

SA Community Information Centre



The following is a letter we received from Ian Colls of Compusafe. These are his concerns (25/10/07):

As you may be aware, there has been a sudden increase in crime in the Upper Highway area for the last 3 months. This is a spill over from the industrial areas of Pinetown, New Germany and Westmead, where there has been a sudden drop in crime over the same duration. The crime I am referring to specifically be the theft of computers from businesses during break-ins between 1am to 5am. I have been investigating the syndicate responsible for this crime for the last 5 years and have reported my findings and conclusions to local security companies and the SAPS; however nothing has been done as no one is prepared to take responsibility for a pro-active stance on the problem.

The problem is that the SAPS mandate is that more serious crimes such as murder, rape, child abuse, etc take preference to insured stolen goods such as computers - and who can argue with that. The security companies, not all of them, are quite clear on the legal issue of the contract that they have with their clients - monitoring and response only! The contract quite clearly states that what happens between a positive report of a break-in and the time it takes for reaction staff to arrive on the scene is not legally their problem - and they are right.

Here is where I have a problem. Everybody in the security industry and the SAPS, except for the greater public, by now know who is involved in this syndicate. How the syndicate operate, how they choose who to break in, how they get around the alarm systems, and worst of all, that the thieves are in 90% of cases coming back for a 2nd and 3rd break-in for the newly replaced IT equipment. Especially commercial letting agents that know what their prospective client is in for do nothing to warn or help the victims. I think it is about time that the public is made aware of exactly what we are dealing with, that they become

educated so that they can make an informed decision on how best to help themselves.

Here are the facts:

1. Move into a new business premises and you have a break-in soon after.
2. Apply for, or transfer a business telephone line, and you have a break-in.
3. Apply for, or transfer an ADSL line in your company's name either for a business premises or a business run from home, and you have a break-in.
4. Replace your stolen computers and connect back onto the Internet with ADSL, and you have a repeat break-in.
5. Install an alarm system which is connected to your security company via a telephone line, and you have a break-in.
6. Don't install an alarm system, or only use a radio to connect to your security company, and you stand very little chance of a break-in.

There is only one company in South Africa which can be linked to all the above statistics and has the technology to monitor a company's telephone lines, ADSL and ISDN lines, has company addresses, and can tell if you have an alarm attached to a telephone line. Further more, as long as SARS collects revenue in the way of vat on replaced stolen goods such as computers, it is not economically viable for the government to do anything about this crime. And who says, "crime does not pay"! The big question is where are all these computers going? You wouldn't believe me if I told you!

For further information regarding this matter please contact Ian on 031 765 3153 or 082 451 9338 or info@compusafe.co.za

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