

Crime

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## Edmonton police chief says 100 new officers needed to police online crime



By Fletcher Kent Reporter

Global News

**WATCH ABOVE: Edmonton's police chief says crime, in many areas, has plateaued, but not in one area: cyber crime. As Fletcher Kent reports, he thinks Edmonton needs more officers.**

In a wide-ranging year-end interview, chief Rod Knecht proudly spoke about the work Edmonton police have done in 2016.

However, in computer crimes, Knecht acknowledged there's work to do.

"We as a police service, we're a little bit behind in that area," Knecht said.

"We could invest another hundred people in just online crime. I think we're playing catch up in an extreme way right now."

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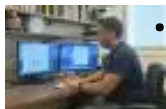


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Knecht pointed out every crime perpetrated in the real world can and does happen in the virtual one, too.

For example, in September, fraudsters used the internet to sell fake tickets to the inaugural Rogers Place concert.

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This summer, hackers took control of nearly 10,000 University of Calgary email addresses. They asked for, and received, \$20,000 in order to return control to the owners.

Police in every city are used to rental scams and puppy scams. In each case, thieves use the internet to lure victims and convince them to send money for a product or service they never intend to provide.

criminals often evolve faster than police do.

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Knecht said it's time for that to change.

"I think we're at a tipping point in policing," Knecht said. "The future of policing is certainly going to be in the cyber world. You're going to see us evolve more and more with technology."

How they evolve may look different than the current model. Knecht said he wants 100 more people, not police.

“A lot of those we don’t necessarily have to hire a police officer to do those investigations. We’d probably be better off hiring a 15 or 16-year-old. They’re good at that stuff.”

Computer hacker and cyber security expert Brad Haines said hiring 100 more people to help police the internet would be a good start. Even more is needed.

“Law enforcement in general is woefully and most hilariously unprepared for the next wave of computer crimes.”

Haines said all police need to better understand the cyber world.

Evidence isn’t just weapons and photos. He said police need to better understand the ones and the zeros and how to investigate those.

Haines recommends more staff and more training for officers in all departments because computers are everywhere.

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Haines also notes there are many more jurisdictional problems created in computer investigations. Often the criminal is in a different part of the world from the victim. It’s hard to find them and if they do, it’s hard to do much about it.

It’s possible, but it takes more work and, therefore, more resources.

“This is the new reality,” Haines said. “We can’t put that genie back in the bottle. We can only adapt to that brave new world that we have.”

These policing problems are not limited to Edmonton.

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police has highlighted computer crimes as an issue for all services.

In August, the association put forward a controversial proposal that, if adopted, would give the courts the power to compel suspects to provide passwords to electronic devices.

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