

Cross-referencing digital evidence to identify offenders who have concealed identity

Using CCTV, doorbell video, social media, and clothing analysis from before, during, and after offences to identify offenders.

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Key details

Purpose	Investigation cases
Topic	Theft and burglary Vehicle-related theft Investigation
Organisation	Northumbria Police
Contact	Detective Constable Andrew Donald
Email address	andrew.donald@northumbria.police.uk
Start date	May 2025

Description

Five males were captured on Ring doorbell footage, having just broken into a victim's home to steal three sets of car keys. The offenders were disturbed while trying to get the vehicles started and ran away.

All offenders had their identities concealed, wearing masks or hoods to hide their faces. They were all wearing gloves and left very little physical or forensic evidence. One male was detained not far from the scene and was in possession of stolen keys taken from two further burglaries, which took

place earlier in the evening.

Several attempted burglaries had also been reported during the same evening involving four or five males. Clothing comparison between scenes identified that it was the same offenders for all crimes, but their identities remained unknown.

Initial investigation identified that it was likely the offenders had used public transport to get to the area of the burglaries. Analysis of CCTV from the metro station closest to the first burglary showed all five males leaving the station, with clear visuals of their faces. This provided positive identifications of the suspects but did not place them at the scene of the burglaries.

Open-source enquiries revealed the suspects had posted videos of themselves on social media posing on the stolen vehicles, with their identities concealed. The location where the video was taken was identified as the housing estate where the second burglary took place.

Line of enquiry

Clothing comparison documents were created for each offender using the footage from the metro station, social media, and Ring doorbell footage. The remaining four offenders were positively identified as being placed at the scene of each offence where doorbell footage was available.

Outcome

The suspects were arrested, interviewed, and charged with the burglaries and attempted burglaries. All offenders plead guilty at court.