# Analyzing Intelligence From a Top Offender Database

When information is added about offenders to the top offender database, advanced intelligence analysis can be completed that otherwise would be cumbersome. A sample of four analytical processes includes identifying points of intervention, analyzing associations, mapping activity spaces, and linking potential offenders to crime series. A description of the four processes is provided, but it is important to recognize that they are relatively new techniques and have not been evaluated.

Identifying points of intervention is a key goal of any focused deterrence project originating from a top offender database. Because the database considers *all* offenders and is not focused on a particular subgroup such as juvenile gang members, those identified as top offenders are associated with a variety of underlying issues. Some are simply incorrigible, professional criminals with no identifiable underlying issue except a profit motive. Others have chronic problems with joblessness, homelessness, substance abuse, alcoholism, mental health, and a variety of other factors that alone or in combination "cause" their criminal activity.

The database does not have a magical formula that determines the most applicable underlying problem for each offender, but by allowing the collection and management of data from a variety of sources, it can inform a collaborative process that filters offenders accordingly. Such decisions would not be made by an analyst, of course, but rather a working group of analysts, detectives, and managers who consider the totality of the evidence. The database offers such a group a central place to work.

Associations between individuals are managed in a tab within the database for that purpose. If two individuals are listed as suspects or arrestees in the same crime, this section is automatically populated with data on those associations, but the section also allows for manual entry based on intelligence collection.
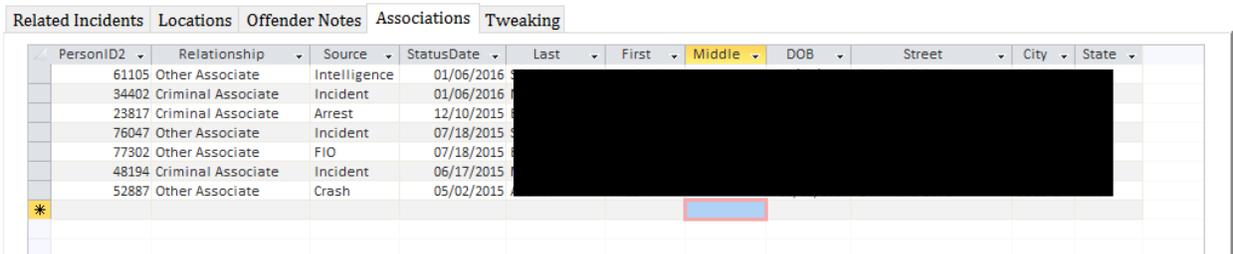
	PersonID2	Relationship	Source	StatusDate	Last	First	Middle	DOB	Street	City	State
	61105	Other Associate	Intelligence	01/06/2016							
	34402	Criminal Associate	Incident	01/06/2016							
	23817	Criminal Associate	Arrest	12/10/2015							
	76047	Other Associate	Incident	07/18/2015							
	77302	Other Associate	FIO	07/18/2015							
	48194	Criminal Associate	Incident	06/17/2015							
	52887	Other Associate	Crash	05/02/2015							
*											

Figure 1: The database supports the collection of known associates from a variety of sources.

This data can then be used to populate association charting software or simply used in internal queries that identify potential associates across multiple degrees of separation. Such methods may help identify individuals at the heart of criminal enterprises, even if they themselves often escape detection.

With the collection of extensive location data on top offenders, offender ***activity spaces*** can be mapped. Because some offenders can confine themselves to small geographic areas—often two or three street segments—while others can be wide-ranging, analysis of activity space can have

implications for the identification of potential offenders in crime series, the localization of different types of interventions, and the strategic application of street-level tactics such as field interviews.
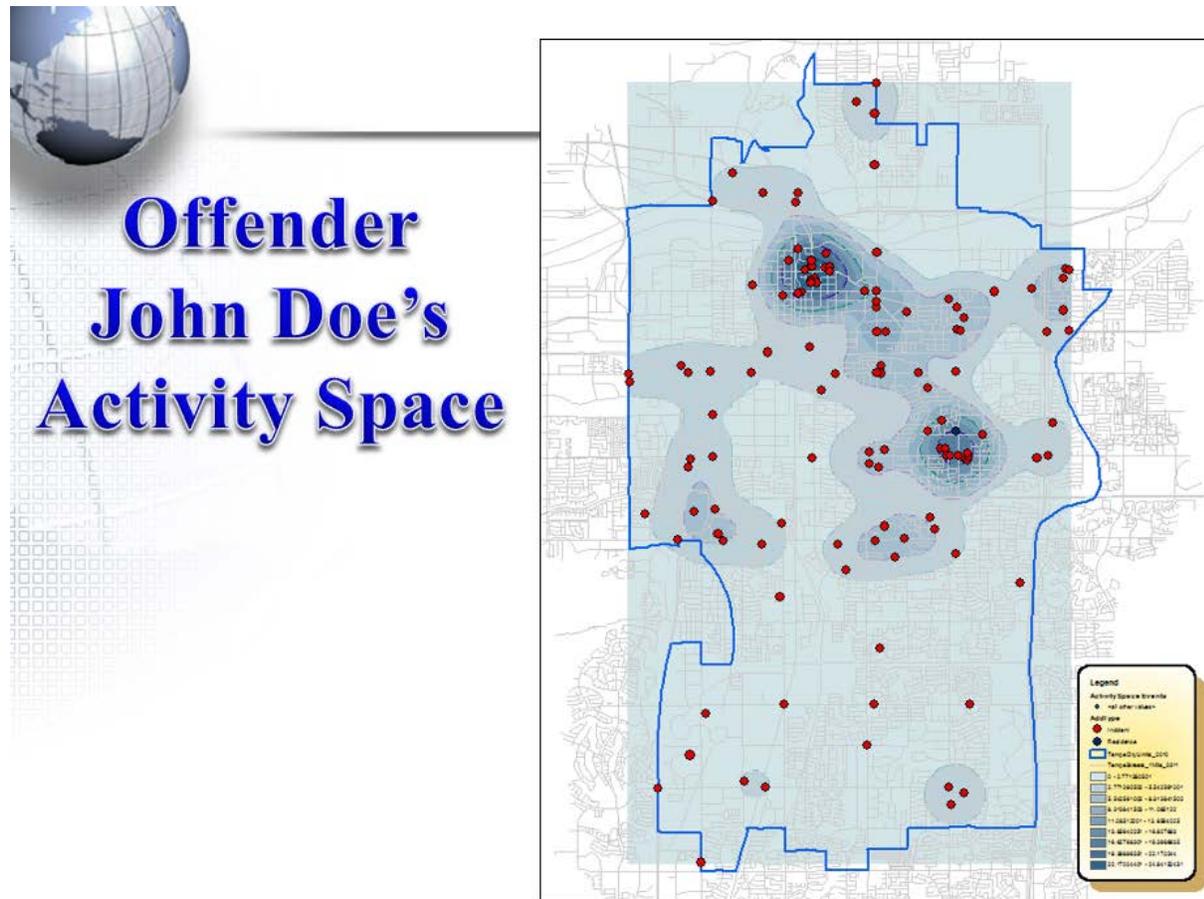

Figure 2: This offender has a wide-ranging activity space but commits most of his crimes within two clusters: one around his house and one in the downtown area.

The final intelligence process from a top offender database is the ability to **link known offenders to active crime series**. When what is known about a serial offender is merged based on the way the offender commits his or her crimes, the crime series factors can be linked to the variables in the offender database and filtered based on the geography of the series (versus the geography of the offender's previous crimes), the types of crimes, and the offender description.

Putting intelligence into action from a top offender database

Collecting, managing, and analyzing data on numerous offender types allows the database to support a wide variety of tactics and strategies, from enforcement to prevention.

Research in this area does not pinpoint a *comprehensive* model that provides guidance on operationalizing a top offender database. However, through various evidence-based sources,

such as the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy and CrimeSolutions.gov, four categories of successful interventions emerge, based on two factors: the offender's *motivation* to commit crime and the offender's *capacity* or ability to commit crime. These are further subdivided into "general" and "specific" categories. The two tables below show these categories for some offender types.

Motivation and Capacity for Offender #1: Drug-Addicted Drug-Store Robber

Focus	General	Specific
Motivation	An unemployed, drug-addicted 23-year-old man is highly motivated to commit crimes to support his heroin habit.	The man needs a fix today and is familiar with a drug store with limited security that he can rob for both cash and painkillers.
Capacity	The man is not currently incarcerated or otherwise indisposed.	The man has access to a firearm, has no one keeping tabs on him this specific day, and has no difficulty getting to the store.

Motivation and Capacity for Offender #2: Campus Date Rapist

Focus	General	Specific
Motivation	A new male college student has fallen in with a group of traditional "frat boys" who encourage the objectification of women and excessive drinking and drug use.	The frat is throwing a party tonight, and its members have challenged each other to "bag" one of the female attendees.
Capacity	The student is at school with minimal supervision, and living with a group that provides social rewards for predatory sexual behavior.	There will be many unsupervised female students at the party, where alcohol will be liberally served, and the student's bedroom is unmonitored and nearby.

These four categories thus give us four different sets of strategies and tactics to intervene these particular offenders' behaviors:

Stopping Offender #1: Drug-Addicted Drug-Store Robber

Focus	General	Specific
Motivation	A focused deterrence program that provides assistance for his addiction and joblessness problems.	Situational crime prevention tactics at target locations.
Capacity	Anything that gets him off the streets, including priority investigation and arrest for previous crimes, priority prosecution, and priority warrant service.	Probation conditions that require him to keep away from certain properties. Electronic monitoring. Required check-ins with probation officers. Officers paying attention to him with field interviews.

Stopping Offender #2: Campus Date-Rapist

Focus	General	Specific
Motivation	Monitoring and dissolution of frats that encourage such behavior; education of new students on proper conduct and encouragement of healthier social relationships.	Banning of sex-related "contests"; education of potential victims to avoid dangerous scenarios.
Capacity	Zero-tolerance policies that evict students for sexual offenses; better supervision of students through resident advisors (RAs), fraternity monitors, and campus police.	Strict alcohol and drug control policies at parties; other strict party policies. Monitoring of social media and provision of authority figures at social events. "No-locked-doors" policies during parties.

In general, the four-category model provides the following types of responses to top offenders:

Focus	General	Specific
Motivation	Focused deterrence programs Dismantling of deviant networks and groups	Social programs that provide alternatives to common crime scenarios (e.g., midnight basketball, alternative proms, social services that provide necessities)
Capacity	Priority investigation Priority prosecution Priority warrant service Probation and parole monitoring Field interviews Probation or parole revocation Sex offender and similar registries	Probation or parole restrictions Electronic monitoring Trespass notices Restraining orders Public housing evictions Alerts to potentially affected targets

In general, a top offender database can support a wide range of tactics and strategic initiatives. A natural extension of the use of a top offender database and its role in operational prioritization and decision making should include its use in the law enforcement agency's CompStat-style meeting for accountability.