



IACP

# PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS:

eTrace: Internet-Based Firearms Tracing and Analysis

## MISSION:

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*The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) Initiative, with support from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, Department of Justice (BJA) works to improve law enforcement's capacity to interdict firearms trafficking and disrupt gang activity. This is one in a series of Fact Sheets<sup>1</sup> designed to provide law enforcement officers and executives with an overview on topics related to firearms.<sup>2</sup>*

## FAST FACTS: DID YOU KNOW

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) is the only federal government agency authorized to assist domestic and international law enforcement agencies by tracing the origin of firearms involved in criminal investigations.

- In 2005, the ATF National Training Center introduced eTrace. The web based application tracks recovered firearms from the manufacturer or importer, to the wholesaler or retailer, and finally to an unlicensed purchaser. In 2009, ATF released eTrace 4.0, a bilingual (English/Spanish) version of the system.
- eTrace is available 24 hours per day, seven days per week, and is provided free of charge to authorized law enforcement agencies. To participate, a law enforcement agency must register and sign a memorandum of understanding with ATF.
- Data from the interactive trace analysis module can be used to link a suspect to a firearm in a criminal investigation, identify potential traffickers, and detect domestic and international patterns related to sources and types of firearms.
- Registered users initiate a search by entering a combination of data elements to establish a firearms trace request submission. An interactive trace analysis module then generates statistical reports to create an information platform.
- eTrace provides real-time data that allows law enforcement agencies to submit electronic firearms trace requests, monitor the progress of traces, retrieve completed trace results and query firearms trace-related data in the Firearms Tracing System database.
- eTrace assists law enforcement by:
  - developing investigative leads;
  - deducing the time to process a trace request;
  - improving quality of trace-related information;
  - Monitoring the status of traces;
  - providing downloadable trace results;
  - generating statistical reports; and
  - performing web-based analytical research.
- Over 6,000 United States law enforcement agencies and 43 foreign countries actively use eTrace in their investigative work.



**BJA**  
Bureau of Justice Assistance  
U.S. Department of Justice

For additional information go to: [www.theiacp.org/PSNInitiative](http://www.theiacp.org/PSNInitiative)



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## END NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This document is based on information obtained from the ATF's Fact Sheet – eTrace: internet-Based Firearms Tracing and Analysis available at <https://www.atf.gov/resource-center/fact-sheet/fact-sheet-etrace-internet-based-firearms-tracing-and-analysis> (accessed June 24, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> For additional information related to the PSN Initiative, to include additional Fact Sheets, please visit [www.theiacp.org/PSNInitiative](http://www.theiacp.org/PSNInitiative).