“Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it”.

This quote originating in the writings of George Santayna, was famously introduced to the masses by Winston Churchill, and has been embodied in the teaching of historians and cultural anthropologists alike. It is an apt statement on our inability to learn from history. However, knowledge of an event, in absence of context, often produces an inaccurate understanding (Best, 1995; Cobern, 1991) or in worst instances may also contribute to inaccurate knowledge (Bohan, 1990). As Lowewn, author of the (in)famous work Lies My Teacher Told Me, offered much of what we come to learn lacks the necessary contextualization of the events leading to a misguided understanding, oversimplification, or allowing inaccurate knowledge to become institutionalized.

At this point, as a reader, you are likely questioning the relevancy of Santayna or Lowewn in a chapter on body worn cameras. You may be asking how can history provide valuable insight into what is a 21st century technology. The answer, as you can likely expect, is much. In fact, technology integration, by many accounts was co-occurring with the development of the modern police service (see Deflem, 2002; Foster, 2005; Moore & Kelling, 1983). However, while the first integration led to the professionalization of the organization, later implementations have often been criticized as technological integrations for symbolic reasons (Manning, 2008; 2001; 1992) or implementations under the guise that this specific technology could alleviate whatever problems plagued the agency (Manning, 1992; Wright, 1978), known commonly as a “Technological Panacea”.

If, as I argue, the body worn camera is on the precipice of reflecting this technological panacea, we must look to history for how to move it from being a symbolic technology to a
Chapter 4
Avoiding the Technological Panacea: The Case of the Body Worn Camera

transformative technology. Moreover, we must question the very integration of the device into the police service. If we fail to contextualize the myriad of factors influencing the implementation of this device, we are condemned to repeat the mistakes of the past by missing an opportunity to transform the modern police service and policing itself by inclusion of or resistance to this device.

A Brief History of Technology Integration in the Modern Police Service

As Soulliere (1999) describes there are four distinct periods (or stages) dating back to the late 1800s. This first stage of technology integration, aligns with the second era of policing and the rise of the professionalism movement. In fact, the first institutionalization of technology manifested during the tenure of one of the key police reformers, August Vollmer. Vollmer believed a professional police service required modernization in organizational practices, human resource management, investigative techniques, police practice, and at its core, technology was integral to these realizations. A cursory overview of integrations during this period speaks to the introduction of technology to improve the delivery of services.

The first wide scale technology implementation was the telephone callbox, dating back to the early 1900s. This device allowed agencies and officers to communicate while on patrol. However, failure to properly contextualize this implementation is an excellent example of knowledge of, without awareness of, the true intent of this technology. Prior to the growth of the professional era, there existed the political era, marked by the distinct lack of professionalism and local political control of the police. It would be easy to attribute the use of this device to conveying incidents to police. However, use of this device increased the span of control (oversight) of supervisors, while also increasing accountability. An officer was expected to be in a certain area, and this technology allowed the agency, to among many other uses, “supervise”
Avoiding the Technological Panacea: The Case of the Body Worn Camera

the officer. In essence, what Vollmer implemented was an accountability mechanism – a technology that could hold officers accountable for their actions (or inactions). In fact, much of the technology implemented within the tenure of Vollmer connected well to accountability.

While the prior technologies improved accountability and the delivery of services (records management and the implementation of forensic science), the last technology implemented during this period is also considered the only transformative technology (see. Soulliere, 1999; White, 2007). A transformative technology, in the context of an organization, is said to be one that profoundly changes an organization (Phillips, 2007). It fundamentally changes the delivery of services (in the context of a service industry). While the prior technologies displayed professionalism, this specific technology fundamentally changed the nature of the interactions police would have moving forward and heavily influenced the organizational culture (Crank & Crank, 2014). That specific technology was the automobile. It transitioned the delivery of services from being quasi-proactive to almost entirely reactive (waiting for a call). It heralded the rise of reactive policing.

By the end of the 1st stage in 1945, police agencies had a mobile police force capable of responding to calls for service from the community, could be held accountable by supervisors who had the ability to contact officers and issue commands (the two-way radio was implemented during this stage), and lastly facilitated in the development and utilization of the hierarchical organizational structure and specialized police units that we see today via the knowledge specialization and focus on forensics to solve specific crimes (Soulliere, 1999). As you can clearly see, by all accounts, Vollmer was a progressive police administrator, and his pursuit of and integration of technology into his agency certainly supported his identification as the “Father of Police Technology”.
Chapter 4
Avoiding the Technological Panacea: The Case of the Body Worn Camera

The 2\textsuperscript{nd} stage of technology integration was signified by the bureaucratization of the police agency. While short-lived from a technology perspective, 1946-1959, the technology sought reflected the current challenges of society and a mandate to address pressing cultural concerns. With prohibition ending just over a decade prior and with the end of WWII, police agencies found themselves responding to alcohol-related incidents including those relating to motorists. With this new mandate to respond to driving under the influence, and the need to do so both effectively and efficiently, the police developed the field sobriety test and the first breathalyzer – credited to a former police captain, Dr. Borkenstein, in 1954 (Borkenstein & Smith, 1961). This technology made the police more efficient (the value within a bureaucracy) in achieving this mandate.

The 3\textsuperscript{rd} stage (1960-1979) indicates a complete reluctance by police agencies to implement technology. The reluctance and arguably the resistance to technology was so great it was noted in President Johnsons Crime Commission in 1967 (Lehman, 1968). Of the many criticisms offered, specific to technology, was the inability for police agencies to embrace technology to improve the delivery of services and address clear organizational problems (Anderson, 1967; Wolfe, 1967). Of the most scathing of points offered was how the history of the modern police service had looked to technology to improve the organization – starting with the creation of the modern police service (Anderson, 1967). However, as an institution, the police had become reluctant to embrace technology beyond improving their ability to respond to violent crime. Technology integration was becoming increasingly more reactive, aligned with improving clearance rates, at the expense of the delivery of services to communities.

This is an opportune moment to return to the importance of contextualization. During this period, the police were increasingly resistant to criticism (Uchida, 1997; Walker, 1977). There
was internal conflict within agencies, external pressure to respond to perceptions of crime and disorder (the impetus for Johnson’s Crime Commission), and growing mistrust on the part of communities viewing the police as an oppressor and police seeing many communities as enemies (Manning, 2001b). During this period, the disconnect between the police and community was increasingly noticeable and police organizations found themselves cited for civil rights violations, police brutality, corruption, and racism (Johnson, 2004; Uchida, 1997).

While technology integration was seemingly nonexistent for much of this period, the most important technology occurred at the end of this era with the creation of the emergency 911 system, computerized records management system, and computer-aided dispatch. Implementation of this technology, given the context of the time, reasserted the agency as a modern police service (Foster, 2005; Soullière, 1999). Each of these technologies reinforced the professionalism of the agency, as this technology integration improved the ability to respond to calls for service and retained a record of those calls as a means of meeting any external requests for information from watchdog groups or other law enforcement agencies (Chan, 2001).

The 4th stage identified by Soulliere (1999) began in 1980. This stage is signified by the Politicalization of forensics including the development, implementation, and increasing utilization of forensic databases. These databases included the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS), the Combined DNA Indexing System (CODIS), and the National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN). In addition to these networks, the fourth stage brought networked interfaces within the patrol car, via the mobile data terminal, allowing for access to local, regional, and national databases such as NCIC and administrative access to larger databases such as the National Law Enforcement Information Exchange (NDEX) and the National Precursor Log Exchange (NPLEX).
Contextualizing this stage necessitates a brief discussion on the associated fear of crime and concerns agencies were not doing enough to respond to crime and disorder. These concerns existed both within the community and within the agency, as agencies sought to improve their clearance rates and image as crime fighters (Manning, 2001b). In an era marked by “tough on crime” policy, the technology implemented reinforced the image of a modern, professional, crime fighting organization. Every community interaction or traffic stop became an opportunity to identify a wanted criminal or to obtain information on a wanted criminal.

However, while the opportunity existed, agencies were not using these technologies to the fullest of their abilities (Manning, 1996). Take for example, NIBIN, a remarkable system for aiding investigations relating to firearms. This system, at a national level, is grossly underused, often cited because of a lack of interoperability (King, et al, 2013) and funding (Cole, 2014). While the former can be addressed with improvements in the latter, funding has always been a critical issue in policing. Advocates for increased spending on police, argue not for better use of technology – to improve the delivery of services. Rather, they offer increased spending to hire more officers. Critics of this approach often cite that the police, on average, receive the greatest portion of the criminal justice budget. In fact, as the economist Kleiman (2009) calculates, the police received 60% of the 200 billion dollars allocated to the criminal justice system in 2009. Certainly, it is not feasible to increase the percentage allocation and budget crisis throughout many areas has witnessed decreases in the total allotment, leaving police agencies (and other institutions) to do more with less. As a result, agencies had to become smarter (see Chan, 2001).

While Soullière (1999) identifies four stages, some offer the modern police service has entered a new era, one marked by broad information collection. The impetus for this new era of
Chapter 4
Avoiding the Technological Panacea: The Case of the Body Worn Camera

policing reflects key changes taking place following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. This new era has been labeled as the Homeland Security era (Oliver, 2006; Stewart & Morris, 2009; White, 2011), the era of militarization (Balko, 2013; Kraska, 2007), or simply put the Information Era (Hooper, 2014). While scholars disagree on the designation of this new era, they uniformly agree this new era or stage of the police service is marked not by a return to the community, reasserting community-oriented policing. Rather, what marks this new stage is an increase in broad information collection programs (Oliver, 2006; Stewart & Morris, 2009; White, 2011). What is distinct about these programs becomes the myriad of sources agencies have access to or are developing (CCTV, license plate reader systems, facial recognition, UAV’s, body worn cameras and data archiving, information exchanges, etc.).

As our historical analysis reveals, at times police agencies have been both proactive and reactive in their technology integration. Across each stage, technology has aided the professionalization of the modern police service (Deflem, 2002). However, regardless of the nature of the implementation, technology has always been shaped by the organizational culture. Moreover, likely the most apt statement on technology integration is that when you convince officers’ this technology will aid them in completing their tasks, while not increasing their workload or posing a threat to the organization (including reducing the workforce), they will use the technology. However, convincing them also necessitates filtering the proposition through the organizational culture. Therefore, before we can explore the body-worn camera, we must come to understand how organizational culture shapes the implementation of technology.

Understanding Organizational Culture

There are three schools of thought concerning the implementation of technology within an organization. 1) Technology is merely a ploy in power by administrators to demonstrate
Chapter 4

Avoiding the Technological Panacea: The Case of the Body Worn Camera

"professionalism" regardless of how the technology is actually used, 2) Technology modifies police practice, and 3) Technology is simply used to replicate traditional police practice and has not brought about any substantive changes.

A metaphor within policing asks if the police are the edge of the knife or the knife. In essence, the metaphor asks if the police are acting or are they acted upon. Depending the scholar’s viewpoint, the outcome will differ, though in the context of technology integration it becomes clearer to see the police as almost always acting. As Crank (2014) offered the police are highly resistant to change and even with significant outside pressure they change when it is advantageous to the organization. Likely, the best explanation for why this is occurring comes from Chan (2001) and Manning (2001a), both offering that agencies are highly risk aversive. This aversion to risk, manifests in an increased opportunity for failure, concerns over liability, potential for increased exposure (with the perception it will increase criticism of the agency), and a myriad of other concerns. Some are rightfully a concern, as increased access to police data, comes with the potential for increased criticism of that data as it lacks the necessary filter and contextualization (Chan, 2001).

Technology as Symbolic Capital

Manning (1992) offers technology integrations have primarily existed as symbolic capital for police administrators reinforcing the image of a modern and professional police service regardless of its utilization or costs to the agency. Many of the technologies offered to be symbolic reflect either their return-on-investment (ROI) or gross underutilization. For example, consider the increasing conversation on unmanned aerial vehicles (or drone technology). While the use of UAVs hold the potential to be highly beneficial to an agency, by way of a resource
Chapter 4
Avoiding the Technological Panacea: The Case of the Body Worn Camera

multiplier\(^1\), initial research suggests many early adopters of UAV programs seek them out not because they are necessary. Rather, they are the latest “cool technology”. Despite UAVs having the potential for improving the delivery of services, they become relegated to rare uses, or props put on display embodying the perception of an agency on the technological cusp.

*Technology Modifies Police Practice*

While only one transformative technology exists, implementations of technology have influenced police practice. Consider the case of the mobile data terminal, or in-car computer. Giarcano and Heaton (2008) suggested that when computers were placed into patrol cars, incident reports for minor crimes witnessed a significant increase in disorder based offenses. Prior, officers would informally address these issues. However, the arrival of the MDT, created an information trial as these calls for service were much more difficult to ignore, or address informally. The latter was much more common towards the end of a shift. Prior, the public drunkard was taken home (or spent the night in the drunk tank), the juvenile loitering either taken home or a call was placed to the parents. However, with the computer in the patrol car, an officer’s ability to avoid work became much more difficult as supervisors were but a message away and the expectations to make arrests (i.e. generate numbers) were increasingly present. From a historical perspective, the arrival of the MDT was co-occurring with a resurgence in criticism of the police for failing to address the rise in crime and disorder. In a “tough on crime” era and the increasing ability to monitor the day-to-day tasking of an officer, the MDT only further moved agencies to disorder-based policing.

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\(^1\) See the use by the Daytona Police Department during Bike Week and other high crowd events for an example of proper use of an unmanned aerial vehicle program.
Chapter 4
Avoiding the Technological Panacea: The Case of the Body Worn Camera

Technology Replicates Existing Practice

Manning (2008; 1992), Chan (2001), Welsh (2002), and Cope (2004) all offer technology reproduces traditional police practice, though each agree that technology is slowly modifying police practice. Specific to the former, Manning (1992) offers technology is primarily symbolic, with symbolism reflecting the perception of what the technology could be used for, in spite of how that technology is actually used. This replication of existing tasks, reflects technology used to demonstrate an organization's high professionalism, while enabling the agency to primarily focus on improving their primary measure of accountability (clearance rates). For example, Chan (2001) in speaking about information technology noted that while agencies could utilize this information to prevent crime it was predominately used as a means of improving identification of criminals (AFIS, CODIS, NCIC) and mitigating harm via requests for information from external watchdog groups and other law enforcement agencies.

Implementing these and other information technology systems ensures the agency is not perceived as unprofessional while also mitigating risk of being unable to provide requested information. For example, agencies collecting race during traffic stops displayed professionalism and could reject external criticism because they were transparent in their policing. This also allowed some agencies to “hide behind their data”. Releasing information to requesters allowed agencies to get out in front of a story and establish the narrative. Allegations of racial profiling could be reimagined as “geographic profiling” (see the NYPD federal lawsuit on the controversial Stop-and-Frisk program).

Reconnecting back to the points from Manning (2008), crime mapping represents a second technological integration replicating existing practice, despite holding the potential to be transformative. Manning (2008) noted that what began as a theoretical study of the spatial and
temporal relationships of crime was reduced to nothing more than digital pushpin maps. What could have been a transformative technology was relegated to a mere replication of prior tasking. Based on his fieldwork in several agencies, Manning (2008) offered a few reasons why organizations were reluctant to fully embrace crime analysis in any meaningful manner.

First, modern agencies are caught in a dualistic dilemma. Agencies were increasingly attempting to implement community policing projects, while also attempting to maximize their efficiency. These conflicting values created a value misalignment causing the organization to resort to its default mandate via a fire brigade mentality (Willis, Mastrofski, & Kochel, 2010). Organizations resorted to mapping incidents, identifying key problem areas, and targeting those problems via saturated targeted patrol (also known as “throwing more bodies at the problem”). Agencies were not concerned about broader factors or issues with this tactic. Rather, the immediate problem subsided, the area was no longer red, and the agency could demonstrate professionalism. This led to the infamous designation of crime analysis as “placing cops on dots”, with little consideration for the broader context or utilization of crime analysis (Manning, 2008).

Second, Manning (2008) highlighted the influence the media had on undermining the transformative potential of this technology. As organizations embraced information technology, they witnessed an increase in request for information (Chan, 2001). However, as the media had become increasingly critical of the police (Erickson, 1991), they would use crime mapping to highlight problems within the community to display not the success of law enforcement but rather crime problems. It is here that the use of crime mapping would be used to display the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the police organization. Crime rates, which become an element of evaluation by the community, become easily displayed and more easily
Chapter 4
Avoiding the Technological Panacea: The Case of the Body Worn Camera

misunderstood. As Manning (2008) noted, agencies were reluctant to utilize crime mapping as it
did not become a source of assistance. Rather, it became a source of criticism.

Thirdly, we must look to the research of Cope (2004), who in writing on the U.K.
experience, expressed a primary limiting factor was an inherent disconnect on what was
organizationally important knowledge. There was a disconnect between the crime analyst and the
patrol officer on what was important knowledge. As Cope (2004) explains, the crime analyst is
trained in the identification of crime patterns and emerging trends across a spatial and temporal
level. Patrol officers want solutions to their problems, not identification of problems that they
already know. Patrol officers seek solutions to the immediate problems, not description of
emerging trends and current hotspots. This organizational misalignment created organizational
conflict inhibiting the full utilization of crime analysis and creation of solutions.

As demonstrated in the prior sections, organizational culture has a profound influence on
technology integration. However, that influence is shaped by the individual, organizational, and
social context of the time (thus the importance of viewing technology integration through a
historical lens). Decades ago, Manning (1992) offered that technology is used to reproduce
traditional police practice. However, the use of technology is slowly modifying police practice.

Contextualizing Recording of Police-Community Interactions

If we view audio and video recording of police-community interactions through a
historical lens and account for the influence of the organizational culture, what appears to be a
recent phenomenon can be traced back decades. As Makin (2016) describes, the history of
imaging technology should be viewed as a counterbalancing between the police and community.
In fact, when we trace the inclusion of, and not necessarily the utilization of, this technology, it
has been entirely reactive. As agencies found themselves criticized for mishandling of events
Chapter 4
Avoiding the Technological Panacea: The Case of the Body Worn Camera
(i.e. civil riots), for police brutality, and for corruption, they attempted to reassert control, not in
countering the claims with video or audio evidence. Rather, reasserting control over the
narrative. Said another way, as agencies found themselves scrutinized over grainy footage, they
held the capacity to “get ahead” of the story and influence the narrative.

The first real opportunity came with the integration of the Mobile Video System (MVS),
also known as the in-car camera. The mechanism for this integration came from the federal
government, specifically the Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing
Services (COPS), attempting to address increasing community complaints of racial profiling by
police agencies. With the implementation of a funding program for agencies, integration of the
MVS reached near saturation starting with about 11% of agencies having the device and after
three years of funding, the majority of agencies had some level of integration.

As research suggests, for many of those early adopters, those prior to the funding
program, their decision to implement a MVS reflected reducing complaints, costly lawsuits, and
improving supervision. However, what afforded them this opportunity was organizational
support, stakeholder support, and most importantly the requisite funds. Results of this integration
were generally mixed (IACP, 2003; Westphal, 2004). Agencies experiencing the greatest
benefits were those integrating the MVS into the daily tasking of the agency, while also
leveraging the additional benefits this technology could provide. Specific to the former, agencies
using footage as a component of supervisory review noted a reduction in officer complaints
(IACP, 2004). Specific to the latter, agencies using the footage for training purposes on best
practices found success in institutionalizing those practices. However, for the vast majority of
agencies, the MVS was relegated to the status of a symbolic technology, a representation of a
modern and professional agency. It held the ability to improve citizen views of police legitimacy,
Chapter 4
Avoiding the Technological Panacea: The Case of the Body Worn Camera

while also demonstrating the willingness for the agency to be transparent in their practices. However, the fixed field of view meant the device was incapable of capturing many of the police-community interactions. As technology progressed, the MVS gave way to a wearable recording device, that device was the body worn camera (BWC).

*The Body Worn Camera*

While the MVS was primarily limited by a fixed field of view (though some manufactures did provide movement tracking), the BWC had no such limitation. The BWC was capable of documenting the entirety of interactions in high definition video and audio (up to 1920x1080). Improvements in the user interface and interoperability allows officers to tag specific details of the interaction (e.g., case number and officer notes) while in the field, streamlining documentation of events, though tagging still remains time consuming (see Makin (2016) for discussion on officer perspectives on using the device).

The earliest known implementation study on the BWC traces back to the United Kingdom, specifically the Plymouth Head Camera Project. Interestingly, the catalyst for this integration was not national criticism of the police or a high profile event. Rather, the intentions were to evaluate the influence the device would have on improving police practice (streamlining arrests, reducing anti-social behavior and violence, and improving perceptions of trust). Results of the pilot study suggested the integration improved officer safety (18% reduction in officer wounding), reduced crime, improved crime detection, and increased rates of prosecution – specifically among guilty pleas. Additionally, agencies suggested a 40% reduction in complaints, specifically for incivility and excessive use of force (Somer, 2007).

Of the many perceived benefits of the body worn camera (BWC), arguably the most touted to the community is increased transparency and improved citizen views of police
Chapter 4
Avoiding the Technological Panacea: The Case of the Body Worn Camera

legitimacy (Makin, 2016; White, 2013). Community interest in the device, mirrors in many ways the integration of the MVS. Increased attention to police practice and ability to distribute video of those interactions via social media coincided with several high profile police incidents. These high profile incidents, caught up in the 24-hour news cycle, inevitably led to conversations on the device.

From the agency perspective, two additional believed benefits are a reduction in complaints against officers – often attributed to the “civilizing effect” improving the behavior of the officer and that of the individuals they are interacting and improvements in case resolutions (increase acceptance of plea agreements and decrease in time to case closure). Specific to the former, a secondary benefit touted by proponents is a decrease in liability, often a result of frivolous lawsuits (Goodall, 2007) and to the latter, preliminary research suggests there is an improvement in case resolution. Additionally, recent experimental research suggests a “timing effect”, wherein when officers activate the BWC during an intense situation, it appears use of force increases, while initializing the camera at the start of all interactions, appears to decrease the likelihood that force occurs (Ariel et al, 2016).

Initial analyses of pilot studies undertaken in Orlando, Phoenix, Mesa, and Rialto suggest implementation of the BWC yielded positive results. Results of the Mesa and Rialto studies suggest a 60% decline in complaints against officers (White, 2013). This tremendous decrease in claims had a profound impact on the agencies’ resources. Additionally, the Rialto evaluation indicated that use of force by officers decreased by 50% (White, 2013). Research on officer perceptions by Jennings, Fridell, and Lynch (2014) indicated police officers generally supported the device and believed it could improve their fellow officers’ behavior, their behavior, and even that of the community. However, independent evaluations are inconclusive.
Avoiding the Technological Panacea: The Case of the Body Worn Camera

Contextualization of the BWC would initially suggest a similar path to that of the MVS. Gradually, criticism of the police had increased, though the initial catalyst for this increased attention to police practice cannot be traced to a single event. Rather, a myriad of high profile events involving the Occupy Wall Street protests, police (and security guards) shootings of unarmed black males and the protests and riots that would follow, and improper behavior on the part of individual officers (caught on camera) proliferated the media, social media, and social news aggregates. However, unlike prior technology implementations, initial implementers of the BWC lacked catalyst events. Said another way, many of the initial implementers did not have high profile events justifying the integration. For example, research of Willits and Nowacki (2016) suggests agencies who had already adopted other technological innovations are more likely to use BWC programs. They also note that agencies with higher reported use of force numbers were no more likely to adopt a BWC program than other agencies, suggesting that BWC implementation was largely about organizational and not contextual factors. This is corroborated by the preliminary research of Fick (2016) suggesting there is no relationship between media coverage and implementation of the BWC or intentions to pursue the device.

What then explains the implementation of the device? If we return to how agencies have integrated technology in the past and place it into the context of organizational culture, the implementation of the BWC aligns with those early progressive administrators, who have the proper resources and support of the command staff and patrol officers. These leaders recognize the BWC is not a technological panacea and implement not on the belief that it will make them appear to be more modern or professional. Rather, they implement for the broader benefits it brings to the organization, without the belief this device will alleviate the problems within the agency. In talking with several police administrators across the United States, those early
implementers made nearly the same identical statement when asked their primary reason for implementing the device (Makin, 2016). As one interviewee remarked, “I think a lot of what I focused on, from my position as a chief within the community, is to maintain a good level of trust through transparency. And I felt this could be a really, an important way to advance that”.

Discussions on transparency, most often call upon the idiom of “if you have nothing to hide”. A common quip in response to resistance to the BWC is that if agencies have nothing to hide, they should support the implementation. However, implementation for the sake of appearances is a symbolic integration. Implementation of the BWC should improve the delivery of services, not act as mere accountability mechanism. If we do not trust those we select, train, and hire for this profession unless we equip them with a BWC, we ought to consider those we select, train, and hire. As history details, those technologies that have come to slowly modify police practice are those which have been integrated to enhance the delivery of services. The BWC is capable of transforming the modern police service. However, it must come to be viewed as so much more than an accountability device.
Chapter 4
Avoiding the Technological Panacea: The Case of the Body Worn Camera

References


Chapter 4
Avoiding the Technological Panacea: The Case of the Body Worn Camera


Chapter 4
Avoiding the Technological Panacea: The Case of the Body Worn Camera


Chapter 4
Avoiding the Technological Panacea: The Case of the Body Worn Camera