al., 1998) and of the use of television as both a source of news and entertainment in individuals views (Dominick, 1978; Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Tewksbury et al., 2006), the discipline has not yet readily embraced the internet.

Indeed, the closest cultivation research related to crime and the internet is found in the work of two Belgian researchers, Van Mierlo and Van den Bulck (2003), who studied the possibility that video games might have cultivation effects, much like television is often cited as having. In their research with secondary school children, they compared cultivation effects between violent video games and television viewing. Weak cultivation on views of violence were reported for the video games, however, the television effects were similar to those found in the United States, according to the researchers.

There are two points worth noting in this research to an alternative form of media. First, Van Mierlo and Van Den Bulck (2003) studied violent games which could be played both in a single player and multiplayer (online or offline with additional present players), but did not

readily make a distinction between the two groups. The other primary point is that their study did not list any control variables to account for television viewing, rendering the already weak cultivation results on unstable ground.

However, Van Mierlo and Van Den Bulck (2003) did expand crime related cultivation research to a previously non-discussed form of media. In doing so, they have shown that there are holes in the literature that need to be filled. It is, therefore, one of the goals of this study to help fill another such omission in the literature, by studying the changing media habits of students, as they represent the next generation of media and crime interactivity.

RQ1: What sources of online content, including mobile apps, do college students in the sample visit and for what purpose?

RQ2: How might the online content that students view influence their perceptions of crime?

These questions will be further explored in the next chapter, as will their associated hypotheses.

Chapter III

METHODS

Introduction

The goal of this study is to understand the impact of the use of the internet, on university students' perceptions about crime and the criminal justice system. This was done through the use of variables that have been previously shown to have been correlated with cultivation effects (e.g., hours of content consumption, perceived realism of programming, personal experience, and content) along with demographic variables that have been correlated with cultivation effects (e.g., age, race, gender, and education). Also of importance to this study are variables related to the internet: consumption, message, and content.

It is important to note that due to television's prominence, it has not yet been displaced by the internet as previous forms of media have been throughout history, as discussed in Chapter Two. Therefore, it was included within the survey instrumentation and an effort was made to calculate the combined effects of the two, as it is difficult to separate the two, given the intertwined nature of television and new media.

This study was designed to determine the impact of internet consumption in the creation or reinforcement of students' beliefs and perceptions about different crimes and the criminal justice system which are often portrayed in an inaccurate manner across the spectrum of media.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Most of the undergraduate college students are members of Generation Y, which has a higher level of internet connectivity and usage than previous generations (Lenhart, 2009).

Through a review of the relevant literature and noting a distinct absence of the collection of

primary data, this study has been designed to address the following research questions and hypotheses.

RQ1: What sources of online content do college students in the sample visit and for what purpose?

RQ2: How might the online content, including mobile apps, that students view influence their perceptions of crime?

Ha(1): Respondents perceptions of crime will differ based upon the amount of time per day and/or online content read or videos watched regarding crime and the criminal justice system.

Ha(2): Respondents opinions on crime will be skewed towards an unrealistic view by internet consumption.

In this section, the variables used in the survey are discussed. First, the dependent variables are discussed and then the independent variables. Among the dependent variables will be a concern of crime scale developed by Crawl (2013). In previous research, perception has often been used in an almost interchangeable manner with fear of crime and almost always is used to discuss that fear (O'Connell & Whelan, 1996; Chan & Chan, 2012). Crawl (2013), argued as a part of his dissertation study, that concern about crime is a more adequate way of addressing the fears of college students, after consulting previous work on the subject and looking at previous scales. Therefore, for this study, fears of victimization in the form of concern about crime have been used for the measure of a perception of crime. Another scale involves the use of students' knowledge of a media driven trial.

The independent variables begin with questioning how the respondents use media. This is followed by questions regarding the use of the internet in a scale developed by Hinduja and Ingram (2008) that measures technological savvy. Further rounding out the independent variables are demographic factors, which have been shown in previous research (Cohen & Weimann, 2000) to have an impact in cultivation research.

Dependent variables. The first dependent variable to be measured was a perception of crime scale in the form of concern of crime related fears. The fear of victimization has a long history in the field of criminology and criminal justice as being used as a form of perception of crime. Previously, it has been used as a type of perception when linked to gender (Haynie, 1998), ethnicity (Chiricos, Hogan, & Gertz, 1997), age (Warr, 1984), and lifestyle choices (Cobbina, Miller, & Brunson, 2008). This use of fear of victimization as a perception of crime is further justified in the number of actual victimizations of members of Generation Y, with one study revealing that between 1995 and 2005, 4.6 million college students were the victims of violent crimes (Hart, 2007).

The researcher utilized Crowl's (2013) scale on concern about crime, which is a more realistic scale of victimization fears for college students. It contains items which are likely to apply to their lives, such as possibilities of textbook theft, laundry theft, or an attack while walking home late at night. Crowl's (2013) scale holds together well, with a Cronbach's alpha of .847 for internal consistency.

An example of the sort of realistic questions Crowl (2013) offers is found below and in the survey instrument in Appendix B, where 1 is "not likely at all" and 5 is "very likely":

"Someone stealing or attempting to steal your cell phone."
1 2 3 4 5

This scale is coded with Likert responses ranging from one to four, with the low end of the scale's range being six (the least fearful) and the upper end being 24 (the most fearful). A pair of scales, determined to assess accuracy of perception, was created from items 16 to 22 (concern of crime), and 23 through 33 (knowledge about celebrated case) in the survey instrument (see Appendix B). Items 23 through 33 are primarily made of misconceptions which arose through media coverage of the George Zimmerman trial as a celebrity case, including both the pre-trial and later post-trial coverage of his run-ins with the law.

George Zimmerman, who was acting as a member of the local neighborhood watch organization, called in a suspicious African American youth to 911. He was ordered not to get out of his car, yet he did, and approached the youth on his own without law enforcement. Zimmerman shot and killed Trayvon Martin. He claimed self-defense. Murder charges were filed. Media coverage focused on Florida's controversial Stand Your Ground Law. Despite the media's insistence on talking about "stand your ground", the defense case rested upon simple self-defense. Thus the media provided misconceptions about the case to the public.

In the months preceding the trial and to the time of this writing, there had been extensive coverage in the media regarding the issues involved. Students were asked questions about the details surrounding the case and where they obtained their knowledge of the case. Their answers were placed along a scale, where correct answers will be scored higher. Each correct answer was given a score of 1 and an incorrect answer was given a 0.

Independent variables. Of importance to this study are the independent variables associated with internet consumption. That is, the media forms accessed and time spent by the students receiving their information. This included both traditional media, such as television news, and new media, in forms of social networking and internet news websites (see items one

through five in Appendix B). The first question was divided into sub-questions, asking first if a person didn't use that source, or if they did, for a name. Then the question further asked if the source (e.g. a newspaper) was an online edition or not.

This was followed by a series of variables used to determine internet usage (see items six through eleven in Appendix B). The first asked respondents about what device they used to access the internet most often and the second, how many hours they spent online per day. Devices in particular were important here, as those with PCs or laptops are more likely to engage in any number of internet proficiency activities their counterparts may not, due to the nature of the device (e.g. it is harder to set up a number of technical details about one's e-mail service from a phone screen than a computer monitor).

Hinduja and Ingram's (2008) variety measure explored why a participant would use the internet. In this measure, used with permission, participants were given thirteen options detailing activities one might do on the internet and asked to check each of those they have participated in over the past month. The proficiency measure was used to capture the technological savvy of an internet user. It lists ten separate measures of proficiency for the respondent to indicate an internet based skill. In both of these measures, answers were summed, with the higher numerical score being used to determine a higher level of variety and proficiency respectively. These measures were also be used to engender an understanding of what activities most students are using the internet for. This allowed for a glimpse into if the level of technological familiarity on the part of the student plays a role in how they gain their news online.

The computer and internet based variables in the survey instrument itself, are from Smallridge's (2012) dissertation on social learning and digital piracy. These variables are a modified version of Hinduja and Ingram's (2008) study. These variables have been used in the

past to discern a student's level of technological savvy. These variables were selected to better determine the technological acumen of the student respondents overall. It was anticipated that those with higher levels of technological savvy, according to this widely accepted set of questions, would be more likely to use the internet in some form to get their crime news and views.

For the purposes of the first research question, certain demographic variables needed to be examined (see items 24 through 27 in Appendix B). First among these was the identification of a respondent's sex with two categories (male, female) and age. In previous cultivation theory research, sex has been consistently shown to have had an influence on responses, with age and sex correlating with higher cultivation effects (Cohen & Weimann, 2008; Cohen, 2000). The final demographic variable asked students about their race/ethnicity.

Sample. For the purpose of this study, the unit of analysis was individuals and included approximately 373 undergraduate students (male and female), primarily between the ages of 18 and 25. These students were drawn from a large, state-funded university with an enrollment of approximately 12,471 undergraduates in Fall 2013, spread out across 136 programs. Of these undergraduate students, 44% were males, 56% were females, and approximately 84% were Caucasian.

This university was well suited for the study, due to a number of factors. The first of which was the age range of those present. The university primarily had an age range of 18-24, which was consistent with Generation Y. As established earlier, Generation Y is the most tech savvy generation yet (Lenhart, 2009).

Approximately 84% of students were Caucasian, a reflection of the area the site is located in, while 16% were of other race/ethnicities. The largest group was African American students,

with 1,466 members and the next largest group was international students, comprised of 765 members from 66 nations. The diversity within the university allowed generalizations from the sample to the population of the student body overall.

This study utilized two methods to gather the students required for the sample. Both of these methods are discussed within this chapter, however, the administration of the survey has been outlined first.

In order to properly determine the minimum required sample size for the analysis, Cohen's (1992) power primer was used as a guide. The alpha level for this study was set at .05 as is the standard for most studies. According to Cohen (1992), a medium effect size is to be expected of .3, which is desirable with the power being fixed at .80 as recommended for general use. This means that a minimum sample of 373 participants was needed.

The primary population of the university campus is equivalent to the desired sample population in terms of age and consistency. Therefore, there was no need to break down different groups into specialized sections, since everyone was capable of participating in the study. All undergraduate classes that were offered at the main campus of the university site were identified and listed (Lewis, 2002). A random number table was used to select the classes where entry was requested.

The researcher gave these surveys in person in the classrooms, after previously receiving permission from the instructor to take class time to administer the survey. This improved the response rate a great deal, as most in person surveys have response rates of above 90% (Fowler, 2002; Dillman, 2009). The requests for entrance into the rooms was sent in waves, two weeks prior to the beginning of the Spring semester, asking for fifteen to twenty minutes of classtime during a point of the instructor's choosing during the second to fourth weeks of the semester.

After an insignificant number of classes provided access in the first wave, the researcher will begin a second wave of e-mails to 20 more instructors asking for access to their classrooms. As a final effort to gain access, the researcher considered contacting the university's Applied Research Lab, to set up a randomized survey of one thousand student e-mails utilizing Qualtrics software, though this was not implemented as a suitable sample size was met.

Survey administration. The researcher administered self-report survey instruments to the undergraduate students enrolled in each of the selected courses during the Spring 2014 semester. During six of the courses, the researcher was unable to administer the surveys himself and asked a colleague to administer the instruments. The use of surveys as part of this research was done intentionally to heed the advice of Fowler (2002) in noting that the use of a self-report survey instrument helps to facilitate an efficient and speedy data collection process in an inexpensive manner.

The researcher e-mailed the instructor of record during the second week of January to ask for permission to enter the classrooms in the Spring semester, as well as issued follow up e-mails in the early Spring semester if no response had been received. The e-mail which used to contact the instructors may be found in Appendix D. Negative responses lead the researcher to choose the next case on the table of all undergraduate classes.

Once the researcher has entered the classroom, he introduced himself and the topic of the research. This was followed immediately by a reading of the informed consent form and stressing that participation in this survey was completely voluntary and non-participation would not result in negative consequences. Furthermore, both the form and verbal instructions highlighted that, as part of the voluntary participation, students could choose to cease their involvement at any point. Once a student chose to complete the survey instrument, the informed

consent told them that their information will be kept anonymous. The informed consent form may be found in Appendix C.

Human subject protections. Prior to the beginning of this study, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained. The individuals asked to participate were given instructions on how to use the instrument in the informed consent process during the in person survey administration. Those taking the survey were further informed that their data was anonymous and to please not identify themselves by name on the survey instrument.

Summary

The information which has been outlined in this chapter was for a completed study into the internet habits of undergraduate students of Generation Y. It was the researcher's hope to uncover how those habits relate to the participants views on crime and justice. The next chapter discusses and presents the information that was obtained and processed in the data collection; minus five surveys which had to be discarded for failure to follow directions, or in one case, the respondent indicating he had recently been the victim of a crime.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

Introduction

Chapter Four presents the results of the quantitative analyses of the survey data that were collected in the current study. Descriptive statistics of the sample will first be presented, highlighting the differences and similarities to the general population. This will be followed by a brief discussion of the descriptive data which outlines the answer to the first of the two research questions. That question was, as follows:

RQ1: What sources of online content do college students in the sample visit and for what purpose?

Following will be a brief discussion of the descriptive data for the multivariate analyses which were examined for the second research question, which, along with its two alternative hypotheses asked:

RQ2: How might the online content, including mobile apps, that students view influence their perceptions of crime?

Ha(1): Respondents perceptions of crime will differ based upon the amount of time per day and/or online content read or videos watched regarding crime and the criminal justice system.

Ha(2): Respondents opinions on crime will be skewed towards an unrealistic view by internet consumption.

Table 2, below, holds the frequencies, percentages, and means to be referenced as descriptive throughout the sample:

Table 2
Frequencies and Percentages for Variables

Variables	Response	Mean	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Female		207	49.1
	Male		215	50.9
Age		21.36		
Race	White/Caucasian		374	88.6
	Non-Caucasian		48	11.4
Home	City		248	58.8
	Rural		174	41.2
TechSavvy		16.51		
Hours Online	Low to Moderate Internet Use		274	64.9
	High Internet Use		148	35.1
Major	Exercise Science		42	10.0
	Athletic Train.		23	5.5
	HPED		4	.9
	Art		24	5.7
	Comm. Media		5	1.2
	Comp. Sci.		37	8.8
	Safety Sci.		84	19.9
	English		14	3.3
	Psychology		10	2.4
	Criminology		76	18.0
	Marketing		3	.7
	Poli. Sci.		11	2.6
	Business Tech.		6	1.4
	Anthropology		4	.9
	History		3	.7
	Intl. Studies		3	.7
	Journalism		3	.7
	Math		1	.2
	Hosp. Mngmt.		18	4.3
	Chemistry		1	.2

Natural Sci.	1	.2
Biology	2	.5
Elementary Ed.	38	9.0

Table 2
Frequencies and Percentages for Variables (Continued)

Variables	Response	Mean	Frequency	Percentage
Major				
	Nursing		7	1.7
	Sociology		1	.2
	Undeclared		1	.2
Newspaper News (Multiple Sources)				
	Don't Use Newspaper		300	71.1
	Local Newspaper		87	20.6
	National Newspaper		35	8.3
	Offline Newspaper		42	9.2
	Online Newspaper		80	19.7
Radio News				
	Don't Use Radio		333	78.9
	Use Radio		89	21.1
Television News				
	Don't Use TV for News		192	45.5
	Offline TV News		189	44.8
	Online TV News		41	9.7
	Local TV News		112	26.6
	CNN		62	14.7
	Fox News		31	7.3
	MSNBC		8	1.9
	Comedy Central		9	2.1
	Other National News		8	1.9
Internet News				
	Don't Use Internet for News		91	21.6
	Local News Website		41	9.7
	Google		29	6.9
	Yahoo		53	12.6
	Huffington Post		13	3.1
	AOL		12	2.8
	CNN		57	13.5
	MSN		17	4.0
	Fox News		10	2.4
	Reddit Worldnews		21	5.0
	Twitter		11	2.6
	Facebook		18	4.3

BBC	8	1.9
Other News Website	41	9.7

Descriptive Statistics: The Sample

The school used in the current study is a medium sized university in rural southwestern Pennsylvania. Its population, in Fall 2013, consisted of 12,471 undergraduate students, of which 422 comprised the sample for this study. The university offered 136 degree programs, of which 25 were represented by their majors, an additional six programs were represented as minors in the sample.

There were three primary causes for only 31 out of 136 degree programs being represented in the study. The first two reasons were related to the sampling strategy. First, graduate students had a greater chance of falling outside of the population of interest, Generation Y, and were excluded. This removed a number of graduate programs from the sampling frame. The second sampling related reason is due to the nature of the systematic sample. A table was created and every 67th case selected, as described in Chapter Three, and an e-mail sent; larger departments received more e-mails than smaller departments, and some smaller departments were missed entirely because they did not have 67 sections of classes available, or one of their sections did not fall on the 67th count. English, one of the larger departments, has no representation, as they were the only group to deny the researcher access. The final reason for the lack of further programs ties into the second; larger majors were predominantly represented, as they had a higher chance of being randomly selected.

Males made up 44% of the university’s student body, while females made up 56%. This ratio was similar to that which was obtained in the sample. Among respondents in this survey, 50.9% were male and 49.1% were female. While the difference between the population and sample is small, it can be explained in that Safety Sciences majors made up 19.9% (89 students)

¹of the respondents and is a primarily male dominated field of study. The mean age for this study's sample was 21.36 years, with the oldest outlier being 44 years of age.

Racially, the university was predominantly Caucasian with 84% of the population belonging to that group. The next largest group was that of African American students, who comprise 1,466 members, or 11.76% of the student population, and the remaining 4.24% of students being comprised of other ethnicities. This was similar to the groupings found in the study; however, the results were a bit higher than expected for three groups as compared to the university population. Caucasians made up 374 members, or 88.6%, of the respondents in the study while Asian and Hispanic respondents comprised a larger than expected 1.7% (7) respondents each. African American respondents only comprised 7.3% of the students who participated, as compared to the 11.76% of the general population on campus. Due to the disproportionately small number of minority respondents, race will not be included as a variable.

Descriptive Statistics: Research Question One

The first research question looked at media habits and comprised the first section of the survey instrument. Therefore, the primary source of news category provided an interesting overview of the descriptive data that follows. This category showed results which were consistent with what was expected from the review of the literature. The responses for primary news source showed a slim majority in the form of the internet, with 59.7% of respondents stating that the internet was their primary source of news. Television, unsurprisingly, came in second place among respondents with 32.9% replying that it held primacy in their news gathering. Newspapers were third among the options with only 3.8% of responses, followed by radio with a similar proportion (3.7%) of all replies.

¹ Only one section of Safety Sciences was selected and responded, but it was a large section comprising 89 students. Four sections of English were chosen, all of which indicated they did not wish to lose class time.

The newspaper portion of the survey provided for a number of options for the media content followed and a selection of whether it was primarily online or offline in nature, as well as allowing for a blank for respondents to provide the name of the newspaper. This was done in order to adequately capture the full breadth of newspaper readership in both digital and print forms, as well as to ascertain if students were using online newspapers for content. In the current study, however, 20% of respondents have read a print newspaper and only 9.2% have used a newspaper online with a digital edition.

Television brought the first surprising note among student respondents, by showing that 45% of students in the sample do not use television as a source of news altogether, despite it being present in most people's everyday lives. The second notable item is that local news is a top contender among those who did watch, with 26.5% of the current study's respondents favoring it to other networks. Finally, it is worth noting that the majority of viewership by students, 79% of respondents who indicated that they do use television for news, do so offline, when there are online offerings (see Table 6 for a list of providers).

It was anticipated that radio would have smaller amounts of listeners in the news genre, as many people prefer to listen to music. While other forms of media asked the question of where one's primary website, newspaper, or television station was, radio simply asked if one listened to it for news or not. Despite this lack of an option to fill in a station, many individuals who marked in the affirmative wrote in that they listened to National Public Radio (NPR). The numbers of listeners included 21.1% of the overall sample.

The final media habit variable to be discussed was the general variable in relation to the use of the internet for the consumption of news. This question, "Do you use the internet for news?", encompasses a great number of responses.

Slightly less than one quarter of students in the sample replied that they did not use the internet for news of some sort. Those who used the internet for a source of news, listed their news source as a site that is often set as a home page (Google, Yahoo, and MSN) in 22.2% of the total responses, while another 11.8% used a form of social media as their primary news source (Reddit, Twitter, and Facebook).

The “Other” category consisted of a true potpourri of answers from student respondents to the instrument. Exercise science and athletic training majors primarily filled this category, writing in that they used the websites ESPN and Barstool as their sole sources of online news. These two websites are primarily based around sports information.

This trend held steady when asked about where individuals turned first for breaking news in celebrity cases, such as the George Zimmerman murder trial. Internet news websites were used by 40.9% of respondents as the first place for updates to cases and 15.9% of respondents turned to internet social networking sites to receive their information. Television, with 30.3% of the respondents held steady, other than a 2.6% dip from being used as a primary source of news.

The primary source of news for respondents in the current study was the internet, however, there were several different methods that could be used to access it. Overall, two types of devices came within a few percent of one another; the most commonly used was a personal computer or laptop with 48.3% of respondents replying it was used and then smartphones with 44.3% of subjects indicating their usage.

After the determination of what devices were used to access the internet, it was prudent to see how long students were online per day. This information was coded into two categories. Low to moderate internet usage was defined as 0 to 3 hours per day and comprised of 64.9% of survey respondents. An independent samples t-test was run on the low and moderate categories,

significance did not occur, therefore they were collapsed into the new “low to moderate” internet usage variable. High internet usage was coded as 4 hours per day or above and totaled 35.1% of the sample. Only one individual said they do not use the internet in their lives at all on a daily basis.

That only one person would not use the internet at all was unsurprising, as most members of Generation Y have grown up alongside it (Lenhart, 2009) and the respondent was a non-traditional student. Among the respondents, 373 out of 422, or 88.4% of, respondents stated that they had internet access while growing up. Those respondents who did not have internet access while growing up, were split in almost perfectly even halves between suburban and rural populations at 20 and 19 respectively, with a minority of ‘no’ respondents coming from urban areas. Only eight of the 47 who said they did not have the internet while growing up were above the age of 25, the remaining 39 were all between 18 and 24 years of age.

Descriptives for Independent Variables for Regressions

Based on the literature review, a number of independent variables were identified for examination as to their possible influence or impact on the dependent variables. The location of students’ hometowns was included as an independent variable. Following an independent samples t-test, respondents were classified into City Dwellers and Rural Dwellers.²

The internet proficiency variable was next and had a mean of 16.51. This was made up of a summed grouping of 29 survey items adapted from Hinduja and Smallridge (2013). With a minimum score of zero (meaning non-proficient) and a maximum score of 29 (meaning highly proficient), the mean of 16.51 shows that overall the sample was slightly above average in their internet proficiency.

² An independent samples t-test was run on the Home Location variable. Significance did not occur between urban and suburban, therefore they can be collapsed into the new “city dwellers” variable.

Major was the final and most diverse variable. Among the 422 respondents in this study, there were a total of 25 majors represented, with one individual stating that they were currently undeclared. The largest major was Safety Science with 19.9% of respondents and the second largest was Criminology with 18.0%. In order to control for major, major was recoded with 0 for Social Sciences and 1 for the other majors. This was done to differentiate them from majors which were less likely to have been exposed to discussion about criminality or deviance as a societal issue.

Descriptives for Dependent Variables for Regressions

The dependent variables for this study were comprised of two scales in Crowl’s Index (2013). These two scales were a Likelihood of Theft scale, and a Likelihood of Violent Offenses scale. The descriptive for these two scales can be found below in Table 3:

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics for Dependent Variables

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Likelihood Theft	9.32	3.60
Likelihood Violent	4.26	2.0

The Likelihood of Theft Scale, was comprised of five Likert type items. The minimum of five indicated something was “not very likely” to occur, while twenty-five was “very likely” to occur. There was a mean of 9.32 in Table 3. Students were most worried about their cellular phones and money being taken. Overall, the Cronbach’s Alpha of these items is .810 and the individual breakdown of the single items can be found in Table 4 below:

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics for Dependent Variables That Comprise Likelihood of Theft Scale

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Likelihood Home	2.19	1.091

Likelihood Cell	2.33	1.181
Likelihood Text	2.02	1.063
Likelihood Money	2.88	1.227
Likelihood Clothes	2.08	1.116

The Likelihood for Violent Offenses Scale was also comprised of Likert type items with the same one to five item numbering theme as the Likelihood of Theft Scale; the maximum (or highest likelihood) is 10 and the minimum (or least likelihood) is 2. Unlike its counterpart, it had only two items. However, even with only two items, the Cronbach's Alpha is .740, a reasonable reliability for a two item group, even if .8 or above would be preferable. The mean for this scale, as seen in Table 3 is 4.26 and the individual breakdown of the components can be found below in Table 5:

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics for Dependent Variables That Comprise Likelihood of Violent Off. Scale

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Likelihood Day	1.77	.950
Likelihood Night	2.50	1.229

Bivariate correlations. Prior to running the multiple regression models related to the perceived likelihood of Index I and Index II events taken from Crowl's (2013) scale occurring, bivariate correlations were conducted among the independent variables. This was done to examine the impact of each of the independent variables upon one another, in an effort to determine whether multicollinearity existed among the independent variables. The absence of severe or perfect multicollinearity is one of the base assumptions of a multiple regression (Lewis-Black, 1980).

Age was found to have a significant small correlation with the Tech Savvy variable ($r = .096, p < .05$), as well as a small significant correlation with sex ($r = -.186, p < .01$). Age also

had a significant medium correlation with major ($r = .424, p < .01$). The Sex also was found to have a small significant correlation with the Tech Savvy variable ($r = -.145, p < .01$).

The Zimmerman scale³. The George Zimmerman Trial scale was a knowledge-based scale that was to be included to show the misperceptions of celebrity cases in the media. It was still relatively fresh in the minds of those who had been using the internet and watching television and the main “star” of the case has continued to receive media coverage to the present day for outlandish statements or actions. However, the addition of “Don’t Know” rendered the results difficult to use overall. One example of this is the crosstabulation of major with an awareness of the trial, an overwhelming 84% ($n = 344$) claimed to be aware of the details of the trial, but then seemed confused about other details or overwhelmingly marked “Don’t Know”. This knowledge, or lack thereof, is not heavily influenced by discussion in a classroom setting, with only Criminology ($n = 46$) and Political Science ($n = 5$) having numbers over 50% in the sample as having heard about the trial in class. For a further breakdown by major, please see Table 6 below:

Table 6

*Major * Discussed Zimmerman Trial in Class Crosstabulation*

³ A third dependent variable, formed by the Zimmerman items on the survey instrument was planned, but was dropped from the final analyses due to an overwhelming number of responses in the “Don’t Know” category, rendering it non-useful for statistical analysis. The “Don’t Know” category was added to each question, in order for respondents to indicate they didn’t know about the particular question being asked, rather than forcing them into a dichotomous yes/no answer which would be factually incorrect, given their knowledge of the case.

	Discussed Zimmerman Trial in Class			Total
	No	Yes	Don't Know	
Major Social Sciences	39	57	9	105
Non-Social Sciences	206	43	68	317
Total	245	100	77	422

Below are crosstabulations, by major and race, which show an interesting data and provide some context to the view of the trial's issues where even simple information was predominantly labeled as "Don't Know" (See Tables 7 – 9 below), including an event that happened one week prior to the distribution of the survey and was still in the news at the time, found in Table 9 below:

Table 7

*Race * Zimmerman Told Not to Leave the Car Crosstabulation*

		Zim told not to get out of car			Total
		No	Yes	Don't Know	
Race	White/Caucasian	72	111	191	374
	Non-Caucasian	10	24	14	48
Total		82	135	205	422

Table 7 shows that overall, most Caucasian students did not know if Zimmerman had been ordered not to leave the car (he had been), whereas Non-Caucasian students were evenly split (n = 24) stating correctly that he had. Roughly half of all students replied that they did not know the answer (n = 205).

Major, as found in Table 8 below, appears to have no impact on whether respondents answered correctly. Roughly half (n = 205) replied that they did not know the answer. Not one major had over 50% of respondents state the correct answer to whether Zimmerman was ordered

to stay in his car or not, including Criminology, where 60% (n = 46) stated that they had discussed the case in the classroom.

Table 8

Major * Zimmerman Told not to Leave the Car Crosstabulation

		Zim told not to get out of car			Total
		No	Yes	Don't Know	
Major	Social Sciences	34	43	28	105
	Non-Social Sciences	48	92	177	317
Total		82	135	205	422

More recent to the case in terms of the distribution of the survey was one late added item about a domestic dispute in which George Zimmerman was reported to have pulled a firearm during a domestic dispute with his wife (Welch, Bacon, & Stanglin, 2013). However, it had the most heavily biased numbers in favor of the “Don’t Know” category, with 54% (n = 229) of respondents stating their lack of knowledge. This is broken down below by race in Table 10:

Table 9

Race * Zimmerman Pulled a Gun on His Wife Crosstabulation

		Zim pulled gun on his wife			Total
		No	Yes	Don't Know	
RaceRecode	White/Caucasian	78	89	207	374
	Non-Caucasian	10	16	22	48
Total		88	105	229	422

Similarly, the information run via a crosstabulation between major and this variable found that no major exceeded 50% knowledge of this happening, with even Criminology majors only stating the correct answer 39% (n = 30) of the time. As stated previously in the footnote, it

is for this reason, the overwhelming amount of “Don’t Know” results, that the Zimmerman variable was dropped.

Multiple regression. Two multiple regressions were utilized to determine the combined impact of the independent variables on each of the dependent variables. These dependent variables were two scales adapted from Crowl’s (2013) index, discussed previously.

Likelihood for theft offenses. The first alternative hypothesis in the second research question states that respondents perceptions of crime will differ based upon the amount of time per day spent online. The dependent variables for perception were broken down into the individual scales, which tapped into the underlying constructs during the pretesting of the survey instruments. The Varimax rotated component matrix for the factor analysis may be found below in Table 10:

Table 10
Varimax Rotated Component Matrix for Scales

Likelihoods	Component	
	1	2
Of Theft from Current Residence	0.646	0.239
Of Cell Phone Theft	0.807	0.177
Of Textbook Theft	0.754	0.018
Of Money Theft	0.748	0.342
Of Clothing Theft	0.448	0.586
Of Attack During Day	0.285	0.894
Of Attack During Night	0.031	0.880

The first scale, which is comprised of the Likelihood for Theft Offenses, is used as the dependent variable in the multiple regression below in Table 11:

Table 11
Multiple Regression of Likelihood for Theft Offenses (n = 419)

	B	S.E.	Beta	t
(Constant)	8.203	1.974		4.156
Age	-.094	.074	-.064	-1.262
Major	.057	.366	.008	.155
Hours Online Per Day	.661	.377	.088	1.756

TechSavvy	.102*	.043	.121	1.96
Sex	.913*	.368	.127	1.96
City Dwellers	-.100	.355	-.014	-.281
NewsControl	-.082	.368	-.011	-.222

R² = .047

F = 2.852

P < .003

*NOTE: * Significance at the .05 level
 ** Significance at the .01 level*

The model resulted in an R² of .047 and accounted for only 4.7% of the variance in the perception of likelihood for theft offenses to occur. The variables that were significant at the alpha level of .05 or less were techsavvy and sex. Males tend to worry more about theft of goods than females (b = 0.963). Students who are more technologically savvy when it comes to utilizing the internet, are also more likely to believe that there is a higher risk for the theft of personal goods. Based on beta weights sex had the strongest impact on belief in a likelihood of theft, followed by techsavvy. Unfortunately, the hours online per day variable failed to be significant.

Likelihood of Violent Offenses

The second half of Crowl's (2013) Index is the scale for the Likelihood for Violent Offenses, which is used as the dependent variable in the multiple regression found below in

Table 12:

Table 12

Multiple Regression of Likelihood for Violent Offenses (n = 419)

	B	S.E.	Beta	t
(Constant)	1.510	1.066		1.416
Age	.055	.040	.070	1.383
Major	.433	.198	.111	1.96
Hours Online Per Day	.451*	.203	.110	1.96
TechSavvy	.031*	.023	.069	1.351
Sex	.507*	.199	.130	1.96
City Dwellers	-.121	.192	-.030	-.630

NewsControl	.160	.199	.040	.419
R ² = .064				
F = 3.721				
P < .001				

*NOTE: * Significance at the .05 level*
** Significance at the .01 level

The model for the R² in this scale was .064 and accounted for 6.4% of the variance in the Likelihood for Violent Offenses variable. The three variables which were significant at the .05 level or less were the techsavvy variable, hours online per day variable, and the sex variable. Males were more likely than females to think there was a higher likelihood of being attacked (b = 0.507). Those who were more technologically savvy in their use of the internet were found to be more likely to believe that there was a better chance of a violent encounter (b = 0.031). Those who were in the “high use” category of internet users by hours per day, those who spent four or more hours online, were more likely to believe that there was a better chance of a violent act occurring against them (b = 0.451). Ranked by the beta weights, the most significant category is sex, followed by the hours online per day variable, and the techsavvy variable.

Summary

In general, the descriptive data from the first research question was intriguing. Newspaper readership was low, with 71.1% of respondents stating they don’t read newspapers, and of those who do, the preference is for a print edition with 19.7% stating it as their preference. Television viewership was high, with 54.5% of respondents watching the news; among these members of the sample, local news was the most heavily watched with 26.5% of viewers in the sample and MSNBC and Other National News station tying at 1.9% for last place. Radio news listeners were identified in 21.1% of the sample, with many providing commentary on their surveys that they listened to NPR or local talk radio stations.

The internet was used for news by 78.4% of the sample, placing it in a clear lead above the next contender, television, as a source for respondents' news. Standard start pages such as MSN, Yahoo, and Google accounted for 22.2% of individuals in the sample results, whereas social media in the form of Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit accounted for only 11.8% of replies for a primary online news source. The rest of the online news sources either fell in the "Other" category which was primarily composed of sports websites and actual news websites, such as CNN.com, which at 13.5% held the largest share of responses for a single website.

Among the multiple regressions for the second research question, where the dependent variables were the likelihood of theft and violent offenses based on the Crowl scales, only three of the independent variables showed themselves to be significant, out of a total of seven. These three variables were the sex of the respondent, those who fell in the "high use" category for the online hours per day variable, and the techsavvy nature of the individual. These second and third variables in particular are interesting, in that it correlated with the first hypothesis under the second research question. Those students who knew more about the internet, or spent more time on it daily, were more likely to have different views on crime than their less internet inclined counterparts, being more likely to suspect possible victimization. The second alternative hypothesis, however, was to be measured by the eliminated Zimmerman scale and thus a measurable conclusion is not forthcoming.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

A discussion of the current study's findings is presented in this chapter. First, an overview of the analysis is offered, followed by the author's explanation for the findings, a discussion about the strengths and limitations of those findings, and concluding with plausible policy suggestions and the direction of future research in this area.

The first research question addressed asked, "What sources of online content do college students in the sample visit and for what purpose?" This was measured with survey items about the time spent online, the type of websites visited, and social media habits. Unsurprisingly, many participants used websites that coincided with interests related to their major; one example of this is that many Athletic Training and Exercise Science majors wrote in that they utilized barstool.com as a website frequently, because it allowed them to keep up to date with sports news related to their fantasy sports leagues. One item that was almost universally mentioned was the use of social media by participants, with only 7.3% (n = 31) stating that they did not use social networking websites.

The second research question asked, "How might the online content, including mobile apps, that students view, influence their perceptions of crime?" and was broken down further into two hypotheses. The first alternative hypothesis stated, "Respondents perceptions of crime will differ based upon the amount of time per day and/or online content read or videos watched regarding crime and the criminal justice system." The second alternative hypothesis stated, "Respondents opinions on crime will be skewed towards an unrealistic view by internet

consumption.” It is the second research question and these two hypotheses which drive the discussion of the data which will be reviewed in this chapter.

The other element that drives the discussion of the chapter’s data is the work of Gerbner and Gross (1978) in the form of Cultivation Theory. The basic idea behind the theory is that a television viewer is subjected to continuous and repeated images that aid in “cultivating” a perception of a subject the viewer has no experience with. People live vicariously through television, and after heavy enough viewership will begin to believe the reality that is presented on it (Cohen & Weimann, 2000). This in turn will begin to impact the viewer’s snap judgments in response to questions (Shrum, 2004), such as, “How likely are you to be attacked at night on campus”?

While classical Cultivation Theory has been applied exclusively to television, especially comparing non-viewers to heavy viewers (Hammermeister & Brock, 2005) it has begun to branch out into other forms of media in recent years, the most recent of which is video games. Van Mierlo and Van den Bulck (2003) found that there were weak cultivation effects among secondary school students who played violent video games, though they seemed to have weak control variables. It is the purpose of this study, in part, to expand Cultivation Theory into the era and usage of the internet.

With both the theory and the research questions in mind, a number of variables had to be taken into account which measured time online, websites visited, other forms of media used, and what people knew about technology in general, and sex to provide an adequate picture of the typical participants in this study. Among these demographic, media, and technological variables, when run through a multiple regression analysis, several showed significance in their correlation

of people's views on the likelihood of becoming a victim of a violent offense, such as the amount of hours of internet time usage per day, use of the internet for news, general knowledge of technology, and sex.

Likewise, three variables also were significant in regard to the participants' view of the likelihood of becoming the victim of a theft offense. Those variables were: general knowledge of technology, the use of the internet for news, and sex.

Another set of variables that needed to be considered were those related to cultivation theory, upon whose framework the study was built. These are primarily demographic in nature, but also extend to the amount of time and usage of different types of media, as Gerbner and Gross (1978) stated the more time spent in regards to the consumption of media would raise the likelihood of cultivating the worldview being presented by that media. In addition to those variables which have previously been mentioned in the Likelihood for Theft and Violent Offenses, Sex was also found to be of significance in a multiple regression analysis in both categories. This places it into line with previous cultivation research, as a meta-analysis by Morgan and Shanahan (1992) found that Sex was a consistent variable in cultivation in 52 previous studies.

Sex, as a variable, needs to be broken down before we discuss the other elements of the study. In the current study, the sample was comprised of 49.1% (n = 207) females and 50.1% (n = 215) males. This is comparable, though slightly askew from the overall population of the university in the Fall 2013 semester, in which the student body was made up of 57% females and 44% males. The excess of males in the sample is most likely explained by the Safety Science

department, which contributed the largest class surveyed, 20.9% (n = 84) of the participants, being dominated primarily by males.

How and Where Participants Access Their News

The first questions of the survey instrument and the first research question for the project, dealt with how participants accessed their news. News access stretched across print, video, audio, and digital mediums, and generated a great deal of information about each of the mediums and how participants utilized them in their daily lives.

In the current study, 20% (n = 80) of participants have read a print newspaper and only 9.2% (n = 39) have used a newspaper online with a digital edition. Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where this study took place has a well-supplied access to newspapers on its campus in various forms. Both the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* are free of charge in dining hall areas and the business college building. The school paper, *The Penn*, is available in at least one location in every building on the university campus, if not more. The local paper, *The Indiana Gazette* has a major following on social media and most likely accounts for many of the online readers in the sample.

Television viewership was high, with 54.5% (n = 230) of participants watching the news; among these members of the sample, local news was the most heavily watched with 26.5% (n = 112) of participants in the sample. Among the main three news networks, CNN had the most viewers among participants (14.7%, n = 62), Fox News came in second (7.3%, n = 31) and MSNBC, Comedy Central, and Other National News station tied at 1.9% (n = 8) for last place.

The Pew Research Journalism Project (2013) reported that television remains the dominant news source for most Americans, with upwards of three in four adults in the United

States watching local television news and 65% of the adult populace of the nation watching network television news. This is less of a case in our sample, where television came in second to the internet as a source of news. One reason for this is a generation gap between Generation Y and older Americans, another is that the use of smart phones, laptops, etc. rendering the need for television news almost redundant when an answer is a few clicks away.

Among those who did watch TV news, local television news remained the top contender as a category, with the vast percentage of its viewers preferring to watch offline, and 26.5% (n = 112) of the current study's participants favoring local news to other networks. It is worth noting that "local" news for this sample included participants' hometown news stations, the local university run station, as well as KDKA and WTAE news from Pittsburgh, one of the nearest metropolitan areas with a newscast, second only to WTAJ in Johnstown, Pennsylvania.

Radio was one of the more interesting results in the current study. The number of listeners of radio as a source of news was 21.1% (n=89) overall. These results were unsurprising in that the number of news radio listeners is actually less than half the average of a recent survey of U.S. adults (Gross, 2010). Among these 21.1%, several indicated on their surveys that they listened to news in the car during the drive to the campus from their apartments, or when visiting another town, which given the rural location of the university, would entail a thirty minute drive minimum and a generous amount of time to listen to the radio.

The final component of how participants consume their news is that of the internet; which Lenhart (2009) holds that many of Generation Y have grown up with for their entire lives. The findings of the current study agree with that sentiment largely, with 88% (n = 373) of participants reporting that they had grown up with internet in their home, no matter the location of their hometown.

When it came to the use of the internet for news, 21.6% (n = 115) of participants reported that they did not utilize the internet for news. This means that 78.6% (n = 307) of participants do utilize the internet for news purposes, an abundance of responses above each of the previous categories discussed. In addition, actual news based websites (e.g. CNN.com, Foxnews.com, etc.) were used by 44.3% (n = 186) of the participants. Among the three major news sources, CNN.com had the greatest with 13.5% (n = 57) participants, MSN(BC) had 4% (n = 17) and Fox News had 2.4% (n = 10); other news websites such as Huffington Post (3.1%, n = 13) and local news websites (9.7%, n = 41) contained the results of the other news websites in low percentages. This places the sample above the national average in the usage of internet news sites, as currently, 39% of U.S. adults get their news online according to the Pew Media Consumption Survey report (2012).

Social media proved to be a source of a great amount of news sharing as well between users. Among those who were included in this sample, 11.9% (n = 51) stated that they primarily received their news from a social media website (e.g. Reddit, Twitter, Facebook), while overall, 64.2% (n = 271) stated that they used social media as a source for crime related news and 16.4% (n = 69) stated that seeing a story on social media had prompted them to look at a news website for the story for further details.

Role of internet usage. One of the most important things this study set out to do was to determine if the internet was acting as a major player in how participants received their crime news and perceived crime. The statistics previously discussed, show that they do use it in great numbers, as Lenhart (2009) predicted. However, these usage statistics are descriptive in nature and only tell part of the story of the internet in relation to this study.

Two of the three variables found to be significant in the multiple regressions of Index I and Index II offenses from Crowl's Index (2013), were related to the use of the internet. The first of which was the tech savvy measure adopted from Smallridge (2013) and Hinduja and Ingram (2008), which measured the respondent's comfort level with computers and various types of internet activities from basic skills such as e-mail to more advanced settings, such as changing a web browser start page. Tech savvy had a greater impact than the other internet variable on perceived likelihood of both theft and violent offenses.

The other internet related variable that was found to be significant, was that of Hours Online, which represented the hours per day spent online. This variable linked directly back to a hypothesis that more hours online would change how the participants perceived the likelihood of offenses. While this variable was only significant at the $P < .05$ level, it was found to be significant for the violent offense categories from Crowl's Index (2013). Overall, the use of the internet as a tool for news and its link to perceptions of likelihood are the most interesting points of this study.

Role of sex. The current study also included standard cultivation variables as discussed first by Gerbner and Gross (1978) and others after them. One variable in cultivation research that proves to be significant in many studies is that of sex, and has been shown to be a variable of fair consistency in predicting impacts on the cultivation of views (Cohen, 2000; Cohen & Weimann, 2008). With its prevalence in previous research in mind, it is unsurprising to find that Sex was a variable of statistical significance in both of the Crowl Scales (2013) that were used as dependent variables in the multiple regressions, with $p < .01$.

Interestingly, men were the more fearful of the two sexes listed, even though the two sexes were almost equal in measures of media consumption. The researcher believes this may possibly be an artifact of a history effect that was unforeseen during the time between the development of the survey instrument and its implementation. During this time period, one student in the Criminology major was shot during a road rage incident by a drunk driver (Hardway, 2014). As previously noted, a large number of the sample comes from the Safety Science and Criminology majors; this means these students are more likely to have been directly impacted by the news.

An alternative suggestion is that the males may have had prior experiences with victimization compared to their female counterparts. Also at issue is that men, especially in this age group, are more likely to be victimized than women, therefore they may have a better estimation of their odds of being victimized, rather than a fear of the likelihood of such an event occurring. There is no data that would back this up from the survey instrument, however, as questions about past victimization were not included in the instrument for fear of biasing results by making people think further about the odds of victimization, or triggering unfortunate memories which might require visits to the counseling center.

Interpretation

The first item to address is that this study's results correlate highly with the variables related to technology, which are the variables most closely linked to the idea which was put forward at the beginning of the study. When individuals in this study spent more time using the internet, they were significantly more likely to believe there is a likelihood of a criminal event

occurring to them. It was the least significant of the variables, but did have a significant impact on both scales from Crowl's Index (2013).

This is an interesting development, because this first technological variable also holds firm with previous cultivation research, while helping to expand into an unexplored new area. It holds firm with previous research, in that time spent watching television has always been a core component of Cultivation Theory (Gerbner & Gross, 1978). However, it is helping to chart new ground, because no previous research involving cultivation, nor criminology, has explored the time spent on the internet as a possible variable in perceived likelihood of victimization.

Media in its myriad forms saturates the American landscape and the lives of citizens on a daily basis (Surette, 2007). Content online combines all previous forms of media into one digitized format; audio, video, and text are no longer separate entities, but rather an amalgamated product of the era. This seems to be taken into account by the other internet related variable in the study. Those who had a higher score on the tech savvy scale adopted from Smallridge (2013) and Hinduja and Ingram (2008) were more likely to be influenced by what they embraced online. These men and women were more at home with the internet, based upon the scale items, and that familiarity with its use appears to have played a role in how they engaged their internet based news.

This tells us that they are more at ease with how to access their information online, be it sports news as those in athletics and exercise science majors were interested in, or in normal news or crime related news, as most other majors engaged in. There is less likelihood of these individuals stumbling across something by chance and becoming interested in it, than of them

finding it intentionally, because they sought it out. These are consumers of information, including information about crime by choice normally, not by accident.

This study also adds to the breadth of the cultivation theory research field as a whole. Thus far cultivation research has focused on a number of areas, but primarily still falls within the constraints of television programs in the modern day (Cohen & Weimann, 2000; Buellens, Roe, & Van den Bulck, 2012) or something closely linked to television, like console video gaming (Williams, 2006). This research has expanded cultivation research into a thus ignored form of media.

Furthermore, it also lends itself to the literature of fear of crime, especially in regards to the sex variable. Sex emerges often in fear of crime research, where despite stereotypes, both men and women often express similar rates of fear (Goodey, 1997) as something that is primarily based on their individual experiences (Goodey, 1997). While these fears, based on individual experience are often different, with females being more likely in most cases to fear some form of violent crime (Goodey, 1997), it can be argued that this is a byproduct primarily of socialization, social learning, and the reinforcement of gender stereotypes, rather than an objective view of perceived likelihood of victimizations (Cops & Pleysier, 2010).

Interestingly, despite the stereotype trending towards females being more likely to fear crime and the previous research showing that fear of victimization levels are equal across biological sex, neither of these were the case in the current study. In this study, it was males who were more likely to feel that they perceived a likelihood of victimization in both the violent and theft offense categories. This may be due in part to the measure, which asks for likelihood,

instead of fear; where males acknowledge they are more likely to be victims of crime, but may not necessarily fear that, that will be the case.

Limitations. The first limitation of this study is it takes a sample of college students as part of an overall university population. Payne and Chappell (2008) state there are four primary weaknesses towards using college students in research: Concerns about validity, ethical considerations, stigmatization of student samples, and generalizability. At this time, the researcher will address these issues in order.

One minor issue with the validity of the administered surveys is the time frame in which they were administered. The surveys were given out mostly in the first two weeks of the semester, as most faculty members had time during this period. This, however, meant that course sizes and compositions were in constant flux, due to the standardized add/drop period which covered the first week of classes in the university where the research was conducted. After discovering one student had already taken the survey in a previous course in a different discipline, the researcher began to ask those who had participated previously, to not do so again, in order to reduce the chances of a threat to the external validity of the study. However, the one case was most likely an outlying oddity, due to each course being one of over one thousand which were offered for undergraduates during the semester that could possibly be selected for the sample.

The other threat was to construct validity, in the form of the variables of interest. Participants were asked to estimate their social media and internet usage habits. While efforts were made on the survey instrument to clarify that “apps” count as internet usage, it cannot be shown that all participants understood this concept.

Ethical considerations were almost a non-issue in this study. No one was asked about previous participation in any criminal activity, nor victimizations. Two of the anonymous participants, however, at the section on likelihood of victimization in theft offenses, left personal notes to the researcher that they had been the victims of some of the crimes marked within recent weeks. One respondent also noted that there needed to be a “Fluid” option under Sex choices.

The stigmatization of student samples and the lack of generalizability are external threats to validity, as laid out by Payne and Chappell (2008) who cite their youth, different life experiences from adults, distinct subculture, and different income bracket as factors impacting the generalizability of the student sample. In this study, the researcher feels that these are non-issues. The goal is not to generalize to the population of the United States, or even the town, at large. Rather, the study looks at members of Generation Y in the form of college students, primarily aged 18-24, with the mean age of the sample being 21.36 years of age. What Payne and Chappell (2008) list as weaknesses are actually a strength of this study; the goal is not to generalize to the entire population, but rather to generalize the findings to the entire population of Generation Y. Furthermore, if a theory such as cultivation is generalizable to begin with, it should behave in a similar fashion across different samples.

Another limitation of this study is that of being unable to control for prior victimization. One survey’s margins had notes in it, by certain items on the likelihood scale stating that they had actually been the victim of some of said crimes only the Friday prior to the researcher coming to their classroom to distribute the survey instruments. This could have been better controlled for by adding questions relating to prior victimization, however, the researcher had no desire to lead anyone down a biased path by suggesting such and therefore implying that it may

be commonplace. There were also limits on the time available for the survey and the researcher did not wish to out-stay his welcome in the classrooms.

One further limitation of this study is that it lacked proper controls for the influence of other forms of media on participants' perceptions of possible victimization. While other forms of media were represented in the survey instrument, they were not given near the amount of attention as the internet was, with only a nominal yes or no representing use and a question of what one's favorite channel, newspaper, or station was for news. This is pale in comparison to the majority of the survey instrument's media related questions, which worked to create a clearer picture of the internet usage.

While the internet usage was partially kept in check when other forms of media being consumed were used as a control in a multiple regression, the variables lacked the richness of their internet equivalents. For instance, there was no measure of the hours spent watching television, listening to the radio, or reading a newspaper that could be adequately translated into a better control variable to match the amount of time that was spent online which was being measured in part.

Strengths. There were several strengths that should be mentioned about the current study. First, this study utilized to great success the Index developed by Crowl (2013). In pre-testing it was shown via factor analysis that what Crowl (2013) had thought was a scale was actually tapping into two underlying constructs and was thus an Index. Once tested this way in both pre-testing and the actual study, these held up as identified and were therefore further fleshed out compared to their initial use by Crowl (2013) as being reasonable items for testing the likelihood of perceived risk of both theft and violent acts.

Second, this study contributed to the literature of the use of the internet in regards to criminal justice and crime news. The field of criminology has been long dominated by the newspapers and television, and this study helps begin the examination of the next major form of media. At the time of this study, the researcher was unable to locate other research utilizing the internet's influence as a factor, but rather what is reported on it (Tewksbury, Miller, & DeMichele, 2006). This also is the case with cultivation studies; while it has expanded from television to video games in recent years (Van Mierlo, 2007), cultivation studies have not yet addressed whether the internet can be used as a source for cultivating views.

The final major strength of this study is the sample. It is a large, randomly sampled group of members of Generation Y with few outliers of an older age. They were the primary subjects of the current study, as the most technologically savvy generation (Lenhart, 2009), and they were captured well, with only two cases of non-response out of approximately four hundred surveyed individuals. Between having an excellent selection of the target group and an excellent response rate, it reduces the likelihood that the results of this study are a statistical artifact due to poor response or an undue influence by those who fall outside the desired group.

Suggestions for Future Research

The current study has endeavored to seek the impact of the internet on the perceptions of likelihood of crimes occurring, as well as to capture a snapshot of how members of the sample have accessed their news. While newspapers and radio may not hold the sway they once did, it would be foolish to count them as gone from the resources of American youth. Likewise, television, while not as impressive in results as the internet, remains a formidable titan of media, unlikely to lose relevance any time soon.

Future research should include further collection of data from populations that are interacted with firsthand. Much of the current research in criminology that mentions media is almost exclusively reliant upon secondary data collected by the Pew Center, and therefore is less open to interpretation for a researcher's specific questions than data collected firsthand. One exploration that should be made is the distribution of a similar survey to people outside of the range of Generation Y, in order to be able to compare the two groups; if cultivation is still a viable theory in the internet era, it should behave similarly, even if Generation Y were replaced with another generation, such as the Baby Boomers. This has been shown in other studies of cultivation, in that video game users (Williams, 2006) and reality television viewers (Cohen & Weimann, 2000) have shown similar cultivation effects to those expected primarily in television viewers (Gerbner & Gross, 1978).

Another natural extension to the current study would be to repeat the research at another institution in another area. Then, differences may be teased out that are not readily apparent at this time, but may be present. The researcher would also be remiss to point out that there are qualitative components which need to be explored in the future as well; while journaling may be difficult to accomplish, participant observation of various forms of online communication, especially if partnered with another researcher, would provide insights into possible subcultures which are developing through the use of the internet, such as the hacktivist⁴ group Anonymous.

This study was launched in the hope of understanding the impact of the internet on members of Generation Y's perceived likelihood of criminal events occurring. Given the new net hours and techsavvy variables were both significant in the second Crowl (2013) scale, it seems

⁴ Self described hacktivists are activist hackers who believe themselves to be aiding the greater good in their criminal activity. Any future research into groups such as Anonymous would require observation only, as participation would be legally questionable.

that there are cultivation effects occurring, due to the nature of cultivation's relationship with time and effort put into being a participant with the form of media utilized. The internet is not going away, nor is it a fad, and its place in how people perceive crime deserves further research.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to act as a way of presenting and analyzing the findings of the current study, as well as the researcher's opinions of the results. It sought answers to questions about the changing media habits of Generation Y and how that impacted their knowledge of crime, the criminal justice system, and their perceived likelihood of victimization in two areas: theft and violent offenses.

What was found was a correlation between a number of variables and perceived likelihood of victimization. Sex, a constant in both cultivation and fear of crime research, which was found to be consistently significant in 52 previous cultivation studies (Morgan & Shanahan, 1997) was found to be correlated for both of the two areas. Hours spent online and general knowledge of how to use technology and the internet also were correlated to a participant's perceived likelihood of victimization. While the general use of technology variable is one which is unique to this study in determining internet prowess, the time online variable that was found to be significant has its roots in cultivation research as well, where a vital part of the theory involves heavy use of the media and an investment of time.

One item which was only measured as a descriptive, but which agrees with recent research (Pew, 2012; Pew 2013) is that while television use among members of Generation Y has decreased from the heights it reached among the Baby Boomer generation, it is not going away. Much like television has coexisted alongside the newspaper and the radio in delivering

news from crime to sports, so too will the internet coexist alongside these previous forms of media.

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APPENDIX A: Media Tables

Table 13

Time Frames and their Dominant Media Formats

<i>Time Frame</i>	<i>Media Type</i>	<i>Form of Distribution</i>
<i>The Domination of Oral Forms of Media</i>		
Antiquity	Theater, folktales and myths	Local audiences primarily. Traveling bards and traders spread tales from community to community. Larger towns hold local theater productions.
1200-1500s	Ballads	Long tales are spun for consumption in song format.
<i>The Domination of Print Forms of Media</i>		
1400-1700s	Pamphlets and Broadsheets	Gallow sermons of the condemned's sins are popular. Pamphlets are passed out to explain the nature of crimes and their punishment.
1830s	Penny Press	Cheap printing press leads to the first affordable mass produced media.
1880s	Dime Store Novels	First affordable fiction works are produced. Crime novels quickly gain prominence.
1890s	Yellow Journalism	The first infotainment leads to occasional mass panics.
<i>The Domination of Audio-Visual Forms of Media</i>		
1880s-1890s	Radio Introduced	Radio is invented and audio plays soon follow. Remains one of the dominant forms of communication through the 1950s.
1910s	Film Introduced	The first silent films reach out to a homogenized audience.
1920s	Commercial Radio Networks	First real home delivery outside of print media. Established several programs which would transition to television.
1930s	Film Domination	Reflects social concerns of the era. Positive endings abound.
1930s-1940s	Comic Books	Comics become known for gruesome depictions of crime. Moral crusades by parents and concerned groups begin; the comic industry never again reaches this peak of consumption.
1950s	Television	Beginning of pixilated media. Small

1970s	Cable Television	amount of channels ensures homogeneous programming. Audiences became fragmented as more niche choices were available to the public as a whole.
<hr/> <i>The Arrival and Domination of New Media</i> <hr/>		
1980s	Videocassette Recorders (VCRs) and the Early Electronic Games	The beginning of interactive media with the introduction of the VCR and video games. Users find themselves able to skip unwanted scenes in videos and making decisions which are displayed on-screen for gaming purposes.
1990s	Computer Games and the Internet	Worldwide access to user generated content.
2000 to Present	Virtual Reality Devices	Media and computer-augmented experiences.

Note: Adapted from *Media, crime, and criminal justice: Images, reality, and policies*, by R. Surrette, p. 7, Copyright 2007 by Thomson Wadsworth.

Table 14
A Sampling of Corrections-based Reality Crime Programs

<i>Program</i>	<i>Description</i>
Beyond Scared Straight	A follow up to the 1978 documentary film, this program sends at risk juveniles to inmate-run “scared straight” programs. After subjecting the juveniles to the programming, a one month follow-up update is provided at the end of each episode.
Jail	A program which ostensibly follows the routine of a local jail, usually several per episode, from booking to incarceration. Officers provide personal commentary for the cameras.
Lock Up (and individualized sequels)	A program which enters American prisons to speak with inmates and correctional officers about the conditions in the locations and the stories behind those who ended up incarcerated within the myriad facilities which are featured. There are a number of sequels which are identified by a naming convention where the individual facility is given after a “Lock Up:”. A <i>National Geographic Channel</i> documentary style program where individuals recount tales of being imprisoned in other nations. It includes dramatized re-enactments, actual footage when possible, interviews with the former inmates, and a statement on how the situation was resolved.
Locked Up Abroad	A program on <i>The Discovery Channel</i> which shows the first week of incarceration for first time offenders. Each offender is profiled and an update given at the end of the episode.
The First Week In	A <i>TLC</i> program which follows women who raise their children in the prison.
Babies Behind Bars	

Table 15
A Sampling of Courts-based (Binding Arbitration) Reality Crime Programs

<i>Program</i>	<i>Description</i>
Judge Judy	A program where individuals agree to binding arbitration by a former family court judge.
Judge Joe Brown	A program where individuals agree to binding arbitration by a former Tennessee judge and set in California.
The People's Court	A program where individuals agree to dismiss their court claims in exchange for binding arbitration. Litigants are paid a nominal fee for their time.
Animal Court	A program involving small claims over animal disputes where individuals agree to binding arbitration by a former judge who also once hosted the television show <i>The People's Court</i> .
Judge Alex	A program for small claims binding arbitration by a retired police officer and judge.
Judge Maria Lopez	A program for binding arbitration before a retired Massachusetts assistant attorney general and superior court judge.
Judge Greg Mathis	A program for binding arbitration before a retired Michigan 36 th District Court judge who overcame a criminal past to become a lawyer before being elected as the youngest judge in Michigan's history.

Table 16
A Sampling of Police-based Reality Crime Programs

<i>Program</i>	<i>Description</i>
COPS	A program which began in 1989 after a writers strike. It follows officers as they patrol the streets and make arrests. It is currently (2012) entering its 25 th season.
Campus PD	A program which follows officers on sworn police forces of university campuses or the surrounding areas. As the title would suggest, it primarily deals with young adult offenders ranging from 18-20s.
Police Women of Broward County	A program which follows four female police officers in Broward County, Florida as they respond to calls and make arrests.
Dallas SWAT	A program which shows the training and day to day lives of Dallas, Texas, Special Weapons And Tactics (SWAT) members.
K9 Cops	A program on the network <i>Animal Planet</i> , which follows Minnesota police officers and their dog partners as they search and arrest individuals.
Cajun Justice	A program which follows a small town Louisiana sheriff and other local members of law enforcement as they respond to calls and make arrests.
Police Women of Cincinnati	A program which follows female officers in Cincinnati, Ohio, as they respond to calls and make arrests.

Table 17
Most Watched Crime Shows on Television 2011-2012

<i>Program</i>	<i>Description</i>
NCIS	Members of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service in Washington D.C. travel the world to solve murders and thwart terrorists in this crime drama.
Criminal Minds	Members of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Behavioral Analysis Unit work as a team to solve crimes and thwart terrorists in this crime drama.
NCIS: Los Angeles	Members of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service in the San Diego branch office travel the state of California and the world to solve murders and thwart terrorists in this crime drama.
Alcatraz	Government agents track down temporarily displaced guards and inmates from the infamous prison in modern day San Francisco in this science fiction crime drama.
Person of Interest	A former green beret, who is also a former agent of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), is recruited by an eccentric billionaire to stop criminals in New York City, New York.
Hawaii Five-0	A remake of a previous show of the same name. This program follows a small special task force of law enforcement officers who solve crimes and thwart terrorists.
CSI	A team of forensic expert crime solvers, who are an amalgamation of most police and forensic scientists rolled into one, solve murders in Las Vegas, Nevada in this crime drama.
Bones	A forensic anthropologist and an FBI agent team up to solve crimes by examining the forensic evidence comprised of the remains of victims.
Castle	A mystery novelist teams up with the New York Police Department (NYPD) to write his novels and solve crimes.
CSI: Miami	A team of forensic expert crime solvers, who are an amalgamation of most police and forensic scientists rolled into one, solve murders in Miami, Florida in this crime drama.

*Adapted from Deadline: Hollywood's *Full 2011-2012 TV Season Series Rankings*, written by Nellie Andreeva (2012).

Table 18
C.S.I. Viewership by Season, Television Season, and Viewers (as of Dec. 2012)

<i>Season</i>	<i>Television Season</i>	<i>Viewers (in Millions)</i>
One	2000-2001	20.8
Two	2001-2002	23.7
Three	2002-2003	26.12
Four	2003-2004	25.27
Five	2004-2005	26.26
Six	2005-2006	24.86
Seven	2006-2007	20.34
Eight	2007-2008	16.62
Nine	2008-2009	18.52
Ten	2009-2010	14.92
Eleven	2010-2011	13.52
Twelve	2011-2012	12.49
Thirteen	2012-2013	13.21

APPENDIX B: Survey Instrument

Directions: Please answer each question by filling in the blank and then checking the box which applies for numbers one through four, then checking the answer that applies for the rest of Section One.

Section One: (Media Habits)

1) Do you read a newspaper?

Don't Use _____ If yes, please provide the paper's name _____

→ Is it mainly online? Yes No

2) Do you watch television news?

Don't Use _____ If yes, please provide the network's name _____

→ Is it mainly online? Yes No

3) Do you listen to the radio for news?

Don't Use _____ Yes _____

→ Is it mainly online? Yes No

4) Do you use the internet for news?

Don't Use _____ If yes, please provide the site names (if more space is needed, use the back of the sheet): _____

5) Which one of the following is your primary source of news:

- ___ Newspaper
- ___ Television
- ___ Radio
- ___ The Internet

6) What device do you use most often to access the internet?

- ___ PC/Laptop
- ___ Smartphone
- ___ Tablets/Netbooks

7) How many hours do you use the internet each day?

- ___ None
- ___ One
- ___ Two
- ___ Three
- ___ Four

Five or more

8) How do you primarily spend your time on social networking sites?

- Reading status updates
- Playing games (e.g. Candy Crush Saga, Farmville, Mafia Wars)
- Looking at memes
- Reading/watching news
- Other (please specify): _____
- Don't use social networking sites

9) When you use a social networking site (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Vine), do you sometimes use it to read or watch crime related material (news articles, television shows)?

- Yes
- No
- Don't use social networking

10) On what occasions do you go to news websites online? (You may select more than one answer.)

- I don't use this type of website.
- When I want to read the news.
- When an interesting headline is displayed on my e-mail account welcome screen.
- When an interesting story is reposted on a social networking site.
- When an interesting story is mentioned by someone in person (e.g. friend, family member, mentioned in class, etc.)
- When an interesting story is on TV and I want to know more.
- Other (Please specify): _____

11) For celebrated cases such as the George Zimmerman trial or Matthew Cordle (the 22 year old who confessed to vehicular homicide on YouTube), where did you go to first get your news?

- Newspaper
- Television
- Radio
- Internet News Site
- Internet Social Networking Site
- Internet Video Site (e.g. YouTube)

Directions: For the questions in the following section, please place a check beside each of the behaviors or level of internet access which applies.

Section Two: (Net proficiency/variety.)

12) From the following list place a check beside each of the behaviors that you have used the internet for in the last month.

- Email, Chat/IRC
- Research for school work
- File Transfer
- Use Newsgroups
- Product and Travel Information
- Online Stock Trading
- Online Shopping
- Online Auctions
- Online Games
- Online Banking
- To collect information related to news, sports, or the weather
- To collect information related to crime
- To collect information related to personal interests and hobbies
- Web Design

13) From the following list place a check beside each of the following behaviors that you have ever participated in online.

- Changed my browser's "startup" or "home" page
- Made a purchase online for more than \$100
- Participated in an online game
- Participated in an online auction
- Changed my "cookie" preferences
- Participated in an online chat or discussion (including email, ICQ, or AOL Instant Messenger, Facebook Messenger, Gchat, or similar instant messaging programs)
- Listened to a radio broadcast or music clip online
- Made a telephone call online (e.g. Skype, Oovoo, Facetime)

- Created a web page
- Set up my incoming and outgoing mail server preferences
- Used an app
- Watched a video
- Checked e-mail

14) Where is your primary internet connection?

- At home
- On campus
- Phone

15) Did you have internet access at home while growing up?

- Yes No

Directions: Please select the best answer for the following questions or fill in the blank where offered the option.

Section Three: (Perception.)

How likely are the chances of the following activities happening to you?

Not Likely at All	Somewhat Not Likely	Not Sure	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

16) Someone breaking into your current place of residence to steal something?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

17) Someone stealing or attempting to steal your cell phone?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

18) Someone stealing to attempting to steal your textbook(s)?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

19) Someone stealing or attempting to steal your money?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

20) Someone stealing or attempting to steal an article(s) of clothing?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

21) Someone physically attacking you during the day?
1 2 3 4 5

22) Someone physically attacking you during the night?
1 2 3 4 5

The George Zimmerman Trial

23) I am aware of the trial of George Zimmerman.
Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know _____

24) We discussed the George Zimmerman Trial in one of my classes.
Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know _____

25) George Zimmerman was told by the dispatcher not to get out of the car.
Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know _____

26) George Zimmerman's defense team invoked Florida's "stand your ground law".
Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know _____

27) George Zimmerman used racial slurs while on the phone with 911.
Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know _____

28) George Zimmerman was arrested by the police the night of the shooting.
Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know _____

29) George Zimmerman did not have injuries the night of the shooting.
Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know _____

30) All of the prosecution's witnesses were capable of basic reading and writing.
Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know _____

31) When George Zimmerman was recently pulled over by the police for speeding, he did not have a gun.
Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know _____

32) George Zimmerman pulled a gun during a recent domestic dispute with his wife.
Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know _____

33) George Zimmerman did not pull a family from a bad car wreck.
Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know _____

Directions: Please select the best answer for the following questions or fill in the blank where offered the option.

Section Four : (Demographics)

34) What is your sex?

Male

Female

35) Where is your hometown located?

Urban

Suburban

Rural

36) What is your age? _____

37) What is your major? _____

38) What is your minor? _____

39) What race do you most identify with?

White/Caucasian

Black/African American

Asian

Hispanic/Latino/Latina

Other – *Please Specify* _____

APPENDIX C: Informed Consent

Informed Consent Page

You are invited to participate in a research project regarding student internet use and crime by completing this survey. The following information is provided to help you reach an informed decision about participating in this survey. You are eligible to participate because you are currently enrolled in the university for the Spring 2014 semester.

Participation in this survey will require approximately ten to fifteen minutes of your time to complete. The information obtained from this survey may assist in efforts to understand how the internet factors into views about crime. There are no known risks associated with this research.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. There will be no repercussions if you choose not to participate in the study. You may withdraw from this survey at any point by no longer answering the questions and submitting an incomplete or blank survey when others begin to turn in their surveys. All surveys are anonymous and no personal responses will be highlighted individually, but rather in combination with those provided by other participants. This study has been approved by the IUP Institutional Review Board.

If you have an questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the individuals below.

Thank you for your time,

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APPENDIX D: Letter Requesting Access

Dear Dr./Professor:

My name is Philip Wagner and I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Criminology at Indiana University of Pennsylvania and a temporary faculty member of that department. I have recently defended my dissertation proposal to research perceptions of crime and internet usage among members of Generation Y. I am currently seeking your assistance in the data collection phase of my dissertation.

The focus of my study is to examine perceptions involving fear of victimization, knowledge of current events in criminal justice, and use of classical forms of media, as well as new media, among undergraduate students. This project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at IUP. All student participants will be informed that participation in the study is completely voluntary and their anonymity will be protected.

Your class _____ has been randomly selected from a sampling frame of possible courses to be included in the study. I am seeking your permission to administer a questionnaire to the students enrolled in your course. Due to the random nature of course selection, I would greatly appreciate your assistance and help in this project by allowing me to administer my questionnaire to your class and students.

The process of questionnaire distribution, informed consent, and survey completion is expected to take approximately 10 minutes. I can administer the questionnaire at either the beginning or end of class time. I can appreciate the value of class time and I thank you in advance for considering my request.

I would be happy to provide you with any additional information or answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me or my dissertation chair, Dr. Erika Frenzel. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Respectfully,

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