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Title	Self Evident App Report
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Summary	A comprehensive report into the app Self Evident
Creating Branch, Code & OCU	Territorial Policing
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BRIEFING NOTE - Self Evident App Report

Report by PC Choudhury on behalf of Continuous Policing Improvement Command

Executive Summary

Self Evident is an app available on smart devices, created for use by the general public as an alternative method to reporting criminal activity or other relevant incidents to the Police with the ability to upload verified, CPS approved evidence & provide first accounts in a structured Police style report.

Since launch Self Evident has succeeded in:

- Becoming the leading, most practical crime reporting app on Android & Apple
- Crucially assisting the public & Police to capture & exhibit evidence with ease
- Saving Police time & reducing the barrier to reporting by creating a solution to the digital incapability of Police services
- Allowing for better triaging of reports entering Police systems
- Being recognised by the CPS as a secure & legitimate evidence provider
- Providing Police officers evidence required to arrest & charge suspects
- Securing convictions at court, based on evidence gathered on Self Evident

Self Evident has not received any public or internal promotion by the MET, thus it has remained overlooked & underutilised. Funding is due to be cut in April 2018 which may lead to its termination.

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Background Papers:

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SELF EVIDENT APP REPORT

1.1 Self Evident

Self Evident is a free smartphone app provided by the social media enterprise *Just Evidence* and is promoted by the charity *Witness Confident*.

The app acts as a non-anonymous reporting channel which can be used by the public to transmit and validate media from smart phones and tablets in a secure and evidentially logged manner to the Police.

This is the first reporting method in the world that allows users to report crimes and incidents, with evidence already attached, via a dedicated smartphone application.

The purpose of the app is to:

- a) Help the Police
- b) Secure valuable evidence for court
- c) Support victims and witnesses
- d) Reduce crime

HATE CRIME?

The *Self Evident* app is a free and easy way to report any crime and send evidence to the Met Police. And if it's a hate incident, you can request support from independent charities.



More information at www.WitnessConfident.org

MAYOR OF LONDON
OFFICE FOR POLICING AND CRIME



METROPOLITAN
POLICE

USE THE SELF EVIDENT APP TO...



CAPTURE EVIDENCE
show what happened
with photos & video



RECORD A STATEMENT
describe the incident
in your own words



SAVE & SEND REPORTS
you choose - to the police
or specialist support

*'It's really helpful you can describe the event
and capture the emotion.'* - Hate Crime Victim

*'It gives you confidence. It's almost like
having a witness with you.'* - Stalking Victim

Search 'Self Evident' on Apple & Google app stores



1.2 Developers

The people behind the Self Evident App are based at the digital social media enterprise *Just Evidence* and the charity *Witness Confident*. The team includes Neil Svensen (the CEO of *Rufus Leonard*, the brand experience leaders); Alex Graham (the chair of the *Scott Trust*, owners of the *Guardian*); Anthony Heaton-Armstrong (a barrister and leading author on *Witness Evidence*); Guy Dehn (the campaigner behind the UK whistleblowing legislation) and Matt Hale (a former managing director from *Bank of America Merrill Lynch*).

On the IT side the coding team includes Richard Groves who works on apps for the *BBC*; Matt Mauger, now a senior technician for *Microsoft*; and Ricardo Monreal who now heads IT security for the *Chilean Foreign Office*.

1.3 External Agencies

Currently Self Evident is part funded by MOPAC using their Victim Budget. However MOPAC believe that this is ultimately a system built for Policing needs and should be aligned as such, therefore the funding will only last until April 2018. At this point there has been no corporate endorsement or

The leaflets, as displayed on this page,
were designed for and funded by MOPAC.

acknowledgement of Self Evident by any Police force, except for the Metropolitan Police and Sussex.

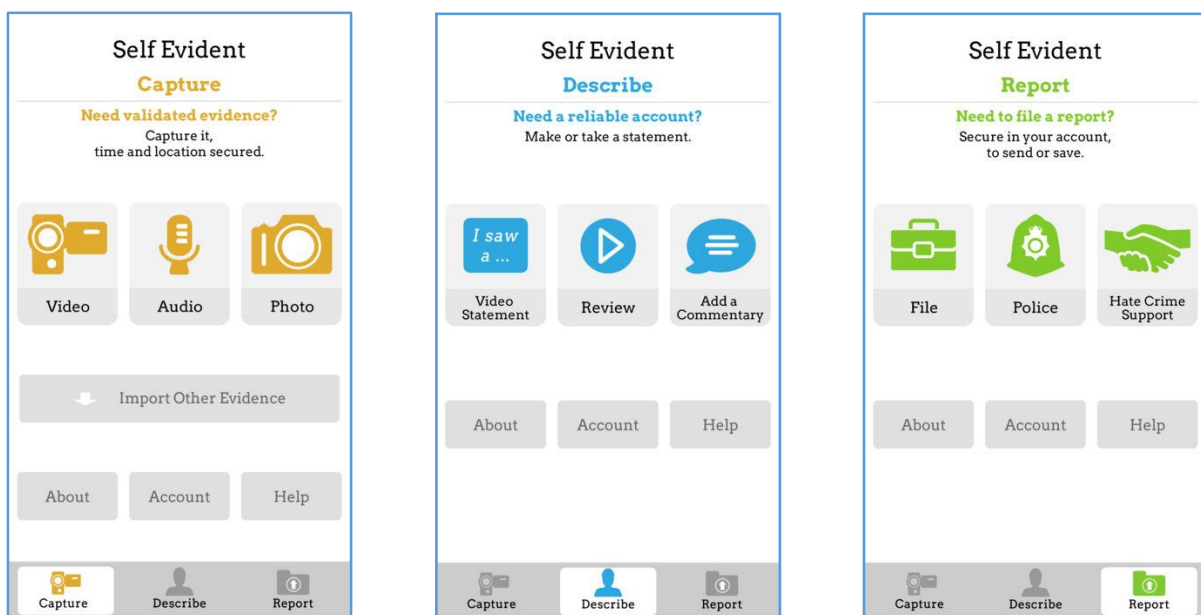
2.1 The App

There are various features grouped into three categories. Each category is given a separate landing page on the app:

1. **Capture** – Collect validated evidence or upload evidence to the app
 - a. **Video** – Record a video
 - b. **Audio** – Record an audio recording
 - c. **Photo** – Take a picture
 - d. **Import Other Evidence** – Upload photos and videos from the smart phone, tablet device, CCTV system or vehicle dashboard camera
2. **Describe** – Create a statement
 - a. **Video Statement** – Record a video of the victim or witness giving their early account with six prompt pages to reflect and inform a standard Police statement
 - b. **Review** – Delete or report materials recorded or uploaded to the app
 - c. **Add a Commentary** – Add an audio commentary over a video
3. **Report** – Create and send reports
 - a. **File** – Create, save and send a report with attached evidence to user's own secure account or other desired email address
 - b. **Police** – Create, save and send a report with attached evidence to Police. Also gives users the option to call Police in cases of emergency
 - c. **Hate Crime Support** – Create, save and send a report with attached evidence to relevant agencies for appropriate victim care



The **Add a Commentary** feature is rarely used. The developers are considering the addition of a new feature allowing users to upload a **Victim Personal Statement**, with prompts for the victim allowing for an effective VPS to be recorded. This has also been suggested to the developers by CPS.



3.1 Version differences

The app is available on Apple IOS and Android smart phones and tablets. Currently the Android version is missing the video elements due to compression restrictions which limited what could be uploaded in an efficient and timely process. Another reason is because of the splintered Android market in which there are over 24,000 different products available, as opposed to IOS phones which are dedicated to only Apple products. This caused issues as it was too costly for the social enterprise to refine the app for every Android product on the market.



This was a problem when the app was first being developed. However over the past three years the Android platform has become more optimised to allow for easier app development and unified features across all products. *Just Evidence* has now begun to explore the video features for Android to ensure that both the Apple IOS and Android versions are identical.

3.2 Public Users

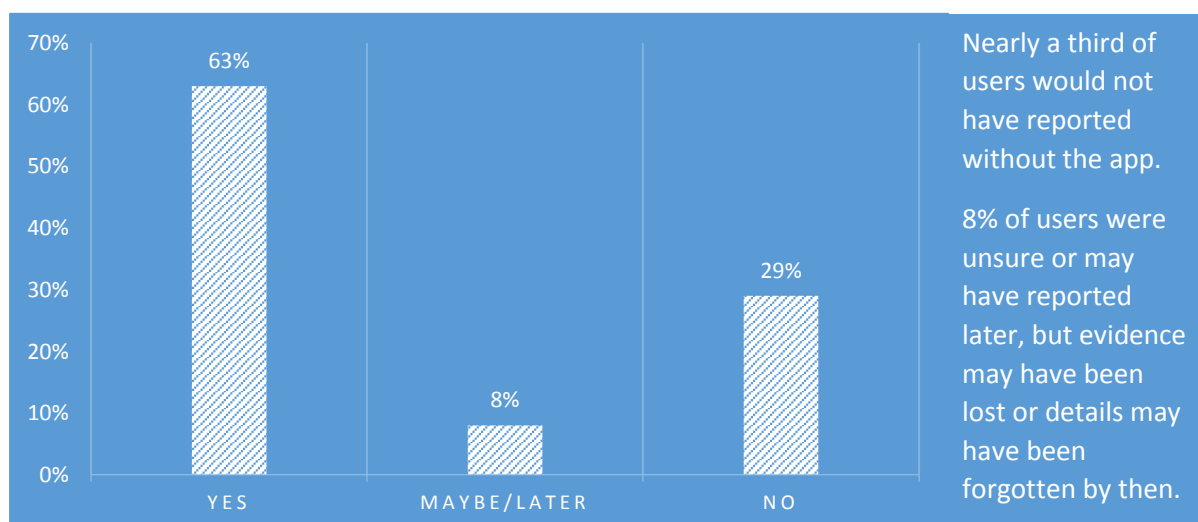
Self Evident has been downloaded over 30,000 times and currently has over 24,000 registered users. Every user must verify their account with a contact number and enter an email address before they can access app features and upload any materials to the Police. This verification process is quick and simple, and it is explained to the user why these details are required. It sends an SMS message to the contact number containing a unique verification code. This is used to gain access to the app and enables Police to contact the user. The app cannot be used for anonymous reports and so the risk of hoax reports does not arise.

Once verified the user has access to a number of features which allows them to capture and send information to the Police.

When information is sent to the Police the user receives a confirmation email. It is then the responsibility of the relevant Police force to act accordingly.

3.3 User Feedback

Just Evidence conducted a survey and data analysis to assess app usage and user experiences in London since 15th October 2015 up until 7th October 2017. The developers attempted to contact all users who had used the app to report and send evidence to the Police. 93 users agreed to complete the survey.



4.1 Self Evident Within the Police

6% of users had been recommended the app by MET officers and there are currently over 100 registered users who used MET email addresses for their Self Evident account. Both of these facts indicate that despite not being an official Police reporting channel, a distinct lack of Police endorsement and no official promotion within the MET, Self Evident fulfils an operational function within the Police that otherwise wouldn't be possible.

MET Police Users

Pilot – 2 users

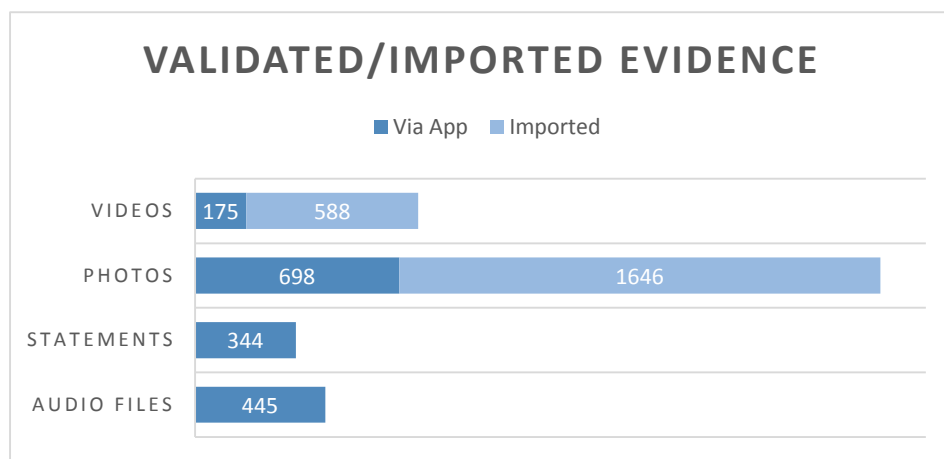
2016 – 7 users

2017 – 92 users

There is an obvious and striking upwards trend of MET officers utilising the app over time which is expected to continue.

One respondent turned out to be a Met officer who had used the app to get evidence from a mother of her missing daughter onto the MPS systems as it was the only practical way to do this.

4.2 Study Results



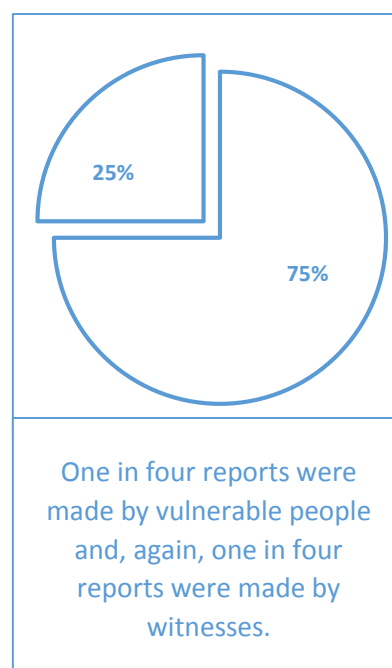
Over the past few years about 3,000 crime reports have been created through use of the app, with almost 1,000 of these within London. About 70% of these reports had evidence attached. The bar graph on

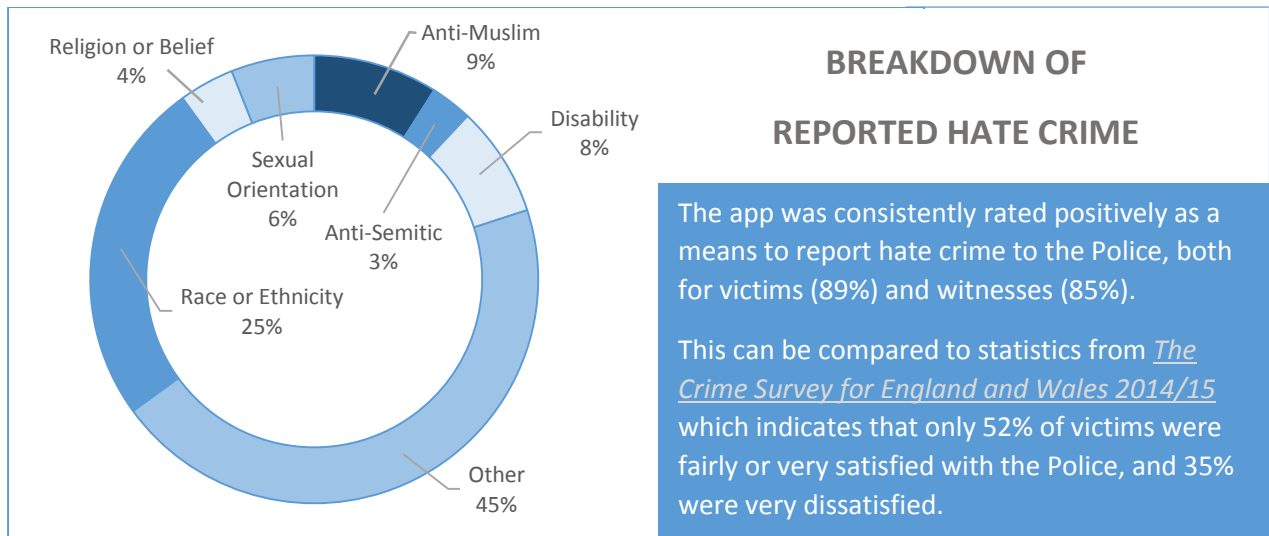
the left displays what evidence has been sent to Police using the app. It differentiates between evidence created within and validated by the app and evidence imported into the app.

Crime Type*	Total	Percentage of Reports**
Hate Crime	157	25%
Anti-Social Behaviour	141	22%
Theft & Handling	72	11%
Harassment & Stalking	67	10%
Fraud & Forgery	37	6%
Domestic Violence	32	5%
Criminal Damage	27	4%
Street Violence	23	4%
Burglary	18	3%
Mugging or Robbery	15	2%
Sexual Offence	11	2%
Terrorism	7	1%
Knife Crime	6	1%

*The types above do not show 'Motoring' and 'Other' crimes

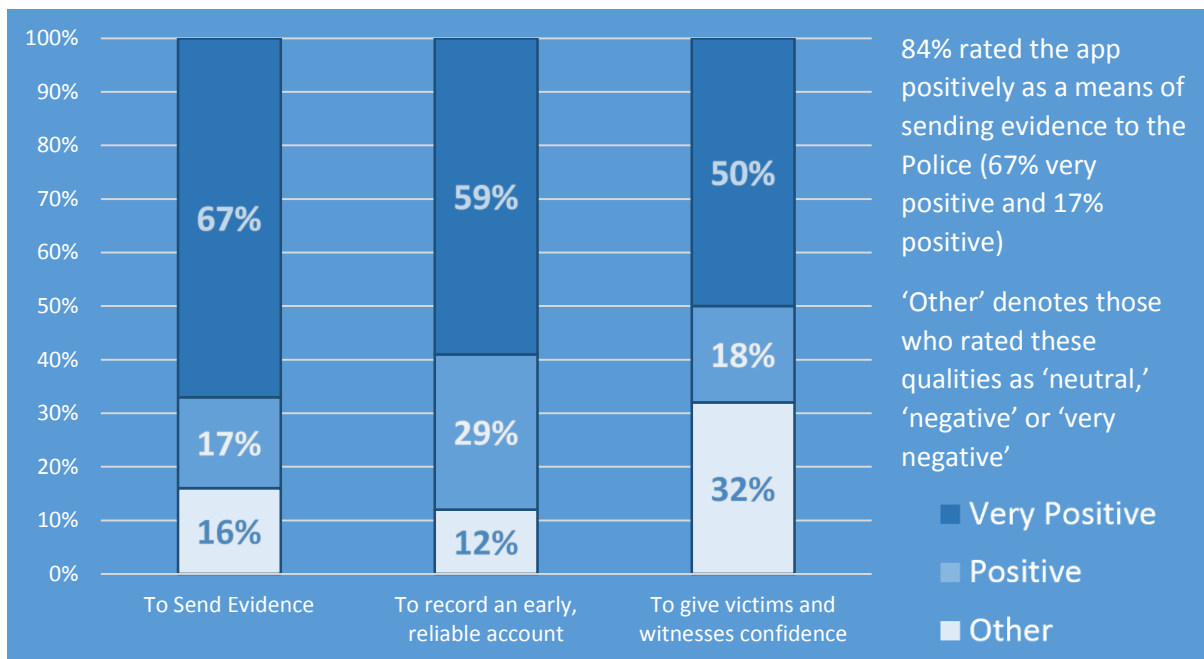
**Total number of 639 reports





5.1 A Helpful Reporting Channel

Self Evident is the only reporting channel which allows victims and witnesses to directly send evidence to Police at the time of reporting, which is a major unique advantage of the app, and something that users care about, considering the results from the study.



5.2 Evidential Reliability

Evidence captured on the app is given a unique reference number and an audit trail is created even before it is uploaded to the secure server. The audit trail shows the date, time, file size and location evidence was taken and uploaded. Additionally it shows every time the data has been accessed and downloaded from the server. This practice ensures continuity throughout the investigation and prosecution process. It is known that a number of cases have been taken to trial and evidence provided by Self Evident has successfully lead to convictions, such as domestic abuse cases and drugs related cases. There have been no reports of Self Evident materials being turned away by any courts.

6.1 Structure and Adaptability

The core function of the app is simple. It allows users to send information to Police. The functions listed above are simple and can be altered or removed easily. Similarly, new functions can be coded and added into the app with ease, so any difficulty is dependent on the complexity of the functions themselves.

The structure of the app, presently the three category structure, will likewise be easy to change and adapt as necessary, including addition or subtraction of categories.

6.2 Scalability

The app has been designed with scalability in mind. It is currently operating across England and Wales, and this has happened smoothly since its launch. Adding a new Police force simply requires the most appropriate mailbox for new incidents to be sent to. For example, any incidents occurring in London will automatically be sent to the MET CCC (Central Communications Command) mailbox, from which they are then filtered through to the correct unit to deal with.

6.3 Back End Integration

Although the app is flexible and can be adapted for various uses, the app will be most efficient for the MET, and will provide the best customer satisfaction, once Self Evident has become aligned with a Police organisation, as this will allow for back end integration.

Back end integration essentially means that the app is updated to allow it to feed into Police systems, providing an unbroken flow of interaction between both entities, with the potential to send data back to the user.

The app would then better cater to the needs of the Police organisation and will enhance the triage process.

Early witness statements, digital evidence and the validation feature means that app-captured evidence is viewed by the CPS as 'good to go,' so back end integration will also help where cases go to CPS and court.

A great benefit to back end integration is that certain functions of the app can be edited to better collaborate with Police systems. Report flags can be renamed to enhance triage and response, and the flow of information can be controlled to ensure the right evidence is sent to the right units and agencies. Additionally the app and its reporting style complements and enhances online reporting systems, such as the new beta MET site and nationwide hate crime reporting system TrueVision. Perhaps most importantly it would become possible for reports to be tracked from the point of reporting up until the outcome, which can give the organisation a better indication of crime statistics, especially if Self Evident offers a reporting solution to those who would not have reported otherwise, which is 29% of the user base.

As the various charts in this report show, the app provides a valuable source of data for Police, including vulnerability, location, crime type, hate crime type and victim/witness demographics. With back end integration this data will have added value.

6.4 Report Flags

App reports arrive to the Police with flags highlighting key aspects such as vulnerability, the crime type that help the way reports are triaged. As [MOPAC data](#) shows the satisfaction of vulnerable victims with the MET is 88% when their vulnerability is identified but 41% when it is not, this feature will help victim satisfaction

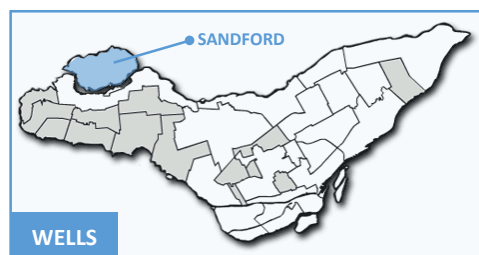


7.1 Adaptable Mailbox System

The app can also be modified easily in order to accommodate larger Police services and to incorporate other agencies such as local authorities. Instead of evidence being sent to a central command centre it can be sent straight through to the local command centre, local Policing team or local council if that is more appropriate (e.g. the report is about a parking offence).

If using Self Evident in a city with divided boundaries the developers can introduce territory specific mailboxes if and when needed. This is not a complicated task to complete, all it would require as a minimum from each territory is an appropriate Policing team mailbox for incidents to be sent to. Mailboxes for other agencies and other dedicated Policing teams can then be collected and added at a later date. The most efficient way to implement extra mailboxes in large metropolitan cities might be to allocate a Self Evident SPOC in each territory, who can identify and provide the most appropriate mailboxes.

A feasible example of this fragmented mailbox system would be an individual, Sam, living in the neighbourhood of Sandford, located in the city of Wells. Sam's vehicle is vandalised on a weekly basis. Last week he returned home to find a smashed windscreen and litter surrounding his car. As advised by the officer overlooking these incidents, Sam took a picture and uploaded it using Self Evident with flags attached – 'vehicle, damage, litter, repeat victim, non-urgent.' The app can be developed to send this to the Sandford local Policing team mailbox (for the damage) and the Wells council mailbox (for the litter). This ensures that the right teams are made aware of the incident and can act accordingly.



This week Sam returned home to find a group of school children vandalising his car. From a distance he video records them and uploads it using Self Evident with flags attached – 'vehicle, damage, school, repeat victim, urgent.' This time the video is sent immediately to the local Sandford command centre with an urgency marker. The material is viewed by the operators who can identify the most relevant details

necessary for an effective response and an incident report is created for officers to attend immediately. Sam can be easily contacted by Police as he has verified the app with his phone number, which is also provided by the app, for further information and up to date information. An email would also be sent to the local schools mailbox where schools officers can view the video, be it at a later date, and assist in identifying the suspects if necessary.

In a scenario in which Wells does not have a fragmented mailbox system both of Sam's uploads would just be sent to the Wells central command centre by default. The first upload would then be forwarded to the most appropriate team or officer and the second upload would be marked for an urgent response.

As demonstrated by the above example a Police force can change from using one command centre to having many individual command centres, or vice versa, without inconvenience.

7.2 Performance

Currently the app can handle up to 5,000 concurrent users before the platform suffers from any performance issues. Over the past few years of operation the app has only had one incident of going down on a Sunday. Within eight hours it was restored and no data had been lost in the process. The app has been created with the intention of growth. The app can be smoothly moved to other servers, which can allow for more concurrent users and better performance, without data loss.

8.1 Security and Confidentiality



Self Evident have employed a number of back end security measures, including sophisticated data encryption, to ensure safety against hackers, data interceptors and data leaks. Qualys SSL, one of the leading server security assessors, evaluates Self Evident servers with a higher security rating than Police servers.

The registration process employed by Self Evident, which necessitates new users to verify a phone number before gaining access to the apps features deters people from uploading false or malicious information as they can be more easily traced, warned and blocked by Police. It also means that the system cannot be abused by artificial intelligence designed to access and spam the app with information.

Although the app does differentiate between urgent and non-urgent material it does not apply a differentiation between confidential and non-confidential material as all information is treated securely. Upon uploading evidence emails are sent to relevant Police mailboxes and an email is sent to the user to confirm the material was sent to those relevant agencies. The evidence is held on Self Evident secure servers and there is no way for third parties to access it, as a police.uk or CPS email account is essential to access the report and download the evidence.

8.2 App Training

The app uses an intuitive and minimalistic user interface, displaying only a few buttons per screen and not overcomplicating the process with extra functionality. By choosing to focus on reporting functionality the developers have avoided confusing users.

User feedback agrees positively that the app is convenient to use, with each function clearly labelled and not overcomplicated.

The developers have added help pages for each function, which are accessible to those that need them but not obstructive to other users. These help pages could, in addition to text explanations, include YouTube videos that visually trains the users. The reason YouTube videos are proposed instead of natively attached videos is to keep the app size small to ensure it runs smoothly and doesn't take too much space on the user's phone.

This following [YouTube video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vC5srDRqP6Q), created by Ealing MPS, advertises the app, its uses and is available in sign language and Polish, to tackle hate crime.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vC5srDRqP6Q>

9.1 App Distribution and Marketing

Although the app can be used by anybody to report any incident or crime, it is most helpful for repeat victims of ongoing abuse, such as domestic abuse, stalking and hate. The current plan for marketing is that the advertisement would be better targeting these specific demographics rather than the general public, but with clear clarification that it can be used in any instance.

The data released in the [Crime Survey for England and Wales](#) in 2013, covering 2012-2013, indicates that out of 1.9 million violent incidents just one in fifty adults were victimised, and 55% of these victims were classified as repeat victims. *Just Evidence's* own user feedback has indicated that, from 2016-2017, 37% of reporters have been vulnerable or repeat victims, signifying an interest in the app from this demographic.

Each year 98% of the population are unlikely to download the app as they have not been subjected to violent crime. Within the 2% that have been victims of crime, over half of these victims are classified as repeat victims. Attempting to target the entire population with general adverts, as 98% are unlikely to be interested, misses the opportunity to direct bespoke advertisement towards the 1.1% who are more likely to be interested.



However, this is not guaranteed to be the case as these statistics fail to take into account non-violent crimes and crime related incidents. It also does not factor in the number of witnesses involved, who may be a potential demographic interested in the features that this app offer.

Currently the app is advertised through Google ads, which employs Google Adwords. Google Adwords is an advertising system designed to detect internet behaviour and user interests to deliver catered ads depending on the user. This allows Self Evident to target users who search for terms such as 'crime,' 'hate crime,' 'report' and 'police.'

In the future the developers are hoping to raise awareness about the app and to utilise Police officers who are directly exposed to the 2% of the population that are victimised.

9.2 App Brand Identity



Currently the app lacks a strong brand identity as it is lacking a unified overarching design across advertising, leaflets, the app itself, etc. For example the logo, displayed on the left, does not necessarily match the blue leaflets that have been designed and developed by MOPAC. This issue exists because the project has been developed by *Just Evidence* but the advertisement is designed for and funded by MOPAC.

However with one organisation having full creative control over the app it would be a simple case of designing and replacing the current graphics with new ones, which would not be a heavily financially or time consuming task.

10.1 Additional Benefits

In addition to securely and quickly obtaining evidence Self Evident offers numerous advantages over current evidence collecting methods employed by Police. Below are just a few:

1. Officers would no longer be required to attend scenes, or call for other officers, simply to transport cameras to the scene in order to document damage or injuries. The victim can just use the app to upload an image/video with a reference number attached. The obvious savings come from not having to deploy a unit, which often means two officers, just to take a picture, which takes them away from their other duties. Also there are other indirect savings, such as fuel and vehicle usage. A simple task like this can often take more than 1 or 2 hours depending on distance and traffic.
2. The app saves the victim/witness the hassle of having to attend a Police station to give a single piece of evidence, thus raising positive perception of the Police. Having to take time to attend the local Police station may be especially detrimental to victims of serious crimes, such as hate crimes and domestic violence. The victim may feel they are doing the officer's work for them, which may lead to lack of their cooperation or withdrawal of support.
3. The standard solution for collecting evidence from victim's phones is to seize it and perform an XRY download, which less than 5% of officers in the MET are trained to do. This process generally takes an officer about two hours, not including time taken to collect the phone, log it into the property store and find an officer who is trained in XRY. The XRY process does not select the content that is downloaded. Instead the entire phone is downloaded and the officer must select the relevant information to keep. This can cause obvious pitfalls around victim confidence and trust.
4. Although victims may email officers directly there is often a Police firewall that is designed to stop viruses and harmful materials being attached. In the MET videos and audio files cannot be sent to officers and in many cases images are also blocked. It may take up to 24 hours for an image to successfully arrive in an officer's inbox, which may cause problems, especially if there is a detainee in custody with a 24 hour PACE clock. Furthermore the image is only sent to one officer. If the image needs to be accessed by another officer this is impossible without the app unless shared.
5. The majority of domestic violence victims are unlikely to call 999 or 101 until they have been a victim over 10 times. Self Evident can provide these victims with the means to log early incidents supported by evidence which can be reported later.
6. When a victim or witness calls 999 or 101 it occupies an operator for the duration of that call and they are unable to respond to anybody else. This could mean that the operators may work at full capacity and are unable to respond to further calls promptly. Self Evident can provide support as an additional reporting channel, allowing operators to better triage calls, to identify repeat and vulnerable victims in advance and for victims and witnesses to report crimes efficiently by utilising a method that does not demand a real time response.
7. The app opens up a reporting method to those who suffer from anxiety or any other restrictions from regular reporting procedures. Rather than calling or meeting the Police they can instead record or type incident details and send it for investigation.
8. Many people can read and write English but an accent may impede their ability to dependably relay information verbally. This can lead to confusion, inappropriate grading of the incident or a misallocation of resources to towards responding to the incident. Additionally the app allows non English speakers to report in their own language.

11.1 Success Stories

As a result of the survey *Just Evidence* received anecdotes from users and descriptions of their experiences with Self Evident. Here are just four of these stories.

Joy's Story

Joy, a single mother, faced ongoing harassment from a male living on her estate.

One day the harassment escalated and resulted in the male putting a gun to Joy's neck. This happened in the presence of her five year old daughter.



Joy did not want officers attending her home address right away but still wanted to report the incident. She came across Self Evident, reported the offence and the suspect was arrested a few days later.

James' Story

James had been recommended Self Evident by a friend who's a Police officer.

Following a number of break-ins in his neighbourhood James installed CCTV at the front of his house. Soon he had collected a number of images of a male acting suspiciously, surveying vehicles.

James sent these images to Greater Manchester Police through Self Evident. Within twenty minutes James received a response thanking him for the images.



Dave's Story

Dave, a minicab driver in London, says that nine times out of ten when he sees dangerous driving it's another minicab driver glued to their satnav, blind to what's happening on the road.

On many occasions Dave wishes to report these people driving dangerously, but calling the Police is complicated as he would get passed around and ends up having to fill a form. On one occasions he drove past three closed Police stations in Peckham and Camberwell before finding Brixton Police station, which was open.



With Self Evident Dave can easily take pictures or videos of incidents, including registration plate details, and send them to the Police with no hassle, something he couldn't do otherwise.

Emma's Story

Emma managed to escape an abusive relationship and her ex-husband was given an occupation order. However, he continued to follow and intimidate her.

The app allowed Emma to log several incidents and to prove he'd breached the order with time-stamped photo evidence and audio statements.

Emma said it was easier to describe emotional situations using the app, rather than face to face or on the phone, and that she wouldn't have reported so promptly and in so much detail without the app as calling 101 takes too long and her local Police station had closed down.

