

<p><b>Institution:</b> University of Abertay Dundee</p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 4</p>
<p><b>Title of case study:</b> The Self-administered Interview: Using applied memory research to help improve the police interview.</p>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Researchers at Abertay University are engaged in research that focuses on developing and testing evidence-based procedures that inform and enhance policing procedures surrounding evidence gathering. One particularly successful line of research has produced an innovative investigative tool called the ‘Self Administered Interview’ (SAI©) that is proven to enhance witness statements and protect memory. The SAI© was developed and tested in a series of controlled lab-based studies at UAD, and later field-tested with eyewitnesses to real crimes with the support of the Association of Chief Police Officers. The SAI© is already standard police practice in some UK and European forces with over 2,500 officers trained in its use. It has also been used in major Health and Safety investigations in the off-shore Oil and Gas industry.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Information from victims and eyewitnesses plays a crucial role in criminal investigations worldwide. High quality, reliable evidence is vital for the investigation process, the pursuit of fair prosecutions, and for preventing miscarriages of justice. A significant problem for investigators is the delay incurred between individuals witnessing a crime event and providing their statement. Ideally witnesses should be interviewed as soon as possible after a report of an incident. In practice, limited police resources means that this does not happen. A delay between witnessing an event and providing evidence compromises both the amount, and accuracy, of information reported at interview.</p> <p>In direct response to this problem, Dr. Fiona Gabbert (Abertay University), Dr. Lorraine Hope (University of Portsmouth) and Professor Ron Fisher (Florida International University) have developed and tested a recall tool called the Self-Administered Interview (SAI©) that can be used to elicit comprehensive initial statements from witnesses, quickly and efficiently. It takes the form of a standardised protocol of clear instructions and questions that enable witnesses to provide their own statement, and is therefore ideal for use when restricted resources mean that a traditional interview is not possible.</p> <p>The SAI© has been extensively tested in staged eyewitness memory experiments at Abertay, supported by research grants from the British Academy and the ESRC (all with Dr Gabbert as PI). These scientific tests, spanning the last five years, have produced a number of key research findings: (i) It has been consistently shown that the SAI© elicits significantly more accurate and detailed information than a free-recall request; (ii) Completing an SAI© also strengthens witness memory, meaning that witnesses are protected against forgetting; (iii) the SAI© also protects against exposure to potentially distorting post-event information.</p> <p>Field trials with police forces have proven the SAI© can facilitate an investigation by obtaining critical information quickly and effectively. In particular, the SAI© has made an important contribution to a number of live investigations by providing detailed initial accounts, prioritising witnesses, and facilitating the identification of additional witnesses, in incidents including serious road-traffic incidents, assaults, robberies, and the terrorist attack in Norway in June 2011.</p> <p>Partners from industry have also commented on its likely usefulness in industrial accidents and insurance investigations. The Universities of Abertay and Portsmouth have registered a trademark for a Self-Administered Witness Interview Tool (SAW-IT □), based on the SAI©, for use in occupational Health and Safety settings.</p>

### 3. References to the research

- **Gabbert, F.**, Hope, L. & Fisher, R. P. (2009). Protecting Eyewitness Evidence: Examining the Efficacy of a Self-Administered Interview Tool. *Law & Human Behavior*, 33, 298-307. doi: 10.1007/s10979-008-9146-8.
- **Gabbert, F.**, Hope, L., Fisher, R. P., & **Jamieson, K.** (2012). Protecting against susceptibility to misinformation with the use of a Self-Administered Interview. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 26, 568-75. DOI: 10.1002/acp.2828
- Hope, L., **Gabbert, F.** & Fisher, R. P. (2011). From laboratory to the street: Capturing witness memory using a Self-Administered Interview. *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 16, 211-226. (**invited academic paper and featured article on journal's website**). DOI: 10.1111/j.2044-8333.2011.02015.x

#### Selected keynote/Invited presentations:

- **Gabbert, F.** (May, 2010). *Investigative Interviewing and the Self-Administered Interview*. Institute of Counter Fraud Specialists (ICFS) Conference, Glasgow, Scotland.
- **Gabbert, F.** & Retford, S. (June, 2011). *Field trials of Self-Administered Interview (SAI) recall tool with real eye-witnesses*. The 4th Annual Conference of the International Investigative Interviewing Research Group, Dundee, U.K. (**This presentation was in collaboration with an end-user of the SAI© from Greater Manchester Police**).

#### Key research grants:

- £69,527. Protecting Eyewitness Evidence: Testing the Efficacy of a Self-Administered Interview Tool. The British Academy. Awarded to **Gabbert, F.** (PI), Hope, L. & Fisher, R. (July 2007 – June 2008).
- £28,453. Improving the delivery of justice for victims, witnesses and society: Field Trials of the Self Administered Interview Recall Tool. Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Follow-on-funding grant. Awarded to **Gabbert, F.** (PI) & Hope, L. (January 2010 – October 2010).
- £7,153. Supporting eyewitness memory with a Self Administered Scene of Crime Recall Tool. British Academy. Awarded to **Gabbert, F.** (PI), Hope, L. & Fisher, R. (March 2006 - November 2006).
- £6,000. Testing the Self Administered Interview (SAI) in the Personnel Security setting. Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI). Hope, L. (PI) & **Gabbert, F.** (February 2011 – April 2011).

### 4. Details of the impact

The line of research on the development and testing of the Self-Administered Interview (SAI©) provides a clear example of scientific research progressing from a controlled lab-environment into an applied context. The initial experimental research showed that the SAI© strengthens episodic memory such that forgetting was reduced, and individuals were vigilant against different forms of misleading post-event information. Based on these findings the Research Team believed the SAI© had the potential to make a significant beneficial contribution to police practice, and ultimately to the delivery of justice for witnesses and victims of crime by virtue of enhancing the investigatory process.

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) endorsed field trials of the SAI© in February, 2009, recognising that the forensic implications of the research for police practice are considerable. With this backing, we applied for, and were awarded, a 'Follow-on-Funding' grant from the ESRC (awarded January, 2010). This enabled us to engage in knowledge-exchange activities with end-users, and conduct field-trials of the SAI©. The field trials were to establish whether the SAI© could demonstrate both practical and evidential benefits to the police during their enquiries by eliciting high quality witness accounts.

To attract the attention of UK police forces an extensive knowledge-exchange strategy with end-users was implemented, which included disseminating findings at practitioner conferences, in practitioner magazines, and by creating and promoting a website ([www.selfadministeredinterview.com](http://www.selfadministeredinterview.com)). Twenty-seven forces (7 from outside the UK) are currently involved in the field trials, which commenced in January 2010.

Feedback from forces participating in the trial has been overwhelmingly positive. A quote from an end-user highlights the real-world impact of this research: *“Notably, the SAI is the first empirically-derived interviewing practice development that has been presented to the police in almost 20 years, probably the most valuable additional tool placed at our disposal in the world of investigative interviewing since the adoption of the ‘PEACE’ model of interviewing in the early 1990s, and the introduction of the enhanced cognitive interview model.”* (Ian Hynes, Force Specialist Investigative Interview Manager and Advisor, Greater Manchester Police, UK).

The SAI© has made an important contribution to a number of live investigations by providing detailed initial accounts, prioritising witnesses, and facilitating the identification of additional witnesses, in incidents including serious road-traffic incidents, assaults, robberies, and a terrorist attack on Norway in June 2011.

Based on the performance of the SAI© in the field trials, some police forces in the UK and abroad have officially adopted the SAI© as a permanent force-form, and train all new-recruits in the procedure. This demonstrates that in a relatively short time, the SAI© has already had a significant impact upon policy. Use of the SAI© procedure, and the information reported therein, was presented as evidence in court for the first time in 2011, with good effect and positive feedback.

The field-trials have also generated interest from charities, such as Victim Support and Roadpeace, the latter of which are actively campaigning for the SAI© to be standard procedure for obtaining evidence relating to road-traffic-accidents. In 2010 the SAI© was used to by two of the world’s largest engineering companies (AMEC and Baker Hughes) to obtain evidence in Health & Safety Investigations, including two serious incidents on an off-shore oil-rig.

In summary, 27 forces world-wide are in different stages of testing/adopting the SAI©. A survey (Sept 2013) of the forces who first tested the tool highlighted that:

- Greater Manchester Police have fully implemented the SAI as an official force form and part of operational procedure (1000 officers are trained in its use).
- The Dutch police have approved nation-wide implementation of the SAI (it is now part of police training).
- In Norway the SAI is mentioned in Best Practice Guidelines for managing eyewitness evidence (issued by the General Prosecutors Office) (1500 Norwegian officers have been trained to use the SAI).
- South Yorkshire Force has been engaged in extensive evaluation across a range of incidents and is working towards the introduction of the SAI as good practice across the force.

End-users report the SAI has been deployed in a wide range of incidents including:

- Major incidents involving multiple witnesses including several murders, shootings and assaults and other major crime incidents
- Part of official response strategy for mass witness scenarios including counter-terrorism, potential public order and security incidents (e.g. London Olympics 2012, Party conference)
- Fatal road traffic investigations
- Policing at an international airport
- Eliciting information from initial responders to an incident
- Screening large numbers of witnesses for historical investigations

In sum, the SAI© research has produced significant scientific and societal-level impact. In

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direct recognition of these impacts, Dr. Gabbert was recently awarded an Academic Excellence prize by the International Investigative Interviewing Research Group in recognition of *Outstanding Achievements in the area of Investigative Interviewing*.

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)**Reports and reviews in practitioner magazines**

- Hope, L. & Gabbert, F. (2011). Protecting Eyewitness Evidence: What can the Self Administered Interview (SAI©) contribute to the investigation of road traffic incidents. *Impact*, 19, 15-18.
- Heaton-Armstrong, A., Wolchover, D., Hope, L. & Gabbert, F. (2011). Conferring beyond the crossroads. *Criminal Law & Justice*, 175, Part 1: 557-559, Part 2: 575 -577, Part 3: 593-595.
- Gabbert, F. (2008, August). Total recall. *The Scottish Institute for Policing Research newsletter*, p 6. <http://www.sipr.ac.uk/downloads/SIPR%20newsletter%20aug08.pdf>
- Small, D. (2007, May). Bridging the Gap. *Police Professional*, 43–44.
- Trantum, I. (2009, April). Making the most of an eyewitness. *Police Professional*, 12–14.
- Welman, S. (2010, April). The Self-Administered Interview. *The Investigator*. 33-35. [http://the-investigator.co.uk/files/April\\_2010\\_The\\_Investigator.pdf](http://the-investigator.co.uk/files/April_2010_The_Investigator.pdf)

**Knowledge exchange websites**

- [www.selfadministeredinterview.com](http://www.selfadministeredinterview.com)

**Confidential technical reports**

- Gabbert, F. & Hope, L. (2012). *Field Evaluation of the Self-Administered Interview*. Report for the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Investigative Interviewing Committee.

**Named contacts of users/beneficiaries who could corroborate claims**

- Police Superintendent, Oslo Police District, NORWAY
- Project Manager on 'Enhancing witness statements', Criminal Investigation Department, Police Force Kennemerland, NETHERLANDS
- Specialist Investigative Interview Advisor a, Greater Manchester Police
- Specialist Investigative Interview Advisor b, Greater Manchester Police
- Specialist Investigative Interview Advisor c, Greater Manchester Police