MARYLAND COORDINATION AND ANALYSIS CENTER
Intelligence Analysis Section

Officer Safety Bulletin

Phone: 443.436.8800   Fax: 443.436.8825

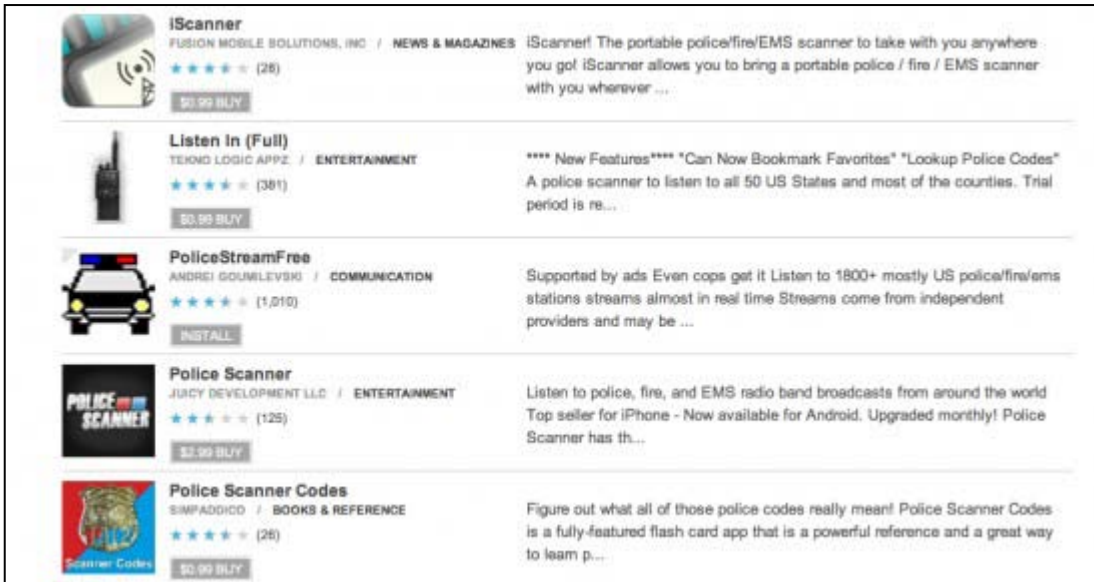*09 December 2011*   *Number 2011 - 0431*

(U) Criminal Use of Police Scanner Apps

(U//FOUO//LES) During several recent contacts with criminal gang members, an identified Maryland law enforcement agency has heard their radio transmissions broadcast over a suspect's smartphone. In one incident, officers pursuing a suspect on foot overheard the suspect listening to the pursuing officers' radio transmission over a smartphone. The radio broadcasts of the agency's primary secure law enforcement channel had an approximate delay of three seconds on the suspect's smartphone.

(U//FOUO//LES) Further investigation revealed that the general public, as well as criminal gang members and associates, are utilizing the website www.radioreference.com to listen to law enforcement secure channels streaming via the Internet. Registration and access to the site is free, with advanced features available to premium subscribers. A customer is able to search radio frequencies throughout the country by state, metro area, city and/or zip code. The website advertises a search for trunked frequencies as well. The frequencies are obtained over the Internet and any cell phone that has web access can listen in.

(U) As of 2010, there were at least 20 scanner applications (apps) on the market for download to smartphones. Some examples are iScanner and 5-0 Radio Police Scanner for iPhones and Police Stream for Android phones. The 5-0 Radio Police Scanner app advertises access to police, fire, aircraft, railroad, and marine frequencies. These apps can be downloaded to the smartphone and at a touch of the screen will allow the user to listen to emergency frequencies via their mobile device.

(U) A few examples of police scanner applications and their descriptions.

(U//FOUO//LES) This situation presents a concern for officer safety. A criminal who is able to listen to law enforcement radio transmissions in near-real time could use the information to further their criminal activity, hide criminal activity, assist in a get-away, gain investigative information or set up an ambush position. Law enforcement needs to maintain a heightened awareness that criminals may exploit emerging technology in order to gain an upper-hand during the planning, execution, and escape phases of their crimes. Law enforcement is asked to contact the Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center (MCAC), Gang Analysis and Training Unit (GATU) Analyst Kelly Sparwasser at ksparwasser@mdsp.org with any further information regarding the criminal use of these applications.

MCAC Customer Satisfaction Survey

Return to:	Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center
	7125 Ambassador Rd. Ste 130 Baltimore, Maryland 21244 Fax 443-436-7748

Marking Instruction: Circle the appropriate response
 Accordingly

1	Strongly Agree
2	Agree
3	Neither agree nor Disagree
4	Disagree
5	Strongly Disagree
N/A	Not Applicable

Dear Customer,

Please take a moment to complete this survey and help evaluate the quality and value of MCAC products. Your response will help us serve you more effectively and efficiently in the future.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance

Product Title: Criminal Use of Police Scanner Apps
Product Date: 09 December 2011

Customer name/agency: (Optional)_____

Quality

1 2 3 4 5 N/A	This product was delivered within established deadlines.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A	The product was timely and relevant to your mission, programs, priorities or initiatives.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A	The product was clear and logical in the presentation of information.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A	The product is reliable i.e., sources well documented and reputable

Value

1 2 3 4 5 N/A	This product contributed to satisfying intelligence gaps.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A	The product resulted in change in investigative or intelligence priorities.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A	The product resulted in more informed decisions concerning investigative or intelligence initiatives and/or resource allocation.
1 2 3 4 5 N/A	The product identified new information associated with pending matters.

Comments