Project SERVATOR: Evaluating Communications Effectiveness for Suspicious Activity Reporting

Cranfield School of Management

'Project Servator' (latin for 'watcher/observer') implemented by City of London Police (in Feb/Oct 2014) and Police Scotland (Summer 2014)

Policing tactics to reassure general public, encourage suspicious activity reporting and deter, detect and disrupt criminal and terrorist activity, involving highly visible but unpredictable deployments of specialist trained officers. Intervention as follows:

(i) **Product** - mixed deployment uniformed and plainclothes officers, dogs, horses, vehicles, closed circuit television (CCTV) and automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) technology and tactical engagement with general public;

(ii) **Place** - unpredictable to discourage and detect would-be criminals and terrorists, integrating information from public, community, CCTV, uniformed/plainclothes officers;

(iii) **Promotion** - media press releases, articles in traditional, electronic (e.g. websites), social media (Twitter/Facebook), posters (differing sizes including 4,6,48 sheet variants) in bus shelters, subway and train stations, handbills (distributed by police officers), and internal advertising techniques (e.g. intranet articles on Police websites) - Safer Neighbourhood Teams and Community Liaison Officers are also briefed as are the business community, including the security industry and property owners.

Project Servator

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-C5WbyLM5is
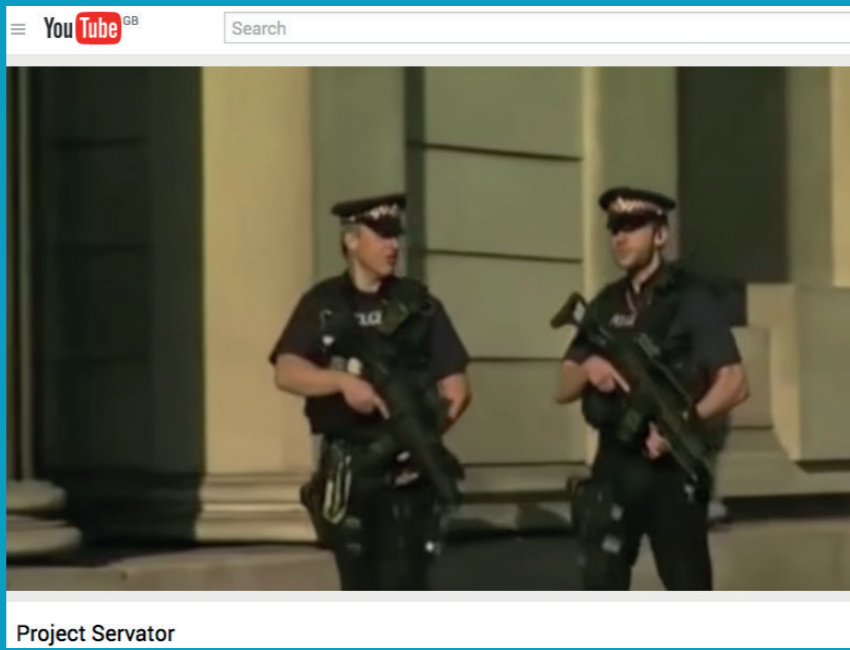
Method of Evaluation

- To determine if the campaign achieved its objectives of informing, reassuring and recruiting the general public, street interviews were undertaken by i o i research's fieldwork team.

- Total of 1140 interviews collected over three waves of research, conducted in March 2014 (i.e. London Wave 1), October/November 2014 (i.e. London Wave 2) and June/July 2014 (i.e. in Glasgow during the Commonwealth games).

- Each participant collected a £5 Prêt a Manger incentive voucher and responded to a 31 item questionnaire, of 5 to 10 minutes duration, comprising multiple choice/open-ended questions and 5-point Likert scales. 101 call and online suspicious activity report data were also collected.

Key Questions

1. Does the tactic used help to achieve primary goal of re-assuring the general public (or not upsetting/causing anxiety)?

2. How, according to the evidence base, is the Servator tactic likely to work in cognitive psychological terms?

Sample Characteristics

Number of male and female participants over the 3 waves of research (n=1140)

	London Wave 1	London Wave 2	Glasgow
Males	36%	52%	45%
Females	64%	48%	55%
Total	100% (n=734)	100% (n=206)	100% (n=200)

Age of participants across all three waves (n=1140)

16-24	25-39	40-49	50-59	60+
15%	34%	20%	16%	15%

Employment status of participants across all three waves (n=1140)

Employed	Retired	Student	Unemployed
74%	12%	8%	6%

Does the Tactic Reasure the General Public?

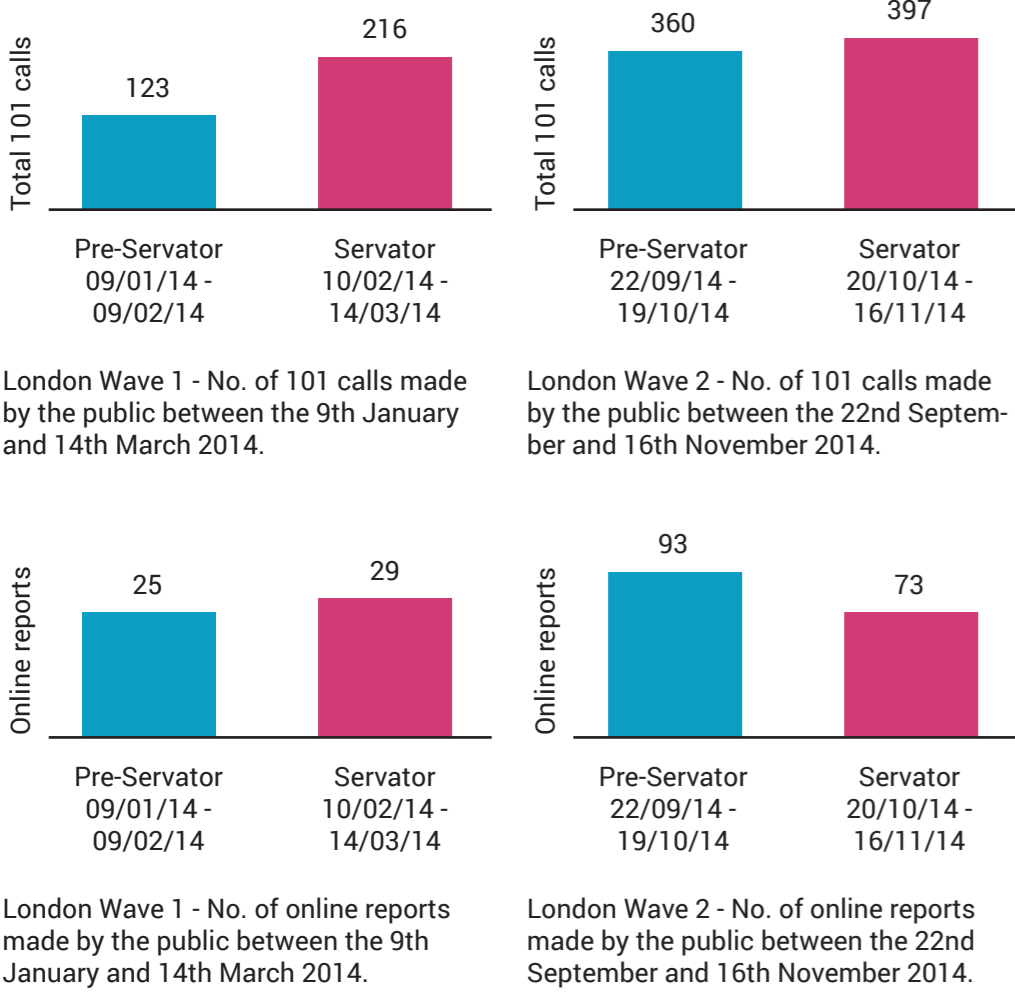**Question - "What do you think of operations like the one today?" (n=1140)**

Response	London wave 1 (Feb/March 2014)	London wave 2 (Oct/Nov 2014)	Glasgow (June/July 2014)
Reassuring	58%	57%	73%
Necessary	38%	25%	30%
Indifferent	10%	9%	5%
Alarming	3%	7%	5%
Waste of Time	7%	7%	5%
Big Brother	2%	1%	1%
Over the Top	5%	5%	9%
Other	0%	10%	6%

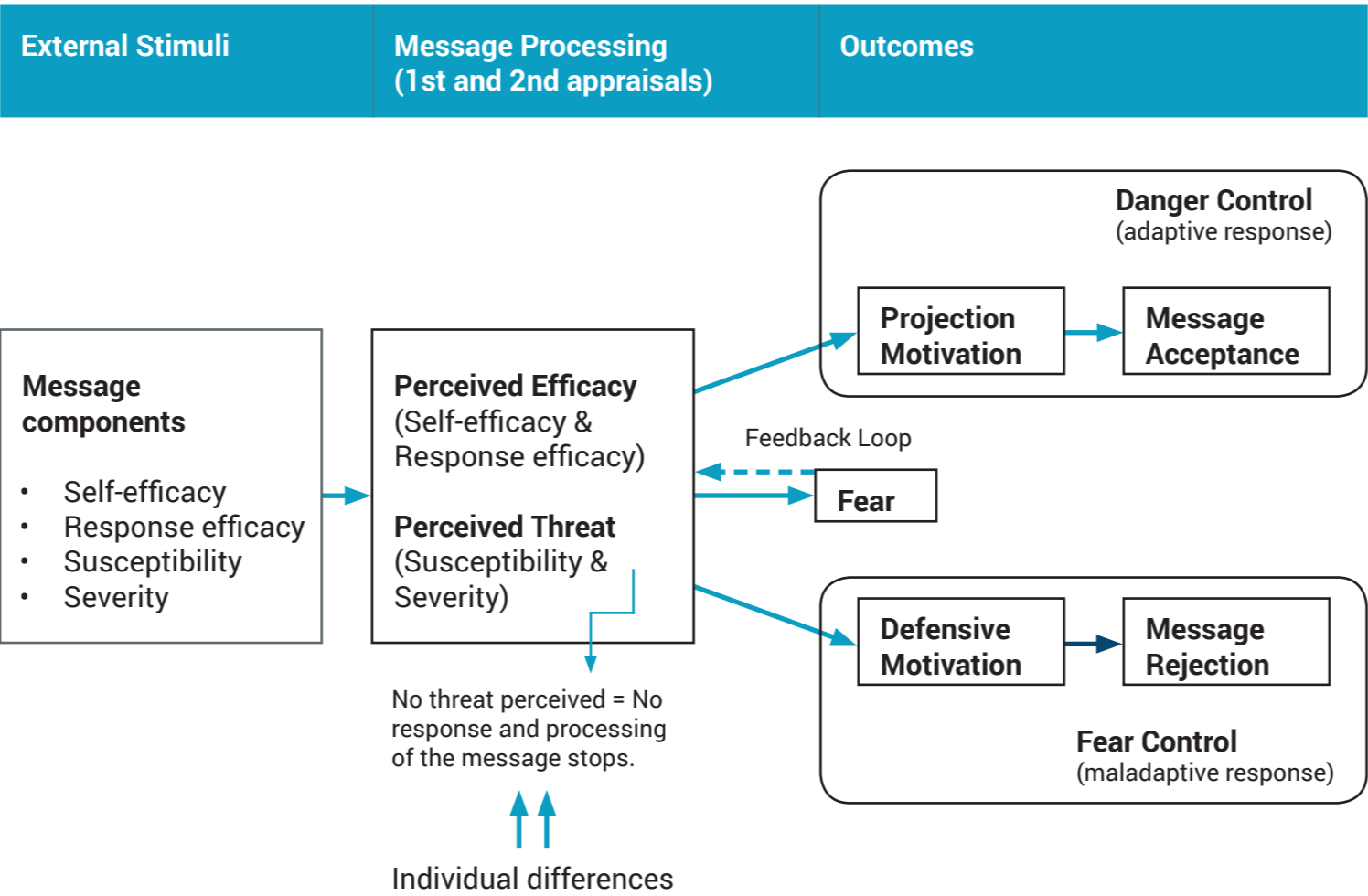*columns do not add up to 100% as multiple responses were possible.

How Fear Appeal Applies to Servator

Key Points	Servator fear appeal
Susceptibility (to a threat)	"If there is suspicious activity occuring you need to be fearful of the potential consequences of it"
Severity (of the threat)	"Unattended items or suspicious terrorist activity could have devastating consequences"
Self-efficacy (Subject's ability to respond)	"You will be able to report suspicious activity and unattended items without consequence to yourself"
Response efficacy (Behaviour which will mitigate the threat)	"Police action to forestall terrorist action/deal with suspicious activity/ unattended items will be effective"

Suspicious Activity Reporting: Before and After

London Wave 1 - No. of 101 calls made by the public between the 9th January and 14th March 2014.

London Wave 2 - No. of 101 calls made by the public between the 22nd September and 16th November 2014.

London Wave 1 - No. of online reports made by the public between the 9th January and 14th March 2014.

London Wave 2 - No. of online reports made by the public between the 22nd September and 16th November 2014.

The Extended Parallel Process Model of Fear Appeal Processing

EPPM Model Provides Theoretical Framework for Reassurance Communications Message Design

- Distinguishes between message acceptance and rejection of a fear appeal message in multiple audiences.

- Stresses a fear appeal message designed by considering self-efficacy, response efficacy, susceptibility and severity and how this impacts on how message received on same dimensions.

- For message to be adaptively processed (i.e. message accepted, danger control route pursued and any suspicious activity reported), public must believe security message is credible (response efficacy, i.e. ringing the police hotline resolves their public safety fears), they are able to call without repercussions (self-efficacy), that public safety concerns them (susceptibility) and their implications to be avoided (severity).

- If the message is maladaptively processed, fear control processing occurs, the message disbelieved and suspicious activity, and potential criminal/terrorist activity, unreported.

BUT ALSO NOTE potential criminals/terrorists also reside in general population. Likely to react differently? Likely to be deterred by such messaging?

Key Considerations

- Undertake unpredictable and ubiquitous police deployments

- Emphasise surveillance elements in any communication to reassure public that they are being watched over, including:
  - plain clothes and uniformed police
  - CCTV
  - public's suspicious activity reporting

- EPPM model dimensions (response efficacy, self-efficacy, severity, susceptibility) should be used to design messages.

- Use of a wide range of integrated communications make messaging more effective including:
  - Press coverage, especially online PR
  - Social media
  - Posters in bus shelters, subway, trains stations, handbills for advertising
  - Online advertising: paid search advertising, banner ads.
  - Tactical engagement officers

Findings

In a November 2016 study by the British Transport Police reportings of suspicious activities and unattended items are broken down into 3 Clusters as follows:

From a latent class cluster analysis (which helps to segment groups of respondents), three distinct segments emerged with differential responses to noticing deployment communication elements, greater/lesser likelihood to report unattended items/suspicious activity and degrees of reassurance/anxiousness as follows:

Cluster 1 – *"Sharp-eyed ('fairly vigilant, most reassured and most persuaded', representing 49% of the respondents):* somewhat likely to have seen posters, highly likely to have seen TEOs, are almost certain to be more likely to report unattended items and suspicious activity reporting, most likely to be reassured but also most likely to be anxious (though this proportion is significantly smaller). This group were predominantly interviewed at Euston and Waterloo, are slightly more likely to be female, and marginally more likely to be under 44 years old.

Cluster 2 – *"I'm all right Jack"* ('complacent, disengaged and unpersuaded', representing 28% of the respondents): very highly unlikely to have seen posters, and almost certain not to have seen a tactical engagement officer, are almost certain not to be more likely to report unattended items and suspicious activity reporting, not very likely to be reassured and almost certain not to be anxious. The greatest proportion of this group were interviewed at Euston, are slightly more likely to be female, and are very likely to be under 44 years old.

Cluster 3 – *"Seer but not believer"* ('somewhat reassured but not persuaded', representing 23% of the respondents): the most likely group to have seen the posters, highly likely to have seen a tactical engagement officer, are almost certain not to be more likely to report unattended items and highly unlikely to be more likely to report suspicious activity, somewhat likely to be reassured and highly unlikely to be anxious. This group were predominantly interviewed at Waterloo, are more likely to be male, and are marginally more likely to be aged under 44 years old."

She's here to help keep you safe.

Don't worry, our search dogs are friendly. They sniff out drugs, firearms and explosives and help us keep them off the streets.

You can help by telling us if you see something suspicious. Call us on 101.

Together, we've got it covered.

www.cityoflondon.police.uk