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SECURITY AND SAFETY FOR ALL

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TOP 10 SECURITY TECHNOLOGY TRENDS FOR 2018

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ABU DHABI SPOTLIGHT
WE'RE IN A WINTER STATE OF MIND

ESSENTIAL GUIDE ON THE 5% TAX IN THE UAE

THE WHAT, WHY AND HOW OF VAT

UAE	5.000	AED
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Kuwait	0.500	DK
Bahrain	0.500	BD
Oman	0.500	OR

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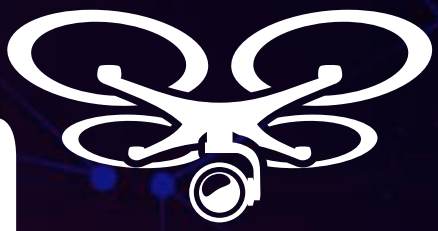


TOP 10 SECURITY TECHNOLOGIES FOR 2018

WITH THE LEAPS IN DEVELOPMENT EVERY YEAR, ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS AND OTHER TOOLS USED IN DEFENCE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT ARE BECOMING MORE COMPACT AND WIDELY ACCESSIBLE. HERE ARE THE TOP TRENDS TO WATCH OUT FOR

BY ORLANDO WILSON

There are a lot of developments in technology that can greatly enhance the effectiveness for those in the security, defence, and law enforcement fields.

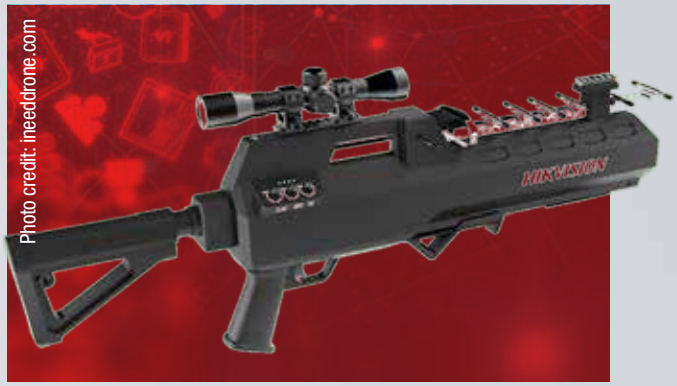
In the mid-90s, when I got my first fax machine, I thought it was a very high-speed bit of equipment, and it served me well on numerous international dealings. Then came easy access to the Internet, digital cameras, laptops and now, we can do everything and more through our smartphones. Technology is moving extremely fast in all sectors these days, and we need to constantly evaluate what's on the market that can help to advance our training and improve our operational success rates.

Here's the list of top 10 areas of development that we all need to keep an eye on in 2018.

1 Drone

These days, aerial drones are very common and commercially available to the public, but security experts believe that their potential in security and law enforcement operations is still in its infancy. Leigh Licence of the UK-based L.S.L UAV Solutions shared his opinion on how aerial drones will be developing in 2018 and beyond. Leigh explained that the problem with a lot of the compact drones was their battery life, which tended to be limited to about 30 minutes.

Ideally a compact, affordable drone, with a battery life of up to two hours, equipped with high-definition and thermal cameras would be a very valuable piece of equipment for police and security patrol officers. Leigh said that an affordable drone such as the Black Hornet, which could be quickly deployed for search and rescue operations or locating and apprehending criminals, could save the lives of accident victims and police officers alike.

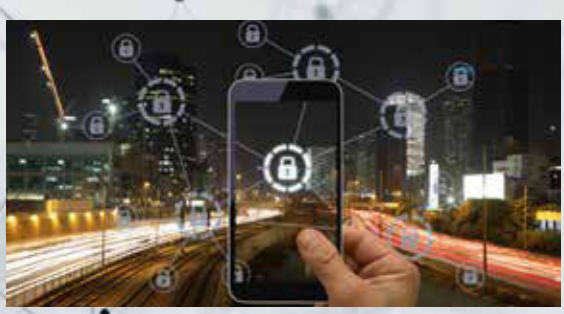


2 Drone defence

The popularity and commercial availability of aerial drones has also brought a vast array of problems for law enforcement and public safety agencies. Drones have been used for illegal surveillance, drug trafficking and been weaponised by terrorists. As aerial drones develop, so will the need for more advanced drone jammers and defence systems. Airports in the UAE have suffered from flight delays due to irresponsible people flying drones in their airspace; such reckless behaviour could lead to a plane crash.

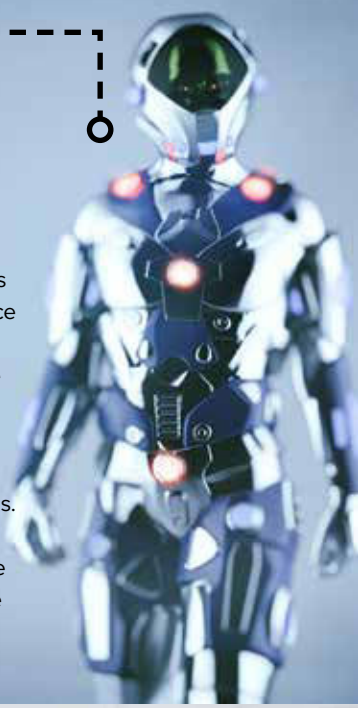
Companies are developing a wide array of anti-drone technologies, from jammers, spoofers, hackers, destroyers, snaggers and even training eagles and hawks to attack them. Such items as the Hikvision Anti-Drone Gun has got media attention, as it claims to be able to defeat drones up to 1200m away. But if you're protecting, say an airfield, then a more permanent solution is required. It'll be interesting to see what essential and needed solutions 2018 brings to the market.

3 Security smartphone applications



Today, everyone seems to have a smartphone, and in most places in the world, you have access to the Internet. A lot of people run their whole life from their mobile phones, so why not use it for their personal security and wellbeing as well? Aidpass is a smartphone application being developed Chamel Akl of Akl Elite Corp, which provides its subscribers with emergency medical response services. Chamel explained that the idea behind Aidpass was to provide lifeline services to those who may be travelling internationally and away from their regular doctors; or those involved in a crisis or emergency, such as a natural disaster, medical emergency or terrorist attack and need immediate advice and support. We can be sure the smart phones are here to stay so we can look forward to new developments in 2018 that will be applicable to the security, defence, and law enforcement industries.

4 Robots



It's a matter of time before robots take over a lot of the routine work of security and law enforcement personnel. Dubai has already introduced a robot police officer for patrolling the city's malls, enabling the public to report any crimes and get general information. Dubai intends to expand its robot force to cover customer service duties, and believes that by 2030, robots will make up 25 per cent of its police force. There are ethical questions on whether robots should be weaponised, but weaponised robots are being used with excellent results by some military and security forces for tactical and combat applications.

What worries experts is what will happen when robots with artificial intelligence start to be weaponised. Will they be capable of making the same life-or-death decisions as humans? And can they be fully controlled?

5 Driverless vehicles

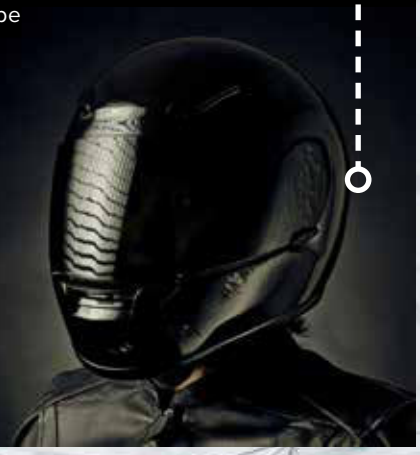
In addition to robot police officers, Dubai is also introducing driverless patrol vehicles that are equipped with high-definition cameras capable of facial recognition and identifying small objects over 300m away. For routine patrols, driverless cars controlled from a central control room can cover large areas, and with the use of their facial recognition technology, car number plate recognition applications and thermal imaging cameras, they can identify suspicious or criminal activity. When such activities are identified, the control room can dispatch human officers to investigate and apprehend the criminals.

Not only are driverless cars going to be used for law enforcement, but driverless boats are being developed, too, by various naval forces. In 2017, China employed driverless safety boats on a lake in Hefei after 15 people drowned there the previous year. The boats are fitted with an array of cameras and sensors that are used to alert manned patrol boats about swimmers in difficulty or about people who have strayed into dangerous areas. So, I expect driverless vehicles on various platforms and applications will appear on the market in 2018.

“Not only are driverless cars going to be used for law enforcement, but driverless boats are being developed, too, by various naval forces

6 Bullet-proof products

With the rise in global terrorism and experts predicting more to come, everyone living in a major city should consider how they’d respond if caught up in an active shooter terrorist attack. Dimitrios Kalogeridis of the Elite Warrior Group (EWG) based in Athens, Greece, spoke about developments in active shooter response for a number of years. EWG is developing bullet-proof solutions for civilians and law enforcement and Dimitrios shared how he saw the industry developing in 2018. Dimitrios explained that there were many companies offering bullet-proof vests and even bullet-proof fashion lines, all of which tends to be uncomfortable to wear. Dimitrios said, “We’re developing products that are light, practical and in a crisis situation, will be quick to deploy and easy to use. In an active shooter situation, people need to have protection with them, and be able to use it as quickly as possible! It’s very sad that we have to consider such things, but this is the reality of the world we live in.”



7 Firearms

Goran Todorović, owner of the leading Serbian arms company GIM, talked about what developments he sees for the small arms industry in 2018. He said that GIM was working on developing new weapons systems for law enforcement that were designed around the FN 5.7mm cartridge. Goran explained that the 5.7mm calibre round was very potent and accurate, but there were limited pistol and rifle platforms designed for it.

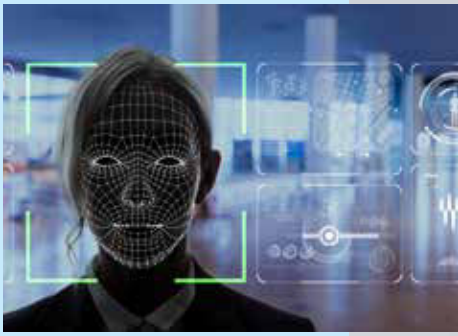
GIM is working to develop more user-friendly firearms that can maximise the potential of the 5.7mm round and give law enforcement and security officers compact, accurate and reliable handguns and sub-machine guns that have the performance capabilities of assault rifles. With the upsurge of terrorist attacks elsewhere, frontline police and security officers need to be armed with compact weapons that don’t inhibit their routine tasks but are able to outperform whatever organised criminals or terrorists may have in their arsenal.

8 First-aid

Photo credit: cresilon website

Police and security personnel are usually the first on the scene of accidents and violent encounters and need to understand basic first-aid. Over the past few years, there have been big improvements in the equipment available to first responders. One interesting product on the market is called TraumaGel, from the US company, Cresilon. It's a gel product that can be injected into wounds to stop the bleeding. The product is intended for military and emergency medical usage and currently awaiting approval from the Food and Drug Administration to be sold on the US market. What is interesting about TraumaGel is its ease of use. In a multi-casualty situation, a first responder could treat multiple casualties within the time it would take to apply one tourniquet. Hopefully, TraumaGel can do what it claims and gets the approval required.

9 Facial recognition



Even the new iPhone X has a facial recognition feature, so we can expect this technology to become a lot more affordable and widely used. Facial recognition applications have been around for many years – they first started to be developed in the mid-60s and have generally only been used by government agencies for the security of high-threat locations and events.

Over the past few years with the development of high-definition cameras, the Internet, and smartphones etc, facial recognition applications are more easily available and I expect will be developed more for operational use by police and security services. Such companies as the Italian Eurotech S.p.A are offering handheld facial recognition devices, such as the SekuFACE, which could be used by field and patrol officers for identity checks. In 2018, we'll be seeing a lot more use of facial recognition technology in our everyday lives.

10 Satellite surveillance

I regularly use Google Maps and Google Earth for the planning of training courses and security operations. When I was working in Nigeria in 2012, I used the satellite views on Google Maps to locate tracks, river crossing etc for training and operations. That was over five years ago, which in the tech world might as well be 50 years. In 2017, Google sold the company that it was using to developing real-time satellite imaging services, "Terra Bella", to Plant Labs Inc., which is looking to further develop this service.

With more commercial satellites being launched, real-time satellite surveillance services, will be commercially available very soon. So, in the near future, a suspected criminal could be followed and watched in Al Ain, Karachi, Manila or anywhere else in the world by a police officer in the UAE who has the satellite surveillance app on his smartphone.

We can expect some excellent technological developments in 2018. We need to learn how to use and apply technology but not to become dependent on it. People still need to be trained how to operate without the luxury of state-of-the-art gizmos and gadgets. If there's a natural disaster or the power grid goes down, police, security and defence agencies still need to be able to operate, and they will, because of their discipline, training, structure, and leadership.

About the writer: Orlando Wilson has worked in the security industry internationally for over 28 years. He is the chief consultant for Risks Inc. and based in Miami but spends much of his time travelling and providing a wide range of kidnapping prevention and tactical training services to private and government clients.