

TAKE THIS CRIME SERIOUSLY

Refreshing on fraud

Fraud is probably the most costly crime to society in financial terms. All sorts of people do it. Yet, 'despite inflicting severe societal damage', police find it only of limited interest. So say the four academic authors of a snappy, elegant and readable study of fraud.

It's meant to be a textbook for students, the only other in the field being Alan Doig's (reviewed in our December 2006 issue). So it's not aimed at practitioners - unlike say various volumes by Mike Comer, or the short guide by Nigel Iyer and Martin Samociuk. Rather, it's for students of criminology and related subjects, and private security people could usefully read it to refresh their know-how of current issues, or for starters if they are doing a master's in security or risk management and writing an essay on white-collar crime. There's a 21-page, wide-ranging and up to date book and article list. Naturally in quite a short (and hence inexpensive) book, some of the topics are done at a canter - preventing, investigating and prosecuting fraud. The 'insurance fiddle' is gone into in some detail. Each chapter by the way has its own handy reading list at the end.

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What's particularly praiseworthy for a textbook, it's quite newsy, written in early 2010, and taking in the MPs expenses scandal, the 2006 Fraud Act and regional fraud forums, to name three. The authors don't shirk some tough things that frauds tell us about our country. Why do some people think it's all right to buy shoplifted goods, or to exaggerate an insurance claim? Where does risky business shade into fraudulent transactions, if at all - a big question, given the recent banking slump? "Certain crimes are treated very differently given who perpetrates them. Given insurance is very often a product of the better off

in society (home owners, car owners, etc), this provides a further example of how different types of fraudsters are often treated differently." Though such crimes are common and serious, data is limited, the authors point out.

All credit to them for such a wide-ranging, insightful and accessible book, that stakes a claim for 'counter-fraud studies' to be taken seriously. **Studying Fraud as White Collar Crime**: edited by Geoff Smith, Mark Button, Les Johnston and Kwabena Frimpong. Published 2010 by Palgrave Macmillan, 264 pages, paperback, £19.99. ISBN 9780230542495. Visit www.palgrave.com to download sample chapter.

A weighty book aims to get to the bottom of crime and corruption.

Some of the authors stress corporate ethics, the tone from the top, and being alert to the 'red flags' of fraud. Mark Schwartz, a Canadian, for example, writes: "Once an ethical corporate culture is developed, the assumption is that the extent of crime, corruption and unethical activity within organisations or on behalf of their agents will be minimised. Unfortunately, it is often difficult to measure the success of an ethical corporate culture, as one cannot always identify the scandal that was avoided as a result of ethical work." Schwartz like other contributors is grappling with intangibles, like integrity. One of the editors, Edward Tomlinson, covers 'the role of trust in employee theft'. By trusting your staff, you may seek to avoid a 'them and us' attitude; but how do you know you can trust all your staff? How do you evaluate? By making checks, do managers violate that trust? In any case might some staff take advantage of that trust? And hide their dishonesty? Placing too much trust in staff could be as unwise as too little, Tomlinson suggests; 'trust is not a security policy'. In other words, there's a call for security controls, whether locks on doors or a confidential reporting line. As other chapters show, on pharma companies and Nigeria for example, crime and in particular corruption go to the heart of a successful and happy (or otherwise) workplace or profession or nation. This book by mainly North American

academics does not offer a blueprint for security managers but is rather a wide-ranging and careful analysis of wrong-doing (whether unlawful or merely dubious) in business. The book does not have answers any more than the rest of us to how to detect and prevent fraud when people are tempted into it, for profit or simply to cut corners. **Crime and Corruption in Organisations**, edited by Ronald J Burke, Edward C Tomlinson and Cary L Cooper. Published by Gower, hardback, 382 pages. ISBN: 978-0-566-08981-7. Website price at www.gowerpublishing.com: £67.50.

The latest formidable addition to a weighty series of security management hardbacks gives the definitive word for crime prevention practitioners.

How do you prevent crime, then repeat the good work, in another town, or year? Paul Ekblom, a leading name in designing out crime, offers the 5Is framework. It may sound like a dieting plan. In fact it stands for intelligence, intervention, implementation, involvement, impact. As Ekblom sums up, 'while crime and its prevention are undoubtedly complex, the complexity can be tamed provided we develop suitable frameworks and languages to handle it within research and practice'. Even the simplest project can generate vast amounts of information (as a site surveyor could agree?!), but only some will be of use. As he admits, the short-term posts of staff, and changes in fashion and priorities can lead to 'collective amnesia'. Ekblom can be your guide. My only quibble is that while the author writes clearly, some photos would be welcome. If you are wary of paying for the book, visit www.jdi.ucl.ac.uk, the website of the Institute of Crime Science at University College London, and try the free downloads of 'How to Become a Problem Solving Analyst'. The institute is also running a one-week course in April. **Crime Prevention, Security and Community Safety Using the 5Is Framework**, by Paul Ekblom. Published 2010 by Palgrave Macmillan, hardback, £55. ISBN 9780 2302 10363. Visit www.palgrave.com for a free chapter download.

