

**Tips and Trends**

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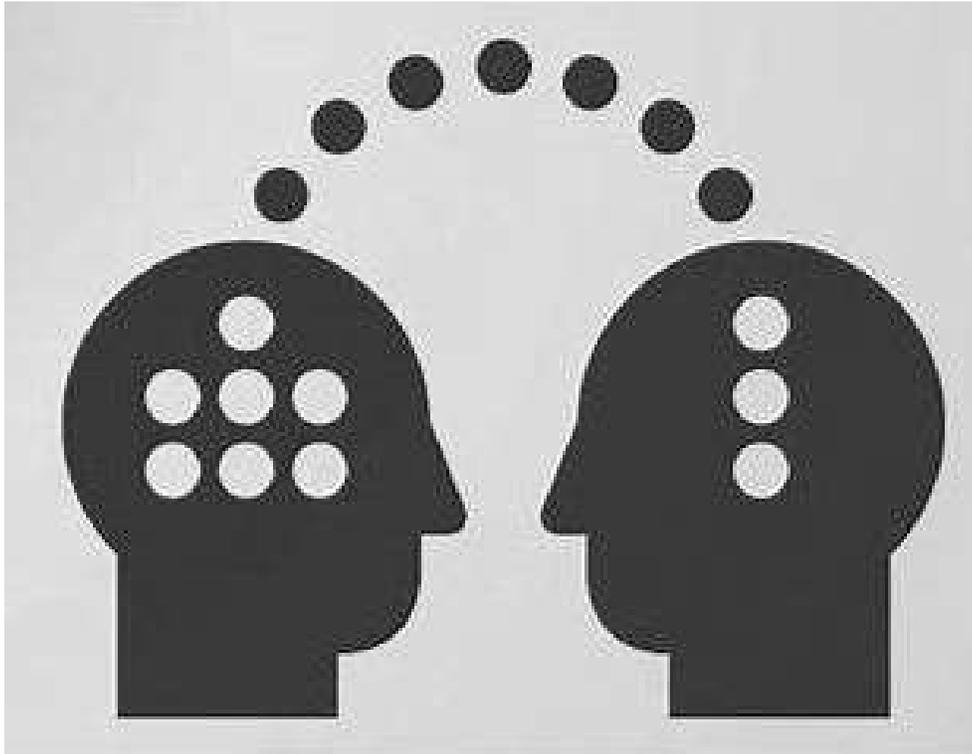
**From** ICJE, Inc. <jimrechel@icje.ccsend.com>

**Date** Tue 1/20/2026 3:19 PM

**To** Phillip Calvert <PCalvert@faulkner.edu>



**New Look for ICJE Newsletter in '26**



ICJE is dedicated to supporting law enforcement professionals, security professionals, legal, criminal justice and private sector personnel with specialized courses and free or low-cost education and training programs.

Our resources aim to enhance skills and knowledge in criminal investigations and effective use of technology.

Some of the recipients of this newsletter are new this month and have been included based upon your attendance at recent seminars, classes or forums in which you requested to receive the ICJE Newsletter as compiled by Jim Rechel. If you decide the topics are not of interest after receiving a few months, you can "Unsubscribe" with the link at the bottom of the newsletter.

We are making a few changes to the layout of the newsletter in 2026 to make it easier to navigate to particular topics:

**Training Desk** - with training and educational resources

**Crime Desk** - with links to crime and society links/articles

**Tech Desk** - technology updates and impact on crime

**Leadership Desk** - assorted information on leadership resources

**Crossroads Desk** - assorted current events

## One Last Thing - items to ponder

Let me know what additional enhancements you would like to see, and I'll try to get it done.

Thanks,  
Jim Rechel  
ICJE Newsletter Editor  
jimrechel@icje.org

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# Training Desk: Educational Opportunities

ICJE specific training has been submitted to the Alabama Crime Prevention Clearinghouse, however we are awaiting all of the necessary funding approvals that go through a myriad of hands within the state. Hopefully next month I'll have a list of ICJE specific training opportunities. In the meantime, here are a few other opportunities:

*(Hover over the titles and click for link to program websites)*

Additional private sector training will be provided next month as well.



## Command Leadership Institute

Jan 26-30, 2026

The Command Leadership Institute (CLI) is an intensive program for law enforcement leaders preparing for command roles. It offers best-

practice strategies and techniques for current and aspiring commanders.



## 3 Day CSI and Forensics

Jan 27-29, 2026.

This class will be taught at Sirchie's Headquarters in Youngsville, NC

Start time for this class is 8:30 am. Back by popular demand - Sirchie is proud to announce the return of the Essentials of Crime Scene Processing, Photography, and Forensic Investigation Course formally known as Crime Scene Technology.



## Intro to the Science of Fingerprints

Feb 23-27, 2026

This class will be held at Sirchie's Headquarters at 100 Hunter Place, Youngsville, NC

Your Instructor is Johnny Leonard, a retired Deputy Director of the City-County Bureau of Identification in Raleigh, NC and is both an I.A.I. Certified Latent Print Examiner and Footwear Examiner.

You need to attend this program if...

- You want to learn the skills necessary to become a fingerprint technician
- You want to recognize and properly classify the eight

fingerprint patterns

- You need training in how to properly compare and individualize inked fingerprints



## FraudSmart

ICJE and The Rechel Group, Inc. recently partnered to research and develop a new course curriculum for staff of financial institutions. For those seeking to energize their frontline staff in improving their situational awareness and providing proactive steps to combat consumer and small business fraud schemes, and active threat mitigation, the programs will complement the Worship Service Safety programs offered to churches around Alabama over the last 5 years.

It is delivered in four 90-minute virtual presentations and customized for the particular needs of the organizations.

[FraudSmart Training](#)



## SafetySmart Logo

Look for the program logo for programs developed in 2026 which will focus on fraud prevention and active threat mitigation/safety education.

# CrimeDesk: Crime and Society



As we step into 2026, the technological and societal shifts of recent years continue to **reshape criminal activity in profound ways**. Looking back over the past five to ten years, I'm struck by how these changes have transformed not just how we work, but the very nature of the threats we face.

Change has become a constant in our field, touching every aspect of our professional lives and urging us to reconsider our strategies for staying ahead of emerging crime trends. Organizations and individuals alike must regularly evaluate their approaches, ensuring they remain agile and prepared for whatever lies ahead.

These **shifts present a paradox**: technology both enables and combats crime. The same innovations that help us collaborate and solve problems also create new vectors for exploitation—from sophisticated cyber fraud to AI-generated scams that can deceive even vigilant victims.

For many in our professions, we all too often see nothing but the negative, yet it's worth remembering that these same tools enhance our investigative capabilities and enable unprecedented cross-jurisdictional cooperation.

At times, I find myself considering how rapid technological advancement has created new challenges and widened gaps in our society—fueling discord and enabling exploitation in ways we're still learning to address. Yet technology has also brought remarkable benefits: collaboration across distances, unprecedented access to information, and the power to solve problems together like never before.

Navigating this landscape requires **humility** to recognize what we don't yet understand and **flexibility** to adapt our approaches as new patterns emerge. By continually reflecting on how we respond to these changes and by listening to diverse perspectives, we can build a more effective and unified response to the challenges ahead.

With that context, here are a couple key trends reshaping criminal activity and law enforcement in 2026. More in the next month.

## **Fraud is Industrialized**

### **Data-driven & Optimized for Scale**

#### **Characteristics**

- Rapid digitization of money, identity, and commerce
- Expansion of remote work, mobile banking, and fintech
- Declining face-to-face verification and increasing reliance on digital trust signals

#### **Crime types**

- Account takeover (ATO)
- Synthetic identity fraud
- Business email compromise (BEC)
- Peer-to-peer payment fraud (Zelle, Venmo, Cash App)
- Romance scams and investment scams (often crypto-linked)

#### **Societal Impact:**

- Erosion of institutional trust
- Increased financial uncertainty
- Asymmetric sophistication between criminals and consumers
- A shift from physical risk to cognitive manipulation

Fraud has effectively replaced burglary as the dominant property crime—not because people are safer, but because value has migrated online.

What This Means for Our Approach:

The industrialization of fraud demands a fundamental shift in how we conceptualize and respond to criminal activity. We can no longer

treat fraud as isolated incidents committed by individual bad actors—we must recognize it as organized, data-driven operations that function like legitimate businesses with R&D, customer acquisition strategies, and continuous optimization.

This shift requires every part of the criminal justice ecosystem to adapt:

**Investigators** (local, state, federal, tribal, and private sector) must move beyond case-by-case thinking to identify patterns, shared infrastructure, and upstream enablers. A single victim may represent thousands targeted by the same industrial operation.

**Prosecutors** need tools and strategies for disrupting entire networks rather than just prosecuting individual perpetrators. Traditional prosecution metrics may miss the bigger picture when one arrest is simply replaced by another operator in the same fraud factory.

**Regulators and policymakers** must understand that criminals are A/B testing their approaches faster than we're updating our defenses. Our regulatory frameworks need to be as agile as the threats we face.

**Private sector and community partners** (including church security, insurance investigators, and financial institutions) are no longer peripheral—they're essential intelligence sources who often see emerging fraud patterns before law enforcement does.

Most critically, we must recognize that industrialized fraud requires an industrialized response: information sharing across jurisdictions and sectors, technological sophistication that matches our adversaries, and collaborative strategies that disrupt the business model itself, not just individual transactions.

**The question is no longer "How do we solve this case?" but "How do we dismantle this operation and prevent the next one from scaling?"**

For instance, the recent health care fraud scam is symbolic of industrial grade fraud.



## **\$14.6 Billion Scam Busted: 324 Charged In DOJ's Biggest Health Care Takedown**

DOJ charges 324 in a record \$14.6B health care fraud bust, seizing millions in cash, crypto, and assets in the largest crackdown of its kind.

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## **Cybercrime and Data Exploitation**

### Characteristics

- Centralization of personal data
- Ubiquitous connectivity
- Poor cyber hygiene across institutions and consumers

### Representative crime types

- Ransomware
- Data breaches and extortion
- Credential stuffing
- SIM swapping

### Societal Impacts:

- The commodification of identity
- Globalized criminal labor markets
- The mismatch between legacy law enforcement models and borderless crime

Notably, perpetrators are often transnational and anonymous, reinforcing a sense of powerlessness among victims. Local law enforcement is often relegated to chasing endless leads down rabbit holes with limited help from the largest financial players.

A recent report by the IRS reflects the growth of digital crime and evidence.



## **IRS-CI issues Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Report showcasing banner investigative results**

Dec. 12, 2025 - \$10.59 billion in financial crimes identified, 25% more search warrants executed and 60% growth in digital evidence seizures

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# **TechDesk: Technology Around Us**

**How False Alarms by Flawed AI Surveillance are Triggering Student Arrests Around the Country | Milwaukee Independent - January 16, 2026**

The teenage girl made an offensive joke while chatting online with her classmates, triggering the school's surveillance software. Before the morning was even over, the Tennessee eighth grader was under arrest. She was interrogated, strip-searched and spent the night in a jail cell, her mother says.

[Read More](#)

A great monthly newsletter I get from Malwarebytes is usually filled with great tips. Thought I would send the link along for those who might be interested. I linked to the January 2026 edition, shown below.

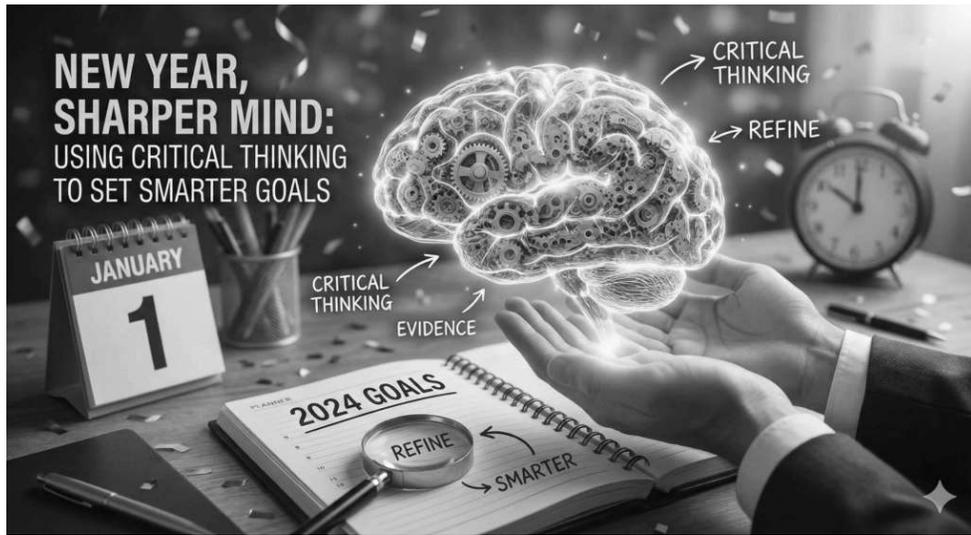


## **Plus: Three platform breaches, two Chrome flaws, and a photo booth privacy fail**

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# **Leadership Desk**



## New Year, Sharper Mind: Using Critical Thinking to Set Smarter Goals

Start the new year with a sharper mind using critical thinking to set smarter goals. Learn strategies to evaluate, plan, and achieve meaningful success.

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## "Crossroads" Desk

Alabama and Tennessee both passed new laws banning "Glock Switches" in 2025. It's an additional tool for prosecutors, but I'm not sure adding another law that duplicates a federal law previously in place will deter the bad actors.

So what exactly does a Glock Switch or similar device do? You'll see why so many are killed or injured when the bad guys possess a firearm with such lethal force in the ATF video below.

Demonstration by the ATF shows how a Glock Switch turns the semi-automatic handgun into an automatic handgun firing many rounds per second.

[Read More](#)



## **"Glock Switches" and Auto Sears**

A closer look at Glock switches and other machine gun conversion devices showing up at crime scenes across the U.S.

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## **One Last Thing**



**A Life Saved - On the Holston River Bridge**

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## **Food for Thought : Generation, After Generation, After Generation**

Matt Ball talks about what impacted his life the most, the difference in the American family farm, helping the next generation and shares his nugget of wisdom.

Maybe we should all take a moment and pray over "the land we farm", for each of us is in the field of life that God granted us. Words of wisdom from a farmer.

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