

EDITORIAL

Regina v Seema Misra, T20090070

In this issue of the journal, the transcript of the trial of Seema Misra is published in full. I thank His Honour Judge Stewart for granting permission to buy a copy of the transcript and to the publication of the transcript. Judge Stewart requested me to obtain the permission of Seema Mira to the publication of the transcript – an action I certainly would have taken in any event. I also thank Seema Misra for her agreement to publish the transcript. Seema Misra agreed to the publication, knowing it would be available to anyone with access to the internet or a legal electronic database. I am given to understand by Alan Bates, the chair of *Justice For Subpostmasters Alliance*, that Seema Misra's case is now before the Criminal Cases Review Commission, and Seema Misra understood that making the transcript available publically in this way would, in her opinion, help her case.

The eyeWitness project

Our networked world may have problems, especially relating to the rampant misuse of personal data, but the technology is also capable of providing neutral evidence. Used in this way, technology can act to prevent barbaric behaviour and provide evidence of atrocities. In so doing, technology can help bring to justice those individuals that commit such murderous acts of violence.

The *eyeWitness to Atrocities* project¹ is an attempt to provide software to users across the world to be able to use a mobile device to record moving images, photographs and audio of abuse, threats of violence, or other related information – such as the serial numbers of weapons, vehicles, insignias, license plates and such like – all of which can also be very helpful to a case (and sometimes more valuable than footage of the violent events themselves). People have begun to make increasing use of social media websites to post footage of violent behaviour. Often the record depicting such crimes cannot be verified, either from the media source or for the purpose of admitting it into evidence. Often, the response by those accused of perpetrating such crimes reject the footage as forged. For example, in 2009 the Sri Lankan

government dismissed footage gathered by Channel 4 that appeared to show government troops committing war crimes by executing Tamil prisoners.²

The purpose of the project was to develop software to enable investigators, journalists and ordinary citizens to make recordings of acts of violence in a manner that enables the image to be authenticated – with metadata that can demonstrate where and when the image was taken, and to be reasonably certain that the image was not altered from the moment it was recorded. The images, moving footage and audio that is recorded can then later be submitted from the device to the storage database maintained by *eyeWitness*. Although users will require the internet to download the app and submit footage, they do not need the internet while recording. This means the app can be used in parts of the developing world that typically lack the technical infrastructure and network coverage needed for mobile internet.

Another aspect of the project is that the *eyeWitness* team can then analyse the footage and research credible trials and investigations, such as the International Criminal Court, to submit the footage to in order to promote accountability. This combination of secure storage combined with project analysts and advocates, make the *eyeWitness to Atrocities* app unique.

Other apps have been created that focus specifically on exposing police malpractice and reporting domestic crimes. These include *MobileJustice* and *Stop and Frisk Watch* in the United States of America, as well as *Self Evident*, *Eyewitness* and *Eyewatch Police* in the United Kingdom. These apps often require a continuous mobile internet connection, and also assume the existence of responsive national reporting systems, cooperative police complaints mechanisms and the functional rule of law. In contrast, this not always the case in parts of the world where international atrocity crimes take place on a wide scale, for which the *eyeWitness* app is designed – which is why there is no streaming capacity built into the *eyeWitness* app.

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¹ <http://www.eyewitnessproject.org>.

² <http://www.channel4.com/news/sri-lanka-uk-justice-war-crimes-inquiry>.

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