

The Stolen Property Market in the Australian Capital Territory

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A report prepared by the Australian Institute of Criminology for
the ACT Department of Justice and Community Safety

October 2002

Acknowledgments

Funding for this study was provided by the ACT Department of Justice and Community Safety. The assistance of the steering committee, particularly Derek Jory, Lil Hayes, Matthew Parkes, Detective Sergeant Gary Shute and Acting Sergeant Kylie Hemiak is acknowledged.

Thanks go to staff at ACT Corrective Services for coordinating interviews with suitable clients, in particular Naomi Buick, Helen Rowling and the staff at the Probation and Parole Unit; Darren Fitzpatrick and Andrew Rose at the Periodic Detention Centre; and Ray Guicci at the Belconnen Remand Centre.

Information on insurance claims was provided by the NRMA, AAMI and GIO. Therese Hackwill from the Australian Federal Police provided the recorded crime data. SPSS Consulting set up the public survey web site. The staff of the J.V. Barry Library at the Australian Institute of Criminology located references and materials for the study. Their assistance is gratefully acknowledged.

The property offenders, second-hand dealers and members of the public who participated in this research are also thanked.

Research staff involved in the preparation of this report were Diana Nelson, Lisa Collins, Frances Gant, Toni Makkai, Keenan Veraar and Michael Bareja.

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Abbreviations

ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AFP	Australian Federal Police
AIC	Australian Institute of Criminology
PDC	Periodic Detention Centre
PROMIS	Australian Federal Police reported crime database

Executive Summary

1. The analysis identified two distinct groups of offenders—those who only stole property from shops and those who stole from both shops and houses.
2. Eighty per cent of offenders usually steal property from shops while 50 per cent usually steal from houses.
3. Analysis of recorded crime data found no apparent seasonal or monthly effects. However time of day may determine when property offending will occur: residential burglaries most frequently occur during the day while non-residential burglaries most frequently take place at night when buildings are unoccupied.
4. Offenders indicated there was a ready market for stolen property in the ACT with most saying that the general public were willing to buy stolen property.

The Size and Value of the Stolen Goods Market

5. The majority of offenders stole property everyday or almost everyday (68 per cent).
6. Recorded crime data show that the mean number of items reported stolen per incident during 1999–2001 was five. However, in 36 per cent of incidents only one item was reported stolen.
7. The amount offenders received for stolen goods varied according to who the receiver was. There were three mechanisms for determining price: negotiating each time with the buyer (having some prior knowledge of what particular goods were worth in the market); receiving approximately one-third of the original value of the goods; or demanding enough to cover the cost of purchasing illicit drugs.
8. The majority of offenders reported earning between \$100 and \$1,000 per day through property offending (most commonly \$300 per day while active).
9. Estimates based on data from three major insurers in the ACT indicate that approximately \$10 million has been paid as a result of property-related claims during 1999–2001. The average claim was \$2,168.

Why Offenders Steal Particular Goods

10. Most offenders knew what they wanted to steal before committing the offence (79 per cent), suggesting that targets were chosen based on the likelihood of a particular item being stored there. Recorded crime data show that jewellery was likely to be reported stolen from houses; mobile phones from public places; computers from offices; and clothing from shops.
11. Offenders usually stole cash, electrical items (such as televisions and DVD players), computers, cigarettes, clothing, mobile phones and some jewellery.

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12. The main reason for stealing property was related to obtaining money to purchase illicit drugs. (Sixty-five per cent stated that they had traded stolen goods for drugs in the two years prior to interview, nearly all of which was through a drug dealer.) A small number used the money to pay off debts or pay for general living expenses.
 13. House alarms and dogs were most likely to deter offenders when choosing a target location. Nonetheless, most offenders claimed they were not likely to be deterred by any measure.

How Offenders Dispose of Stolen Goods

14. Transportation methods included carrying the goods on the person (62 per cent), using a car (22 per cent) and using a bag/backpack (16 per cent).
15. Methods for disposing of stolen goods included keeping some for personal use, selling to businesses, or trading/selling for illicit drugs. The most desired method of disposal was selling to persons who were known and trusted (to avoid detection) and through a “fence” (to achieve best price).
16. Regardless of who was receiving the stolen goods, most offenders were usually able to dispose of the property within a few hours. Approximately one-third had occasionally stored their stolen goods before selling or giving them to other people. Of those who had stored stolen property, over half had not done so for more than one week. Storage was usually in their own home.
17. Techniques used to avoid detection by police when selling to particular sources included: doing “nothing” (27 per cent), picking the right people and places (27 per cent) and behaving in a discreet manner (14 per cent).

The Recovery of Stolen Property

18. Recorded crime data indicate that little stolen property is recovered in the ACT. Overall, the goods that are recovered are those least attractive to offenders. Attractiveness is determined by the ease of resale and the money to be made. Car stereos, tools, televisions and jewellery are least likely to be recovered (all are valuable and easily sold). Handbags, wallets, bank-related items (such as ATM cards) and furniture are most commonly recovered.

Introduction

One way of reducing the number of burglaries and thefts may be to make the disposal of stolen property more difficult. In order to intervene in this illegal trade, authorities need to know what burglars and thieves do with the property they steal. With this in mind, the ACT Department of Justice and Community Safety commissioned the Australian Institute of Criminology to conduct research into the ACT's stolen property market.

Between 1996 and 2000 there was approximately a 71 per cent increase in the number of burglary victims in the ACT (Productivity Commission 2002). In 2000 the ACT had the third highest rate of property crime in Australia. There were 23,386 burglary and other theft offences reported to ACT police (AFP 2001). Since this time recorded crime data have shown unprecedented declines. In 2001 the ACT had one of the lowest rates of property crime nationally (ABS 2002, pp. 3–10).

The present project builds on previous research into burglary in the Territory. MARS (1999), for example, examined the characteristics of burglary and why offenders engage in the crime. The MARS study found that a relatively small number of suburbs experienced a high rate of burglary. There was a higher rate of repeat victimisation in suburbs where:

- unemployment was higher than the overall ACT rate;
- median weekly income was lower; and
- the population was declining.

The study also found that properties obscured by shrubbery or adjacent to public spaces (such as walkways or fields) had higher rates of repeat victimisation. The burglars tended to select houses in middle-class areas that were well kept. Burglar alarms and dogs were reported as major deterrents. Sixty-four per cent of the adult burglary offenders stated that funding a heroin addiction was the main reason for committing burglaries.

Although the MARS study did not profile offenders, other ACT studies have. Ratcliffe (2001), for example, examined a sample of arrested suspects of burglary. The average age of residential burglars was 19, with non-residential burglars slightly older (20 years of age). It was also found that a quarter of reported residential burglaries are committed by offenders under 16 years of age and half by offenders under 18 (Ratcliffe 2001).

The present study aims to explain what happens to property after it has been stolen. Its purpose is to collect and analyse data that would assist the ACT Government and police in developing appropriate crime control and prevention strategies and policies.

It focuses on several key areas of the ACT property market:

- sources of stolen property in the ACT (that is, the types of locations from which goods are most frequently stolen);
- what time thefts occur;
- what goods are stolen (type of item and the amount received when sold);
- a profile of property offenders (including motives, frequency of stealing and methods employed);
- methods used to dispose of stolen goods (including those preferred by offenders); and
- the extent to which goods are recovered;

Also considered is the effectiveness of deterrent measures and the costs of the stolen property market to the ACT community.

Methodology

Given the descriptive and exploratory focus of the research, a number of data collection methods were used:

- interviews with community-based property offenders;
- interviews with second-hand dealers;
- a public survey;
- analysis of insurance data; and
- analysis of recorded crime data.

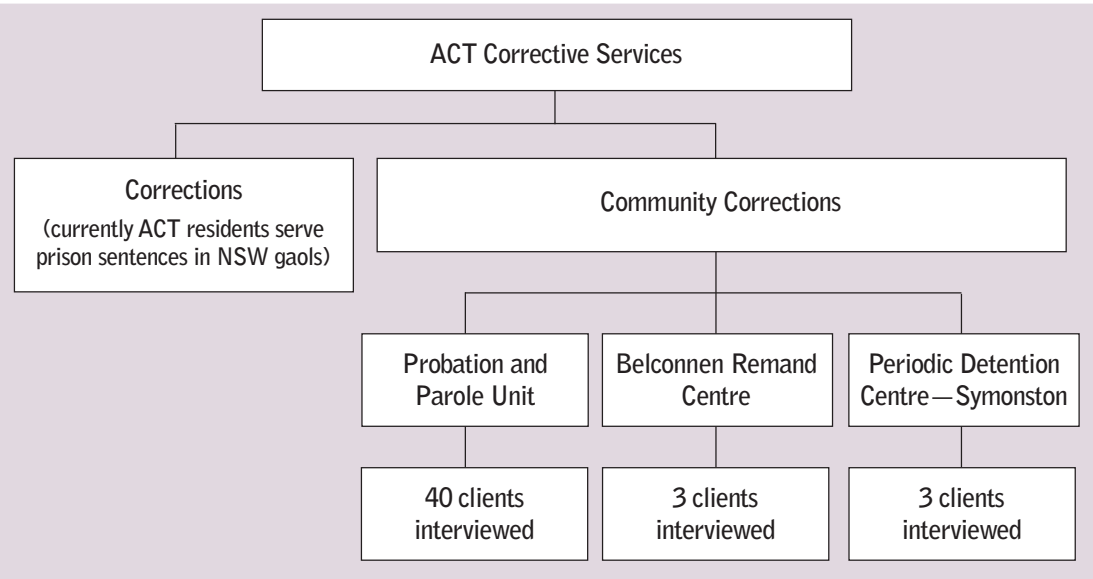
In addition, a literature review (see Appendix 1) was also conducted.

The AIC’s Ethics Committee approved the research proposal in June 2001. Data collection began in July 2001.

Interviews with Property Offenders

Research into stolen property markets often uses interviews with property offenders and receivers of stolen goods—incarcerated or otherwise—to gain both quantitative and qualitative information. Interviews are a rich source of information because they generally enable the collection of first-hand information (see Appendix 6 for a copy of the interview schedule).

Figure 1: The ACT Corrections system



Semi-structured interviews were conducted for this study with community-based property offenders. Interviews were undertaken at three ACT Corrective Services sites (see Figure 1):

- the Probation and Parole Unit;
- the Belconnen Remand Centre; and
- the Periodic Detention Centre at Symonston.

Criteria for Participating in Interviews

Clients at the three Community Corrections sites were assessed as to their suitability for participation in the research project. The criteria included clients with a history of:

- burglary;
- other theft (excluding motor vehicles); and/or
- handling stolen property.

Whether a client had been **arrested** or **convicted** for property offences was not a criterion because:

- not all property offenders are arrested—some may be summonsed to appear in court, others may voluntarily agree to appear in court;
- not all property offenders are charged for all crimes they commit;
- not all property offenders are convicted of the offences they are charged with; and
- some property offenders may be found guilty of an offence but not convicted.

Persons who had engaged in property crime in the past two years were targeted.

Corrective Services staff were encouraged to refer suitable interviewees after case management meetings. Table 1 shows the breakdown of clients referred and the number who actually participated in the interview.

Table 1: ACT Corrective Services referrals and interviews

	Belconnen Remand Centre	Periodic Detention Centre	Probation and Parole Unit	Total
Identified as suitable by staff	10	9	62	81
Met with researcher	6	7	52	65
Already participated	1	2	1	4
Did not meet selection criteria	2	4	7	13
Refused to interview	0	0	1	1
Completed interviews having met selection criteria	3	3	40	46
(Percentage agreed to interview)	(30)	(33)	(65)	(57)

Problems Related to Interviewing Offenders

Due to concerns surrounding the interviewing of minors in the absence of a responsible third party, juveniles were not included in the study. Incarcerated offenders were also excluded. They had been the focus of a detailed study in New South Wales by Stevenson and Forsythe (1998). The information obtained about the ACT stolen property market therefore reflects a subgroup of offenders who have not yet been sent to the prison system.

A target sample of 100 offenders was initially identified. This was based on discussions with ACT Corrective Services who indicated that many offenders were in the designated client group of interest. A number of difficulties arose that resulted in a much smaller sample size than initially anticipated. The predominant issue was an unreliable clientele. While clients are scheduled to meet with case managers on a regular basis, there is no guarantee that they will keep their appointment. Many of the clients scheduled to attend simply did not turn up. Ultimately, 46 offenders were interviewed.

Probation and Parole Unit

The Probation and Parole Unit supervises alleged and convicted offenders on bail, parole, community-based and periodic detention orders to ensure compliance with the conditions imposed by the court and prisoner-releasing authority. Clients of the Probation and Parole Unit are assigned to and supervised by a case manager and are usually required to attend meetings on a regular basis. The frequency of these meetings varies for each case.

After consultation with the manager of the Probation and Parole Unit it was agreed that case managers would identify and refer for interview those clients who met the criteria for this project. Forty Probation and Parole Unit clients participated in interviews for this project.

Belconnen Remand Centre

The Belconnen Remand Centre provides safe and secure housing for prisoners on remand; that is, people who have been refused bail and people who have been found guilty of an offence but not yet sentenced. Although the centre has an operational capacity of 55 detainees, this is frequently exceeded.

Only one data collection period was undertaken at the Belconnen Remand Centre. The Acting Superintendent was asked to identify for interview those inmates with a history of burglary, theft (excluding motor vehicles) and handling stolen property. On the interviewing day, 60 people were remanded in custody. Eleven inmates were identified as meeting the study criteria. Of these, three completed interviews.

Unlike interviewing people in prison or community corrections whose matters have generally been finalised, interviewing offenders on remand poses a number of problems. Generally, remanded offenders are highly suspicious of people asking questions about

their involvement in criminal activity, particularly if they have outstanding matters in court or have yet to be sentenced. Discussions with the Acting Superintendent confirmed that in the past inmates have been suspicious of, and reluctant to talk to researchers.

Also, Canberra is a small community. Interviewees may have been reluctant to participate in research for fear of reprisal. There may be little anonymity for people, especially if there is a tight network of property offenders.

Periodic Detention Centre (PDC)—Symonston

Each weekend there are about 30 offenders in periodic detention and another 30 with outstanding warrants (offenders who have neglected to attend periodic detention). Offenders are required to attend the PDC from Friday afternoon to Sunday afternoon. On Saturdays and Sundays offenders carry out community work in groups. Compulsory cognitive skills programs are also run over a 10-week period on Saturday nights.

Two data collection periods were attempted at the PDC. The first took place on 24 September 2001 and a second on 3 November 2001. On this occasion staff at the PDC identified detainees with a history of property crime by examining offender files, referring suitable detainees to the researchers.

Nine property offenders were identified and referred to the researchers, however only three were actually interviewed. The majority of detainees referred at the PDC, like those at the Belconnen Remand Centre, claimed that they were either not property offenders (despite their files indicating they were) or that they only engaged in theft once.

Case Studies

While conducting the formal survey it quickly became apparent that the offenders were offering information about their offending behaviour which was beyond the scope of the questionnaire. As a result it was decided to tap this rich source of qualitative data by keeping detailed case studies from the interviews. The case studies were taken from people interviewed during the pilot period and the data collection phase, as well as clients who were not included in the study but had engaged in some discussion with the researchers about the stolen property market. Extracts from the case studies appear throughout this report.

Interviews with ACT Second-hand Dealers

Anecdotal evidence suggests that second-hand dealers may receive and then sell stolen goods within the ACT. In order to learn more about this relationship, a cross-section of second-hand dealers in the ACT were interviewed (using a semi-structured interview). The aim of the interviews was not to gauge whether second-hand dealers had purchased stolen goods. Rather, information was sought regarding their experiences, if any, of

being offered property which may have been stolen. Specifically this included information about:

- the types of stolen goods offered;
- the people offering the goods;
- the value of the goods; and
- the frequency with which stolen goods are offered.

A sample of licensed second-hand dealers was selected from the *Yellow Pages*. Selection was based on the types of goods traded (as indicated by the *Yellow Pages* listing). Second-hand dealers of jewellery, small goods and electrical items, computer equipment and compact discs were identified for interview. A letter from the AIC and the ACT Department of Justice and Community Safety was sent to potential interviewees outlining the purpose of the research and the aim of the interviews (see Appendix 3). Twenty-two letters were sent and 15 second-hand dealers were ultimately interviewed. In two cases, participants represented two stores, which they either owned or managed. Five second-hand dealers declined to be interviewed because they felt they could not assist with the research. These stores tended to be furniture and/or antique traders.

The second-hand shops included:

- two pawn brokers;
- two general second-hand dealers;
- two jewellers;
- four furniture and/or antique dealers; and
- seven compact disc, game software and/or computer dealers.

The interviews were held in September and October 2001. While most were conducted at the place of business, a few took place in coffee shops or nearby park areas. Interviews took between 30 minutes and an hour to complete, and in some cases a staff member participated with the store manager in the interview. The reference period for the interviews was the past 12 months.

Legislation Governing Second-hand Dealers in the ACT

Until recently, licensed second-hand dealers in the ACT were governed by the *Second-hand Dealers and Collectors Act 1906* (NSW). Goods covered by the 1906 Act—described as “old wares”—reflected the age of the legislation and did not cover the types of goods that are most frequently stolen today.

New legislation was introduced on 17 April 2002 (the *Second-Hand Dealers Regulations 2002*). The new regulations bring the ACT closer in line with NSW legislation which was amended in 1996. The regulations are designed to make it more difficult for thieves to dispose of goods through second-hand dealers and to ensure that stolen goods sold to second-hand dealers can be identified and recovered by the police (ACT Department of Justice and Community Safety, personal communication, 2002).

The regulations specify which goods are considered “second-hand” as well as the records that must be kept when buying and selling those goods. Dealers must include the date and time the goods were received, a description of the goods, and details of the person selling the goods. The person selling to the dealer must provide either one document containing a recent photograph or three different types of documents such as a birth certificate, credit card or service bill, one of which must show the person’s home address. When a dealer sells the goods, the date and time of the sale, and the name and the address of the person buying the goods must be recorded.

In both the ACT and NSW, the licensee must be satisfied that the person selling the goods is in fact the owner of the goods and must complete a declaration to that effect. Furthermore, the records maintained by second-hand dealers and the goods to which they refer must be available for inspection by the police. Under the NSW legislation, second-hand dealers must keep computer records of all sales and purchases (although exemptions may be given) and this must be regularly provided to the police. Although this legislation does not apply to ACT vendors, it seems that most second-hand dealers in the ACT follow the NSW legislation in record-keeping and the provision of this information to the police.

ACT dealers are only required to keep the goods for five days before they can be disposed of rather than the 14 days required under NSW legislation. They must also notify the police if they receive property that matches the description of an item that has been reported stolen.

The Public Survey

Other studies (see Allen 2000; Cromwell & McElrath 1994) have attempted to gauge the involvement of the public in the stolen goods market in terms of their willingness to buy stolen goods. Surveying members of the public can potentially yield valuable information about the types of stolen goods offered, the supplier and/or distributor, the price of goods, and the frequency at which goods are offered. While the survey undertaken for this project did not explore whether members of the public actually bought or accepted stolen property, it did seek to gather information relating to the offer of stolen property in the ACT. That is, it sought data on the particulars of the offer.

Only four people responded to the first public survey, which was advertised by email in July 2001 (Appendix 4). There were insufficient funds to conduct a face-to-face community survey. A number of reasons may have contributed to the low response. There is limited control over an email snowball sample and obviously with this kind of approach the sample was restricted to those who have access to email and the Internet. Also, participants were required to telephone the AIC to participate in the survey.

Due to the low response rate, a second public survey was conducted over a four-week period in March 2002. This was a web-based survey posted on the Internet. It was again snowballed via email distribution lists as well as being placed on the web sites of the AIC

and the ACT Department of Justice and Community Safety (see Appendix 5). It was thought that this approach might yield a greater response rate because people could complete the survey immediately and anonymously. Again, however, the response rate was very low. As a result, the data from the public survey were not analysed or included in this report.

Analysis of Insurance Data

Given the limitations of recorded crime data, information from insurance agencies was sought to more accurately determine the size and value of the ACT stolen property market, as well as the type of goods stolen from premises. To a lesser extent, data were obtained to learn more about recovered goods.

A joint letter from the AIC and the ACT Department of Justice and Community Safety was sent to three major insurers in Canberra—NRMA, GIO/AMP and AAMI—requesting access to any available data concerning stolen property claims. Personal information about insurance clients or their claim histories was not collected.

The following information was requested for the two-year period from 1999–2000 to 2000–2001:

- number of claims;
- number of goods stolen from particular premises;
- types of goods stolen;
- value of the goods (cost of replacement/claim); and
- characteristics of recovery, if at all (that is, where goods are recovered from and within what time frame).

All insurance agencies agreed to participate in the project, however they differed in the type of data they were able to provide. There was a consistent lack of available data on the number of goods stolen from particular premises, and characteristics surrounding recovered goods. All data provided were in aggregated form, and all insurance agencies provided some type of “other” information. Table 2 outlines the type of data received from the insurers.

Table 2: Data received from insurance agencies

	Insurance Agency 1	Insurance Agency 2	Insurance Agency 3
1999–2000 data	✓	x	✓
2000–2001 data	✓	✓	✓
Number of claims	✓	✓	✓
Number of goods stolen	x	x	x
Types of goods stolen	✓	✓	x
Value of goods/cost of claims	✓	✓	✓
Recovered goods	x	x	x
Other information	✓	✓	✓

Insurance Agency 1 forwarded data for the two-year period on the description and value of “replacement items” under generic categories. In addition, the number of claims, as well as the number of policies against which a claim was made, were provided.

Because of resource limits, Insurance Agency 2 was not able to provide data for 1999–2000. It did provide a list of the top six categories of items involved in household burglary/theft and housebreaking. Unfortunately, the value of these goods was not available. Other data provided included:

- cost (payout) of claims, by month;
- claims, by ACT suburb;
- covers, by ACT suburb; and
- claim frequency, by ACT suburb.

Agency 3 forwarded a breakdown of household burglary data for the two-year period. This included the number of claims by month and by ACT suburb, and the amount paid in claims by month and by ACT suburb. From this information the average cost of a claim was determined. No information was provided on the type of goods claimed, or their value.

Analysis of ACT Recorded Crime Data

Recorded crime data were sought from ACT Police in order to identify theft trends, the characteristics of property offenders, the type and value of stolen goods, particulars of property recovery, and the rate of return to owners. In addition, it was envisaged that case studies of offenders and their activities could be derived from analysis of police data. The data requested was:

- property offence data:
 - burglary;
 - theft;
 - handling stolen property;(note: excludes burglaries and other property offences where no property was stolen)
- particulars of the above offences:
 - offender/s;
 - what goods were taken/traded;
 - value of the goods;
 - where it was traded/stolen from;
 - when the incident occurred;
- stolen goods:
 - reported stolen in Canberra;
 - value of the goods;

- premises from which they were stolen;
- if recovered, what, where, time period between theft and recovery; and
- criminal histories of people who in the past two years were arrested/charged with burglary, theft and handling stolen property.

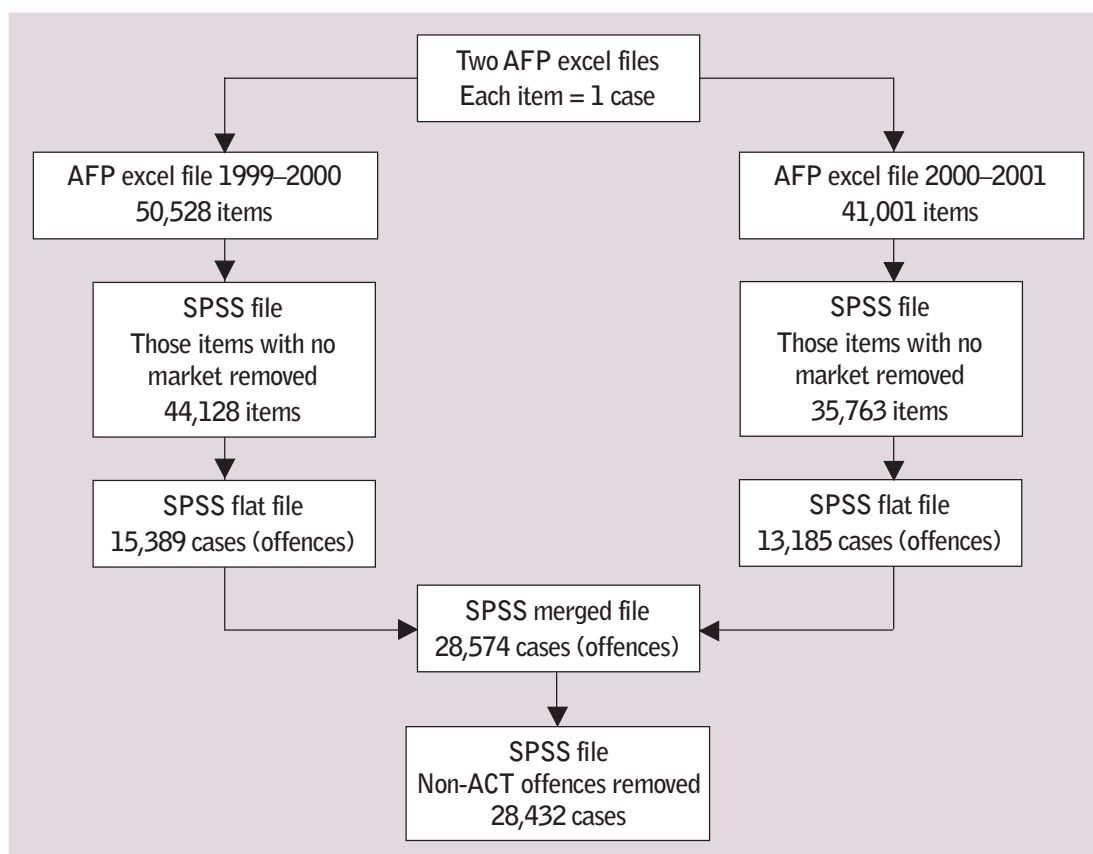
Recorded crime data on property offences for 1999–2000 and 2000–2001 (see Figure 2) was provided, however criminal history data were not available. The PROMIS records contained details of 91,529 goods recorded stolen in the ACT. The research design explicitly excluded motor vehicle theft, so records relating to car theft were excluded. Also excluded were items for which there was not an illegal “market” (for example, there is no stolen property market for cash). The limitations of administrative data are well known. In this particular study, much of the data were reliant on victims and what they reported to police. Often victims cannot recall exactly what was stolen and estimates of the value of goods are often inaccurate.

A flat file was created resulting in 28,574 records. In 142 records the incident location was outside the ACT. These cases were also deleted, reducing the file to 28,432 records (Figure 2).

This provided two files for analysis:

- all recorded property items stolen (n=79,517); and
- each offence of property crime (n=28,432).

Figure 2: Recorded crime data management



Findings

1. Location of theft

Data detailing the location of property thefts in the ACT were drawn from interviews with Corrective Services clients and from recorded crime data for the ACT. The focus is on the types of locations targeted and the distinctions between these locations rather than on the precise address at which the offence occurred.

Types of Premises Targeted

ACT Recorded Crime Database

Between July 1999 and July 2001 there was no substantial change in the type of premises targeted by stolen property offenders in the ACT. Residential dwellings remain the number one target for offenders, accounting for 47 per cent of all stolen property offences, while 34 per cent occur at “other” premises and 19 per cent at commercial premises. “Other” premises includes public places (such as car parks), educational facilities and hospitals.

Table 3: Type of premises targeted in the ACT (per cent)

	1999–2000	2000–2001	Total
Residential	48	45	47
Non-residential	52	55	53
Commercial	18	21	19
Other	34	34	34
(n)	(13,553)	(11,679)	(25,232)

Note: Does not include 3,200 offences with unknown offence location.

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, ACT Recorded Crime Database 1999–2001 [computer file]

Grouping commercial and “other” properties together reveals that 53 per cent of stolen property offences occurred at non-residential premises (Table 3). These offences can be broken down into burglary cases and theft (including minor theft). Table 4 indicates that non-residential premises are more likely to be the target of theft, while residential dwellings are more likely to be the target of burglary. This is consistent with Ratcliffe’s (2001) study of burglary offences.

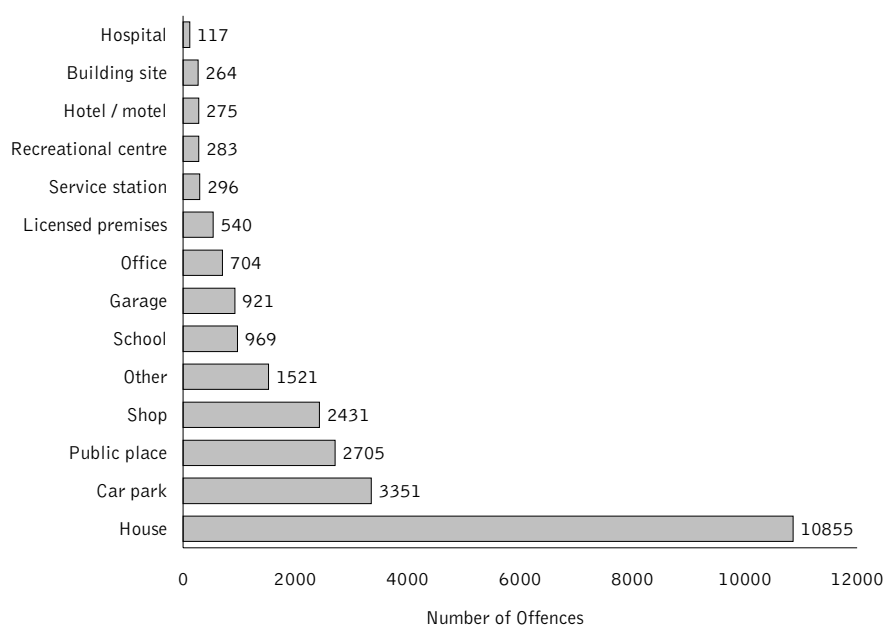
Table 4: Premises type by offence (per cent)

	Residential	Non-residential	Total
Burglary	60	15	36
Minor theft	33	67	51
Theft	7	16	12
Other	1	2	1
(n)	(11,776)	(13,456)	(25,232)

Note: Does not include 3,200 offences with unknown offence location. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Figure 3 details the type of premises from which property was stolen. The most common location was a house, followed by car parks and public places. In 11 per cent of cases no location was recorded. Table 5 shows that houses account for 43 per cent of all locations and car parks 13 per cent. However, in terms of the overall amount of property stolen, houses disproportionately account for more items. On average, approximately four items are reported stolen from houses, two from car parks and two from public places. It is important to note that recorded crime data is dependent on crime being reported to the police. Crime victim surveys show that 17 per cent of Australians in 1999 did not report burglary-related offences to the police and 63 per cent did not report attempted burglaries (International Crime Victims Survey, cited in AIC 2002).

Figure 3: Locations of ACT stolen property offences, July 1999 to July 2001



Note: Does not include 3,200 offences with unknown offence location.
Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, ACT Recorded Crime Database 1999–2001 [computer file]

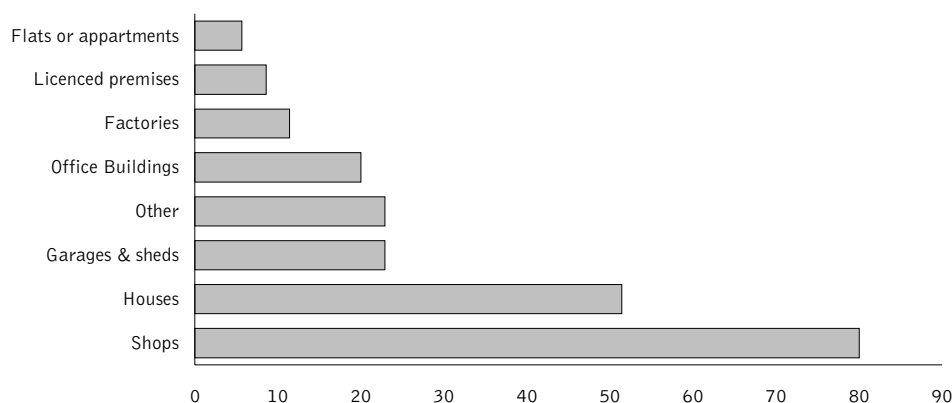
Table 5: Major stolen property locations

	Per cent of total stolen property offences	Per cent of total stolen property	Average number of items stolen per offence
House	43	61	4.1
Car park	13	9	2.1
Public place	11	7	1.8
Shop	10	7	2.0
School	4	2	1.8
Other	20	14	2.1
(n)	(25,232)	(73,016)	

Note: Does not include 3,200 offences with unknown offence location. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, ACT Recorded Crime Database 1999–2001 [computer file]

During the Corrective Services interviews, offenders were asked about the location of their thefts. They were able to indicate more than one type of location. Eighty per cent said they usually stole property from shops. Only 50 per cent said they usually stole from houses (see Figure 4). Other locations mentioned were cars, schools and building sites.

Figure 4: Premises from where property is usually stolen (per cent)



Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, ACT Property Offenders Survey, 2001 [computer file]

The recorded crime database shows that for every one “shop” offence, there are four “house” offences. Figure 4 may consequently suggest that those offenders who usually steal from houses are more frequent repeat offenders than those who steal from shops. However, there are other possible explanations:

- more shoplifters than burglars may have been referred to the researchers for interview;
- victims of household burglaries may be more aware of the theft and to report it to police than victims of shop or business theft—a situation that would therefore lead to under-reporting of the theft from shops in the recorded crime data; and
- interviews with Corrective Services offenders were self-report accounts—not confirmed by other evidence.

There was a clear group among those interviewed who only stole property from shops.

Male offender, aged 27, engaged in theft from shops to support a drug habit—mostly used heroin. He stole alcohol and clothes. He chose to steal from shops because “they can afford it and they have money”. He did not steal from houses because it is too personal; his family was a victim of burglary when he was younger.

Another group stole property from both shops and houses. There was only a small percentage of offenders who stole only from houses.

Twenty-seven-year-old male was stealing property to support his drug habit and that of his girlfriend. Most of the time he stole from people’s houses or their garages/sheds but sometimes from shops and licensed premises. He thought that houses were the quickest

way to get things. He chose wealthy-looking homes because they would be insured. He stole everything except jewellery. When stealing from shops it was mostly food but if the opportunity arose at licensed premises he would also steal from there.

As shoplifting is a minor offence, it may thus be the property offence of choice for those engaged in opportunistic crime or who are not “professional” property offenders (see also Maher et al. 1998; Sutton 1998). Once an offender has become entrenched in the stolen goods market, he or she may then progress to more serious burglary offences. In this sense shoplifting may be seen as a “gateway” offence, which in time may lead an offender into more serious property offences (see Literature Review in Appendix 1).

Table 6 shows the most commonly stolen property from each type of premises. Once the offender has an idea of the type of premises they will steal from, they must then select the exact location.

Table 6: Most commonly stolen property by location

Location	Most common items (%)	Second most common items (%)
Building site	Trade tools/garden tools (70)	Electrical/white goods (10)
Car park	Car stereos (11)	Clothing (10)
Licensed premises	Mobile phones/accessories (36)	Handbags/briefcases (14)
House	Jewellery (25)	Cameras (6)
Hotel/motel	Mobile phones/ accessories (13)	Clothing (12)
Public place	Mobile phones/ accessories (13)	Car stereos (9)
Office	Computers/ accessories (42)	Mobile phones/ accessories (12)
Shop	Clothing (12)	Mobile phones/ accessories (10)
Service station	Car related (26)	Alcohol (16)
School	Computers/ accessories (20)	Bicycles (12)
Recreational centre	Mobile phones/ accessories (15)	Wallets (13)
Garages	Trade tools/garden tools (41)	Bicycles (16)
Other	Trade tools/garden tools (23)	Car related (11)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate the percentage of total stolen property from each location.
Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, ACT Recorded Crime Database, 1999–2001 [computer file]

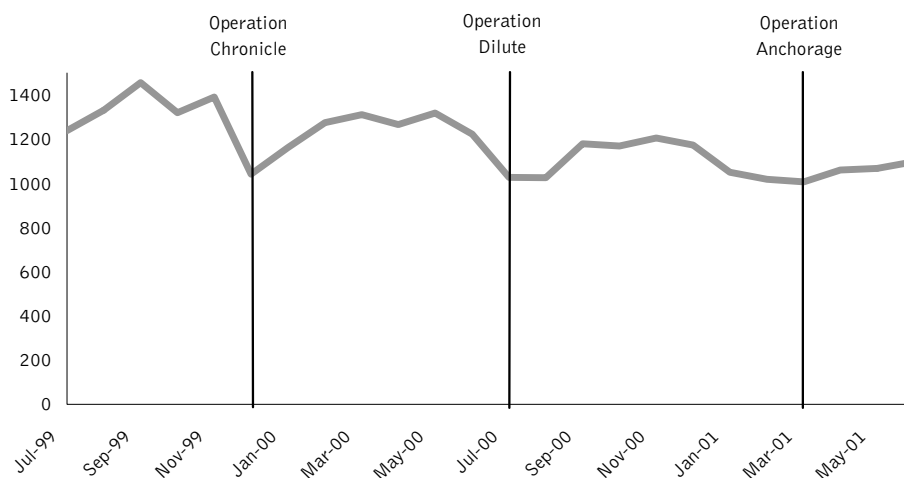
A 19-year-old male stole computers and other equipment from schools. He stole from the schools he went to because he knew what was there and was familiar with the schools.

A 24-year-old male stole from houses because he knew they had things he could sell.

2. Time of Theft

Over the 1999–2001 period, stolen property offences have remained relatively steady, averaging 1,185 offences per month. There appears to be no seasonal or monthly effect. This differs, however, from national studies and those undertaken in NSW that have found seasonal effects on burglary rates. For example, increases in the rate of burglary each January corresponds with school holidays. The ACT may also be affected by these patterns, although ACT burglary numbers may be too small to show any significant change. Police operations, however, do seem to have had an impact on the number of offences in the ACT. These operations were primarily targeted at burglary offences, though, so have had little effect on theft rates.

Figure 5: Monthly stolen property offences (number)

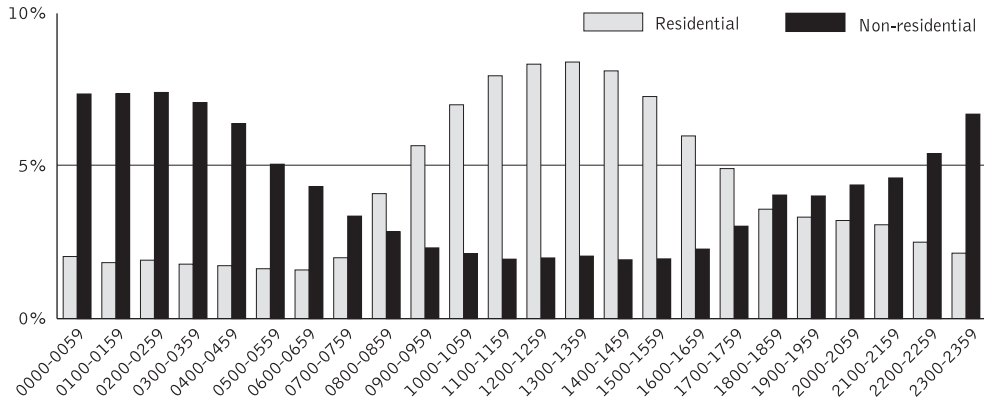


Note: Vertical lines indicate ACT police operations; only includes offences where items were stolen.
Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, ACT Recorded Crime Database, 1999–2001 [computer file]

Time of day has been shown to play a large role in determining when offences occur. Burglary patterns differ between residential and non-residential offences. Residential burglaries most frequently take place while occupants are not home; non-residential burglaries most frequently take place at night while premises are vacant.

Using an Aoristic analysis technique, Figure 6 examines the probability of offence times for burglaries in the ACT. It shows that the most common time for residential burglaries is between 8am and 6pm, while for non-residential burglaries the pattern is reversed. A similar analysis of days of the week shows a decrease in residential burglaries on Saturdays and Sundays (Ratcliffe 2001, p. 2).

Figure 6: Time risk of burglary in the ACT

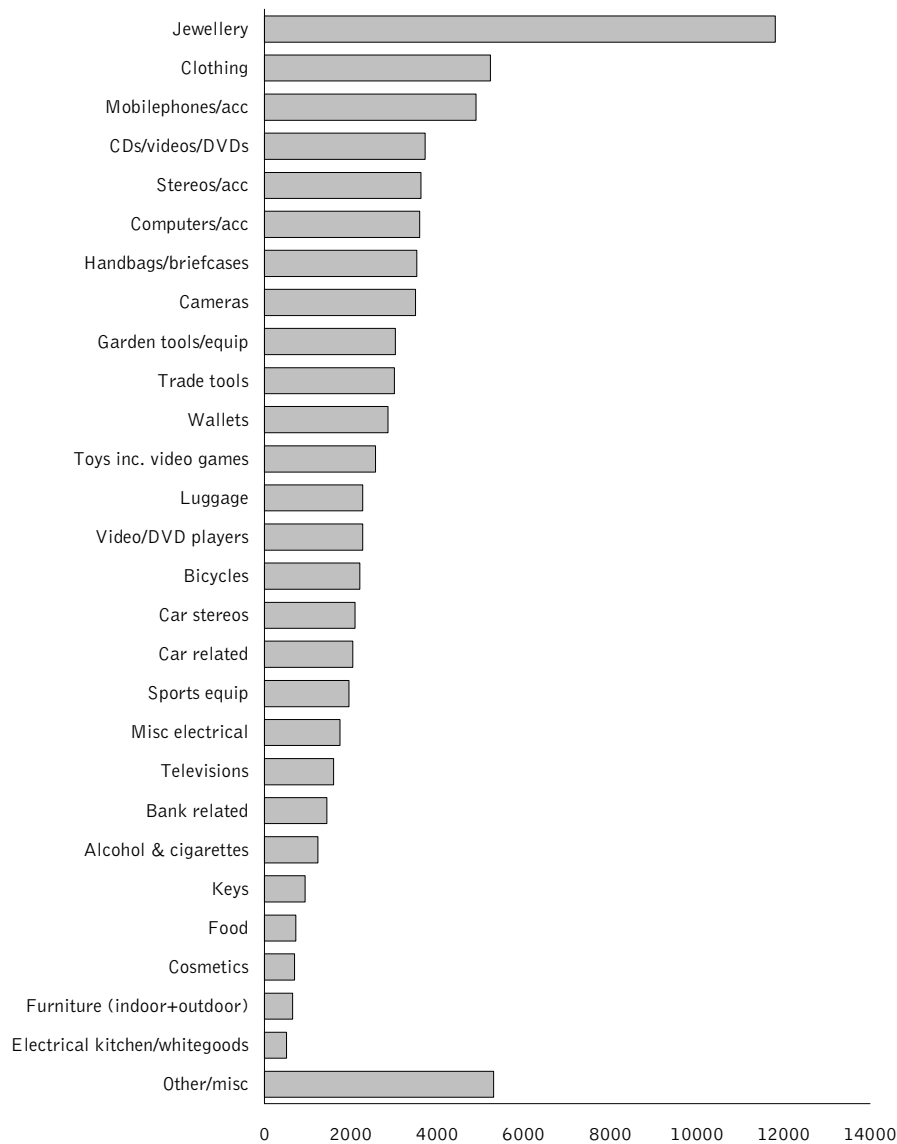


Source: Ratcliffe 2001

3. What is Stolen?

The present study reflects findings of earlier studies with regard to the most commonly stolen property items. The most frequently stolen items reported to the police in the ACT during this period were jewellery, clothing and mobile phones (see Figure 7). Stereos, DVD players and VCRs were also commonly reported as stolen.

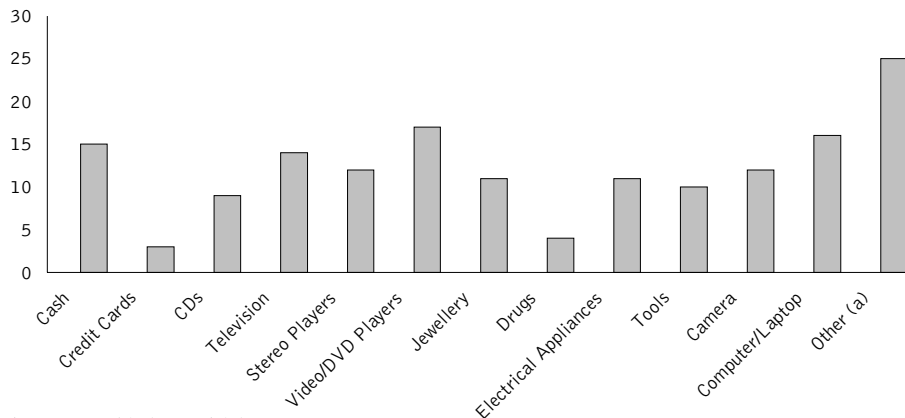
Figure 7: Types of stolen property 1999–2001 (number)



* "Other/miscellaneous" includes items such as books, stationery, coins and knives.
Source: Adapted from Australian Federal Police data [computer file]

Offenders interviewed through Corrective Services for this study were asked what types of property they usually stole. Cash, televisions, video and DVD players, computers and jewellery were common responses (Figure 8) These data are consistent with insurance data. Several insurance agencies in the ACT reported that jewellery is stolen very frequently in burglary incidents. Other items frequently reported stolen and claimed by

Figure 8: Items usually stolen (number)

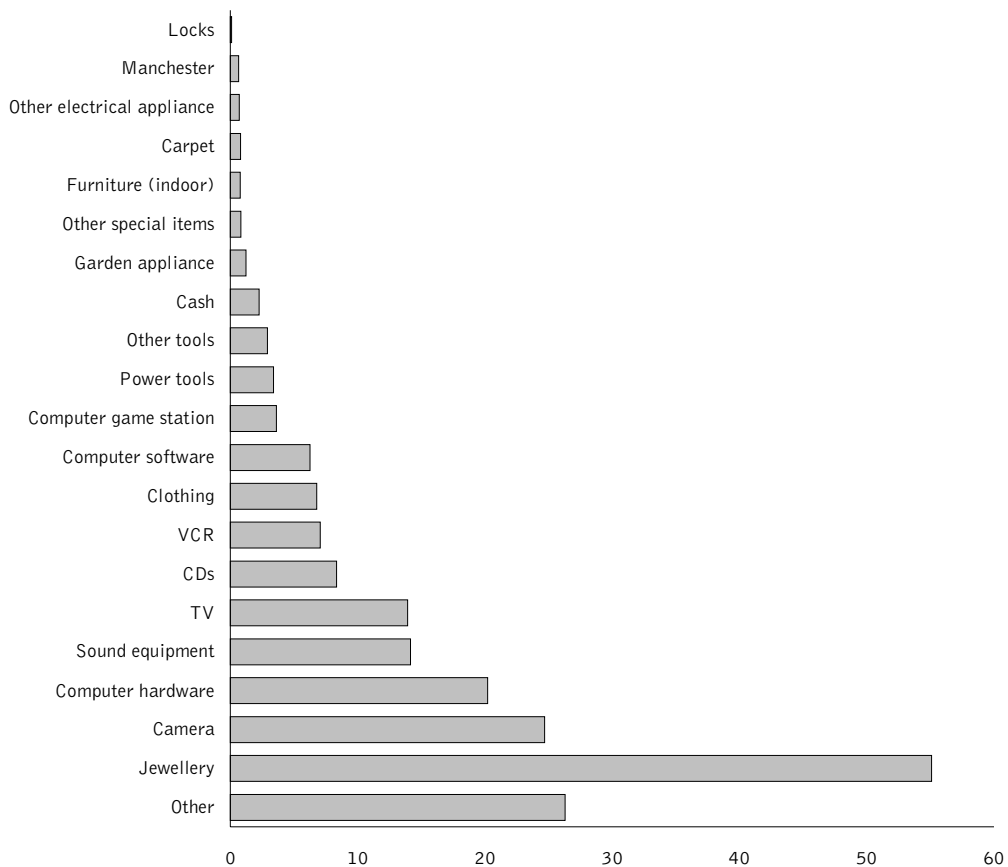


(a) Other includes cigarettes, mobile phones and clothing.
 Note: Multiple responses to this question were allowed.
 Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, ACT Property Offenders Survey, 2001 [computer file]

individuals are cameras, computers, electrical goods, power tools, mobile phones and DVD players (Figure 9).

31-year-old female stole at every possible chance. She stole cash, jewellery, electrical appliances, script pads from doctors and clothes (particularly lingerie). She stole whatever she could, whatever she thought was worth something.

Figure 9: Stolen items claimed in ACT, 1999–2001 (per cent)



Source: Adapted from Insurance Agency 1 data, 1999–2001

Male, 35 years old, engaged in theft of commercial office buildings. He stole computers, faxes, printers, scanners, etc. and worked in the industry buying, selling and repairing computer equipment.

Male offender, 22, stole electrical goods, DVD players, televisions, jewellery, cappuccino machines, clothes, etc. Most of the goods he stole were ordered from either businesses or drug dealers.

The interviews with second-hand dealers in the ACT garnered information about the kinds of goods encountered. Items offered were consistent with the types of goods the stores traded. For example, CD traders reported offers of CDs and games, jewellers reported offers of jewellery, and generalist traders reported offers of VCRs, DVD players and stereos. Only one dealer reported an offer of goods not consistent with what he sold in his shop. This was described as an isolated incident.

The type of goods offered to second-hand dealers might determine the frequency of the offer. For example, CDs and computer games appear to be offered more frequently than jewellery or antiques. It may be the case that CDs/games are stolen more often or, alternatively, that there is a larger market for these goods in Canberra. Compact discs, video and DVD players, stereos and televisions are readily available in legitimate markets, relatively easy to steal, and there is a high level of ownership of these items. It is plausible to expect, therefore, that these goods would be stolen and offered more frequently. Unless goods are labelled, or owners are aware of serial numbers, identifying marks or features, many of these items can quite easily blend in with legitimate goods. Proving ownership, or that the goods have actually been stolen, can be difficult.

Jewellery does not appear to be offered very often. When it is, the jewellery is apparently cheap in price and inferior in quality. It was suggested that expensive jewellery is likely to be moved to Sydney because of the small size of Canberra's market and the information networks that operate between stores in certain areas. Stolen jewellery would be relatively easy to identify in Canberra, particularly if it were an unusual piece. Managers conceded that victims of theft do ring up about jewellery stolen from their houses but that the goods never surface. In fact, jewellery stores are more likely to be *victims* of theft than to be offered jewellery acquired through theft.

A similar pattern may be emerging with antiques, although it is not clear how many are stolen in Canberra. Antique dealers have certainly reported thefts but little in the way of stolen goods seems to be offered to dealers. Generally there is good information-sharing between antique dealers as to what has been stolen and the characteristics of the theft. The difficulty of offloading antiques in Canberra (again because of the small market) was noted. Stolen antiques may be moved to Sydney through organised dealers. The exception, however, appears to be Royal Doulton figurines. A few antique dealers reported offers of these figurines by people who were willing to accept much less for the goods than they are worth.

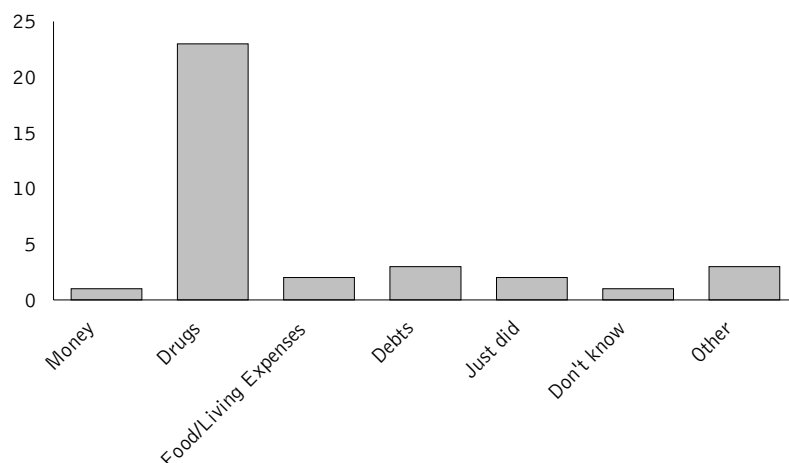
Attractiveness of Certain Goods

When interviewing offenders, the most frequently given reason for stealing particular items was that the goods could be sold quickly and easily (see, for example, Clarke 1999). An emerging problem identified in other literature is the dramatic increase in the number of mobile phones stolen (see Freiberg 1997; Briscoe 2001). Anecdotal evidence suggests that mobile phones are popular with drug dealers. They can be used to facilitate drug deals and other organised criminal activities. It is very difficult for the police to intercept calls made on mobile phones and when a phone has been stolen the thief can simply replace the SIM card and continue using the phone (Briscoe 2001). In the present study, mobile phones were not on the list of items thought to be commonly stolen but offenders, when prompted, would say they had stolen mobile phones.

A recent study in New South Wales found that mobile phones were often stolen from motor vehicles (Briscoe 2001). Cars were not often reported as the location of theft in the present study. Mobile phone thefts may be viewed as isolated incidents by the victims and not reported to the police. The recorded crime data found that mobile phones accounted for approximately six per cent of all items stolen over the past two years in the ACT.

Sometimes thieves focus on stealing particular items because they have found an outlet for that item. For example, two interviewees who were both involved with brothels (one as a prostitute and another as an employee) stole lingerie. Most offenders claimed that they knew what they wanted to steal before the event. Offenders who said they did not were asked about their decision-making process prior to offending. The most common response was to steal any type of good “if and when the opportunity arose”. Others “stole whatever could be sold”. The majority of offenders claimed their reasons for stealing goods related to their need to purchase drugs (n=23) (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Reasons for stealing property (number)



Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, ACT Property Offenders Survey, 2001 [computer file]

Male, 27, said that although he “stole everything”, he seemed to have particular outlets for tools—both the fence to whom he mostly sold goods, and a drug dealer. The drug dealer had friends in the trades who would accept the tools.

This situation is exemplified in the case studies below taken from interviews with offenders at Corrective Services. The drug use profile, the type of offending and type of goods stolen suggests that the interviewees were predominantly not “professional” thieves, but engaged in opportunistic crime.

Male, 21, engaged in property crime to support a drug habit. He stole property—a bit of everything: cash, videos, DVD players, computers, clothes, laptops—from houses, shops and cars because they were easy targets.

Male, 22, who had both stolen and received stolen property nominated almost everything on the questionnaire—cash, CDs, videos, DVDs, televisions, stereos, jewellery, electrical appliances, tools, cameras, computers. He was supporting a heroin habit and at his most active was making \$3,000 a week. He stole from a variety of premises (all on the list) but most frequently from shops, where he would pick up things people had asked for.

Male, 36, stole books. He stole from shops where he thought the security measures were less effective. He made about \$700 a week to support his drug habit. He had arranged outlets for disposing of the books.

Size and Value of Goods

Recorded crime data in 1999–2000 showed the mean number of goods reported stolen per incident was five. The number of items reported stolen per incident during this time varied from 1 to 77, although just over 90 per cent of all reported burglaries involved 12 items per incident or less. Approximately 36 per cent of reported burglaries involved the theft of just one item per incident. The situation changed little in 2000–2001. The mean number of goods reported stolen per incident remained at five. Again, there was a wide range in the number of items reported stolen per incident. Just over 90 per cent of all reported burglaries had 12 items or less stolen.

Some recorded crime data on the value of stolen goods were provided, however this category in the database was frequently not completed so there was a considerable amount of information missing. Many victims do not know the value of the goods. There were difficulties associated with assessing the quantity of goods taken in each incident based on the interviews with ACT Corrective Services clients. Although a few clients said that they had stolen only one item, the majority would give an approximation of how much they were earning from stealing goods—this was often in terms of the amount they were spending on drugs—rather than providing information on the value of goods they stole.

Second-hand dealers reported that most of the suspected stolen goods offered were single items, although CDs tended to be offered in larger quantities. Some CD traders reported up to 20 CDs at a time being offered. While the majority of goods offered to second-hand dealers are used goods, a few stores conceded that some goods appear to be

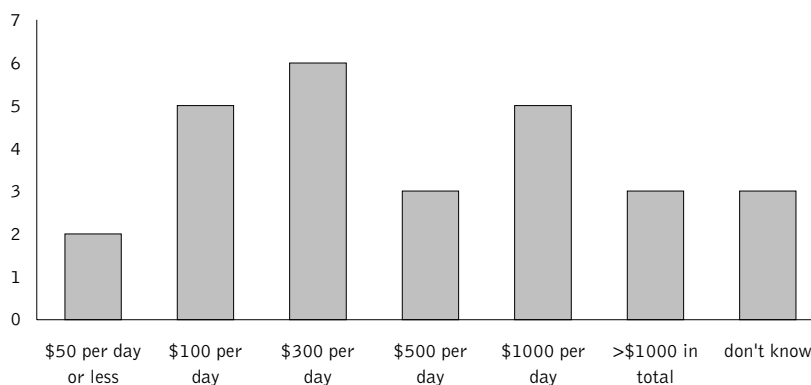
brand new, complete with store tickets and tags. It was reported that this happens more often with CDs and computer games than other goods. It was difficult for second-hand dealers to determine the value of goods offered due to the range of goods offered and their second-hand status.

Male, 19, would break into business premises eight or nine times a night to support an addiction to heroin and amphetamines. He also used the money to buy the “equipment” he needed for breaking into premises, such as crowbars. He claimed to earn about \$500 a day.

Male, 24, stole property about three or four times a week to support a heroin habit. He mostly stole from houses because he knew they had things he could sell, but he also stole from shops, factories and office buildings. Over a three-year period he made about \$10,000, which he used to buy drugs.

Figure 11 illustrates how much money the offenders claimed to be earning or spending on drugs each day.

Figure 11: Approximate money earned through property theft when most active (number)



Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, ACT Property Offenders Survey, 2001 [computer file]

Transportation of Stolen Goods

Property offenders were asked, “How did you take the property away from where you stole it?”

- 62 per cent indicated that they carried it;
- 16 per cent said they used a bag/backpack; and
- 22 per cent said they used a car.

In the ACT minor theft accounts for 51 per cent of stolen goods offences, with an average of 1.3 items stolen per offence. It is therefore less likely that a car is needed to carry goods. This may explain the difference from the findings of Stevenson and Forsythe (1998) who found that 75 per cent of burglary offenders used a vehicle during the offence. They also found the vehicle used had frequently had been stolen, particularly when the burglar was a juvenile. Other studies have found that burglars used public transport or taxis as well as their own cars, and in some cases, taxi drivers knowingly gave burglars transport (Sutton 1998).

4. Offender Profile

A profile of who commits property offences in the ACT was developed based on the interviews with Corrective Services clients. The profile includes the frequency of offending and reasons for doing so.

Gender

An earlier study of domestic burglary in the ACT found that 82 per cent were committed by males (Ratcliffe 2001). The present study supports this finding: approximately 78 per cent of the property offenders were male (n=36) and 22 per cent female (n=10).

Age

As mentioned, only adult offenders were interviewed in this study. The age breakdown was as follows:

- offender ages ranged from 19 to 47;
- the mean age was 25.4 years and the median was 22.5 years;
- half of the interviewees were aged 22 or under, while 78 per cent were less than 30 years of age.

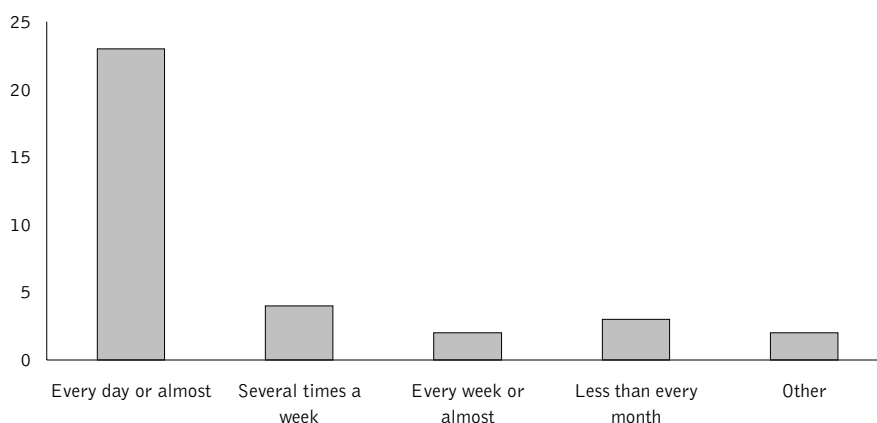
The age and sex of interviewed offenders is consistent with the overall profile of offenders (that is, young males).

Frequency of Offending

Figure 12 illustrates the reported frequency of offences committed by the offenders.

The majority (68 per cent) offended every day or almost every day. Some reported that they only committed one offence per day while others offended more frequently. Six responded that they offended about twice a day.

Figure 12: Reported frequency of offending (number)



Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, ACT Property Offenders Survey, 2001 [computer file]

Male, 19, would break into business premises “all night”—about eight or nine break-ins each night.

Female, 24, lived on earnings from shoplifting for approximately seven years. Would steal five or six times a day. Most of the money was obtained through seeking refunds for the goods stolen. Sometimes items (mostly computer-related, such as software packages) were taken to other businesses where they were sold for half the retail price.

Motivation for Offending

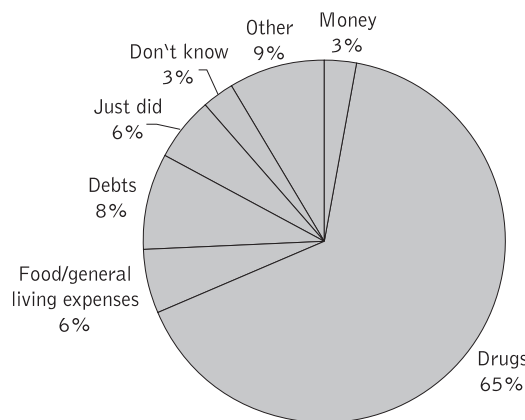
Drug use has an obvious relationship with property crime. Stevenson and Forsythe (1998) found that 83 per cent of property offenders spend their income on drugs, and that 90 per cent had used illicit drugs in the reference period before the interview (the past six months). The findings of the present study concur: offenders were asked what they did with the money they gained from stolen property and the majority answered that the money was used to buy drugs.

Female, 21, engaged in property theft every day to support a drug habit, discussed using heroin, pot, pills and speed. Goods would be exchanged for drugs, or money to buy drugs. Offender says she would steal from just about anywhere—office buildings, shops, restaurants, houses, doctor’s surgeries—with two other people. She stole from these places because they had “things”, either money or goods that would sell.

Male, 27, stole property to support his drug habit and that of his girlfriend. He made about \$200 a day. Sometimes he would trade the goods for heroin and the seller of the heroin would decide how much heroin to give him. He thought that he did not get a good deal.

Figure 13 examines why offenders stole property. Again, there was a strong correlate between drugs and property crime—65 per cent of interviewees claimed that they stole property to support a drug habit. Other reasons given included to pay off debts and to provide for general living expenses.

Figure 13: Reasons for stealing property



Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, ACT Property Offenders Survey, 2001 [computer file]

Twenty-one offenders reported they traded stolen property with a drug dealer. In three cases it was not known with whom the respondent exchanged drugs. These data are consistent with NSW data that disposing of stolen property is most frequently done through drug dealers (Stevenson & Forsythe 1998).

Method of Offending

When initiating a theft an offender has several choices. Does an offender's "wish-list" determine the premises they target, or does the choice of premises dictate the type of goods stolen? Seventy-nine per cent of the offenders interviewed said they knew what they wanted to steal before committing the offence, thus predetermining the type of premises generally targeted.

Male, 22, engaged in store theft at least once (sometimes twice) a day to support a heroin habit. He chose to steal from stores (department stores, electrical stores, etc) because they had the goods he wanted. Most of the goods he stole were ordered from either businesses or drug dealers.

One of the findings of the present study was the opportunistic nature of many burglaries and thefts. Houses were chosen somewhat randomly. One offender "just looked around for the 'right place'". Others mentioned that they chose houses that were in wealthy areas, were concealed by bushes, and where no-one was around. Business locations were chosen because the offender had been there and had a chance to look around to learn the layout of the place and the items that were desirable.

A female, 29, mostly stole from office buildings that she happened to be in. She emphasised the opportunistic nature of her offending. She said she would take money and purses from people's offices—sometimes she would return the wallet after removing the money.

Male, 24, stole property about three or four times a week to support a heroin habit. He mostly stole from houses but also from shops, factories and office buildings. He stole from houses because he knew they had things he could sell, and picked places where there were no people around—just took opportunities when they were apparent.

Nineteen-year-old male assessed the likelihood of places having goods worth stealing wherever he went. For example, if he saw petty cash he would break in later.

Comments such as "just sussed them out" and "whatever was easy" suggest that offenders may plan the burglaries/thefts to the degree that they look for places with reduced risks. However, there was not a great deal of preparation before committing a burglary/theft. Although the majority reported that they knew what property they wanted before committing the offence, the most frequently given reason for stealing a particular item was no more specific than that the offender knew it could be sold (79 per cent).

It is difficult to determine whether working with others or working alone in burglaries indicates opportunism or organisation. On the one hand, a group of people would seem to necessitate organisation and planning. However, it is easy to imagine, for example, a group of teenage boys behaving in a more risky or impulsive manner as a group than on their own. From the survey:

- 60 per cent stole property alone; and
- 40 per cent stole with others.

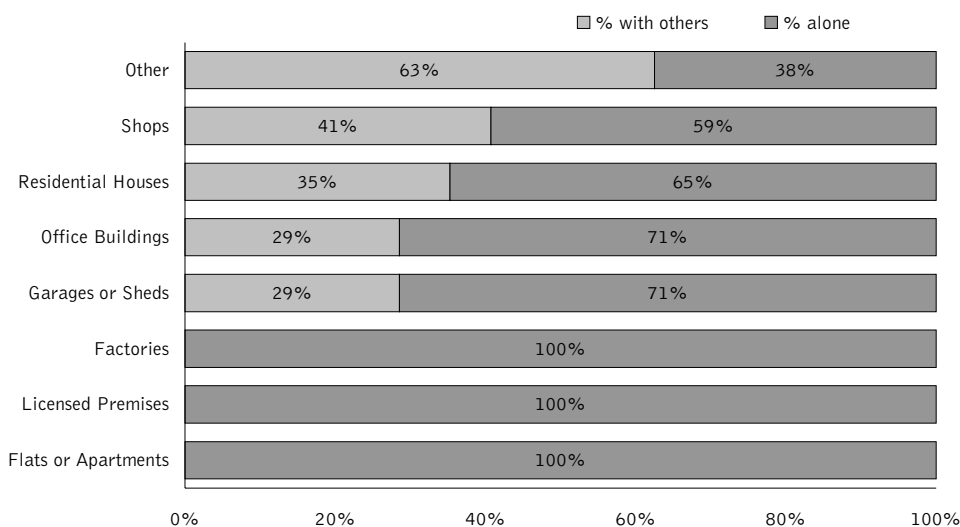
Of those who stole with others, 38 per cent did so with one companion and 43 per cent with more than one. Ratcliffe (2001) found that 70 per cent of offenders acted alone and 20 per cent acted with one other person. The NSW study undertaken by Stevenson and Forsythe (1998) reported that 46 per cent of offenders usually committed burglaries alone. They found that most juveniles burgled with accomplices. Other studies (Newbold 2000; Maher et al. 1998; Cromwell et al. 1991) have reported that domestic burglaries tend to be committed by inexperienced or younger offenders while more professional thieves focused on businesses.

Male, 22, engaged in store theft at least once (sometimes twice) a day to support a heroin habit. At times he would take his partner with him and she would create a distraction while he was stealing.

Male, 20, broke into a house once with two people he knew. Mostly he would steal clothing and trinkets from shops. He felt that he stole property because he was “in with a bad group” and the peer pressure led him to do so. He stole goods on impulse—he did not know what he wanted before he stole the items.

Figure 14 illustrates whether offenders usually stole alone or with others when stealing from a particular location category. Multiple responses were allowed for the type of location they usually stole from. There was a larger number of people stealing from shops with at least one other person than in any other defined type of location. Locations such as schools and public places were included in the “other” category. The data indicate that these places were more likely to be targeted by offenders working in pairs or groups. A possible explanation is that less experienced offenders have a higher tendency to steal in groups. This combination of inexperience, a group environment and a public place as a target may be indicative of a more opportunistic style of property offending.

Figure 14: Location of property offences committed alone or with others (per cent)



Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, ACT Property Offenders Survey, 2001 [computer file]

5. Disposing of Stolen Goods

Offenders were asked a variety of questions to determine what happened to property after it was stolen, such as:

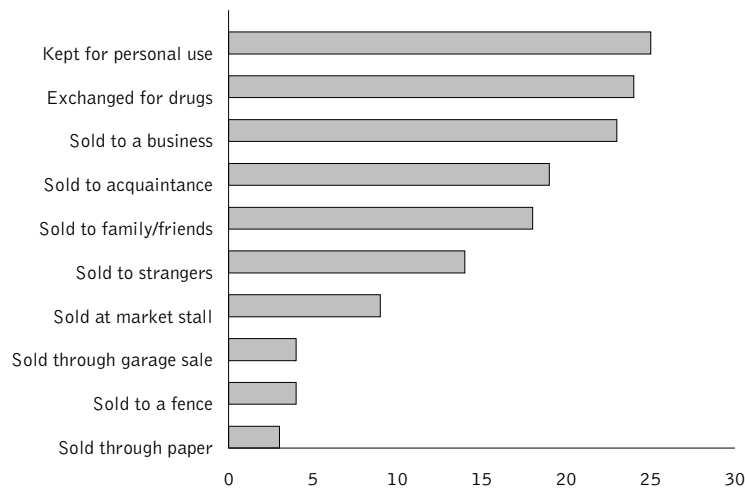
- whether the offenders kept the goods for their personal use or sold them to others;
- what the most desirable avenues for disposal were;
- what the length of time between stealing items and disposing of them was; and
- where the goods were usually stored prior to disposal.

Just under two-thirds said they had kept some of the goods for their own use. Other popular methods included selling to businesses, trading or selling the goods for drugs and selling to family and friends or to those people “seen around”. A few offenders claimed to have sold stolen property at market stalls or garage sales. One had sold stolen property to an auctioneer but this was a direct sale, not on consignment. When asked what other outlets were used for disposing of stolen property, five offenders answered that they sold goods to a fence, four to a drug dealer and three answered that they had advertised goods in a newspaper.

As offenders were not asked specifically if they had sold stolen goods to a fence or to a drug dealer, there could be some overlap in the outlets through which they disposed of stolen goods. For example, both drug dealers and fences could have been included in the “people you see around” category. Some may also have regarded the drug dealer to whom they sold goods as a friend, hence drug dealers were included in the “friend” category. There was no clear distinction at times between a drug dealer and a fence. In fact, many buyers of stolen goods who have a legitimate business could be described as a fence. In one case an offender used an intermediary to sell to a fence—this was outside any of the categories provided in the questionnaire.

Figure 15 shows the different ways in which offenders disposed of the goods they stole. Offenders were able to list all the ways they used and, as this chart shows, a large number kept some of the goods for their own use (although this might have been only a

Figure 15: Methods used by offenders to dispose of stolen property (number)



Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, ACT Property Offenders Survey, 2001 [computer file]

Table 7: Ways in which offenders dispose of stolen property (number)

	All/most of the time	About half of the time	Sometimes/once	(Total)
Kept for own use	9	3	13	(25)
Sold to: Businesses	11	3	9	(23)
Family/friends	4	1	13	(18)
People seen around	2	1	16	(19)
Strangers	4	0	10	(14)
Sold through: Market stall	3	0	6	(9)
Garage sale	0	0	4	(4)
Exchanged for drugs	10	5	9	(24)

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, ACT Property Offenders Survey, 2001 [computer file.]

small proportion of the goods they stole). It is possible that the people interviewed were minor offenders not involved in the distribution of stolen property.

Table 7 shows how often offenders disposed of stolen property to particular outlets. Most property was not sold to family, friends or people seen around, although a majority of offenders reported that they sometimes used these outlets. Offenders commented that they were more likely to give, rather than sell, goods to family and friends. The other three major avenues—keeping the property, selling to businesses or exchanging for drugs—are routinely used.

It appears there is a variety of legitimate businesses which will accept stolen property. These include local “corner stores” as well as shops in the centre of Canberra. The data suggested a network of outlets that offenders are familiar with, although some interviewees said they would approach places on their own initiative. While the interviews seemed to indicate many legitimate businesses are organised fronts for the disposal of stolen goods, it may be individuals who work within these businesses who accept stolen goods rather than the business being partly supported by dealing in stolen property (see Maher et al. 1998).

Female, 19, was stealing every day from shops to support a drug habit. She would offer stolen goods to restaurants without having information through the “network” that they would accept stolen goods.

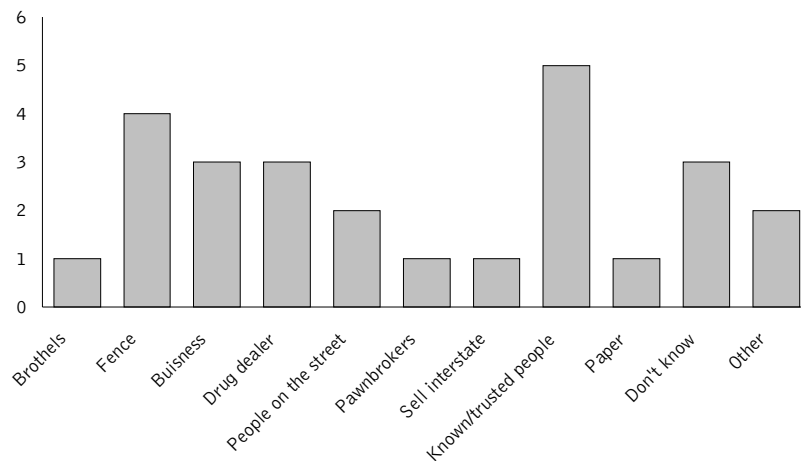
In the main, offenders said they did not know what happened to the property after it had been sold on. Furthermore, they were not interested in finding out about distribution. One thought that the drug dealer to whom the stolen items were sold had connections with “bikie gangs”; another thought that the stolen goods might have been sent in trucks up to Sydney. However, in some cases it was apparent that while the interviewees were willing to talk about their own criminal activities they were reluctant to give any information about their associates’ activities.

Male, 24, stole property about three or four times a week to support a heroin habit. Mostly he sold to businesses (that is, small business people such as mechanics, shops and restaurants). He also sold to an auction house. He was aware that some businesses shipped goods out of the ACT, probably to Sydney. Occasionally he sold to family and friends, people he saw around, or strangers. Sometimes he exchanged goods for drugs with a heroin dealer. He sold the stolen goods all over the place and would approach

strangers in the street—said that only once did someone say no. He said you could tell who was likely to buy the stolen goods but there was also a network which let people know.

There appeared to be “favourite” ways of disposing of stolen property, and this often influenced what offenders stole. Some said they sold items to restaurants while others would steal things like computer parts or software to sell to computer stores. Offenders frequently expressed a preference for selling to people they knew and trusted because this reduced the likelihood of getting caught. “Trusted people” covered the whole range of outlets, including fences. Offenders felt that fences offered the best deals. Several sold to second-hand dealers and pawnbrokers. They were not deterred by the need to show proof of identity—some getting caught as a result. Some used false ID or arranged for other people to sell the goods for them. However, a number thought that second-hand dealers were too risky.

Figure 16: What is the best way to dispose of stolen goods? (number)



Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, ACT Property Offenders Survey, 2001 [computer file]

Because it is the business of second-hand dealers to buy and sell used goods, it is reasonable to expect that some stolen property will make its way (knowingly or otherwise) into the second-hand goods market. The majority of goods traded by dealers come from distributors and suppliers of used goods, other second-hand dealers, members of the public and auction houses, although some second-hand dealers also trade in new goods.

According to the 15 store managers interviewed, all have experienced, at one time or another, an offer to buy property that they considered to be stolen. When specifically asked about their experiences in the past 12 months, the frequency of offers ranged from several times a week to only a few times in the past year. This difference appeared to be associated with the type of goods traded. Antique and furniture stores reported fewer offers of stolen goods in the past 12 months compared to CD and computer traders. Some interviewees pointed out, however, that offers of stolen property did seem to fluctuate around holiday periods, the introduction of police initiatives, and business movements within the area.

Table 8: Length of time before disposal of stolen goods (row percentages)

	Within hour/s	One day	One week	Varied/other	Don't know	(n)
Businesses	71	19	5	0	5	(21)
Family/friends	71	18	6	6	0	(17)
Acquaintances	59	12	6	24	0	(17)
Strangers	82	0	0	18	0	(11)

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, ACT Property Offenders Survey, 2001 [computer file]

Time Taken to Dispose of Goods

Because of the risk of being caught in possession of stolen property, thieves are anxious to dispose quickly of the goods they steal (Sutton 1995). Stevenson et al. (2001) found that about half their respondents disposed of goods within four hours. Kock et al. (1996) suggested that most burglaries took place in the morning and that the stolen goods were sold to handlers in the late afternoon of that day. Drug users tended to dispose of goods more quickly and at a lower price (Sutton 1998). When goods were not disposed of immediately by the burglar/thief, they were stored in the offender's home or a friend's home. Other storage places included vehicles, the family home and lock-up garages. Goods were also often hidden in bushes and collected later on (Sutton 1998).

In the present study, regardless of who was receiving the stolen goods, offenders reported that they usually were able to dispose of goods within a few hours of stealing them:

- 71 per cent when selling to businesses;
- 71 per cent when selling to family and friends;
- 59 per cent when selling to acquaintances; and
- 82 per cent when selling to strangers.

Approximately one-third said that at one time or another they had stored stolen goods between stealing them and disposing of them (either selling or giving them away). Of those who had stored stolen goods in the past, over half had not stored the goods for more than one week and usually did so in their own home.

Receivers of Stolen Goods

Ten of the stolen property offenders said that they had been charged with receiving or handling stolen goods. Some claimed that these were minor offences (such as receiving a stolen camcorder in order to video his partner's children; or a home entertainment system bought from a friend which turned out to have been stolen). Another offender claimed that he was just looking after property for a friend. Yet another said that he had kept all the property for his own use. The following case studies outline how offenders who received stolen goods on a more regular basis handled the goods.

Female in her 40s operated as a fence for all types of property including electrical equipment, computers, mobile phones, gems, tools and ornaments. She sold goods through a number of avenues—businesses, friends and family (although these were

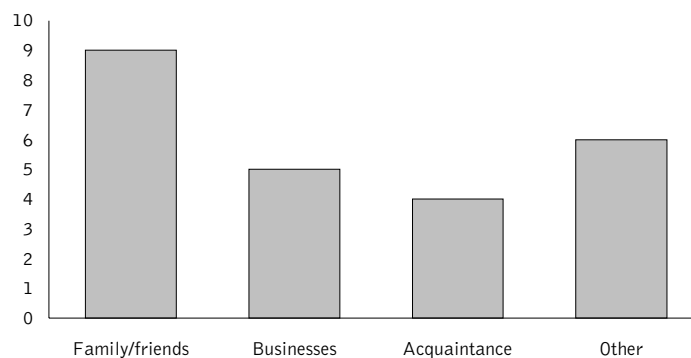
usually gifts), strangers, through the markets and at garage sales. About 70 per cent of all goods were sold to strangers who were referred to her.

Male, 47, received stolen goods including televisions, video/DVD players, jewellery, electrical appliances, tools and cameras. Sometimes he would keep things for a week before disposing of them, and would store the goods in his house or in a commercial storage space. Some property he kept for his own use. Most frequently he would dispose of the goods by advertising in the paper, although some of the time he would sell through a market stall or a garage sale. If he was unable to sell goods through these avenues he would take the goods to a second-hand dealer such as Cash Converters, but this was a last resort because the price paid for goods was lower. He thought that selling goods through the paper was the best way to dispose of stolen goods because it brought in the best price. He thought that some of the people who bought the goods knew they were stolen, but not all. He thought that the second-hand dealers did know they were stolen items but he said they did not care. He did not sell goods to family or friends but did sell to people he saw around. Whereas he might get a third of the new price of the goods by selling them either to people he knew slightly or through the paper, second-hand dealers would only pay a quarter of the new price. He was not concerned about getting caught by the police. He said that the second-hand dealers did not care if the goods were stolen and did not call the police.

Stealing to Order

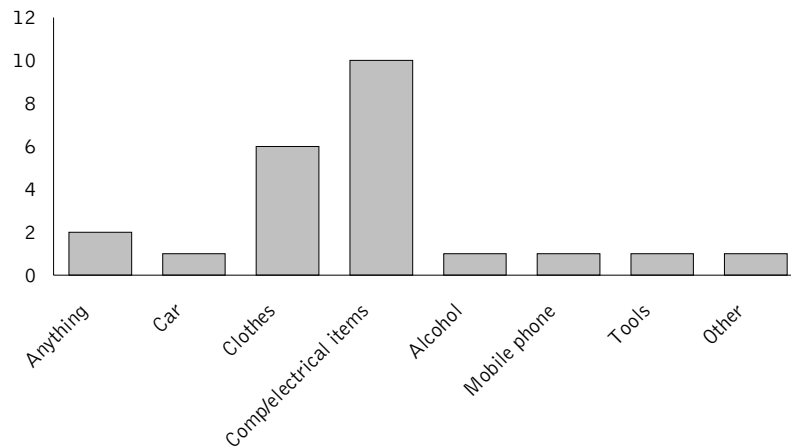
Offenders were asked if they had stolen property in the two years prior to interview because they had been asked to. Twenty-five had. The request to steal property was most commonly made by family members and/or friends. Five offenders had been approached by a business requesting the stolen items. The types of property most often requested were computers, other electrical items and clothing (see Figure 18).

Figure 17: Persons ordering stolen goods (number)



Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, ACT Property Offenders Survey, 2001 [computer file]

Figure 18: Type of property requested (number)

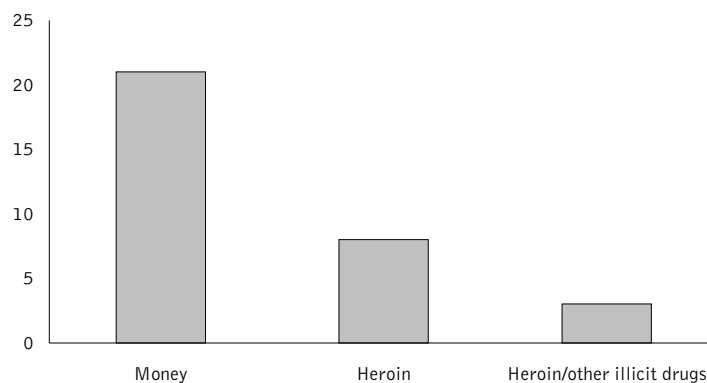


Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, ACT Property Offenders Survey, 2001 [computer file]

The form of payment received for these stolen goods was usually cash, although some offenders claimed to have received heroin and other illicit drugs in exchange for the goods. Fifteen offenders who had stolen goods “on order” stated that it had only taken them a few hours to get the goods. Six offenders stated that it would take them one week or less to do so.

Offenders were asked whether they knew what receivers did with the ordered items once they had been delivered. Almost half said the goods were kept for personal use (n=7), although some stated that the receiver was likely to on-sell the goods (n=4). These responses may have been based more on a desire to not implicate associates rather than a true reflection of what happened to the goods after sale.

Figure 19: Form of payment for ordered stolen goods (number)

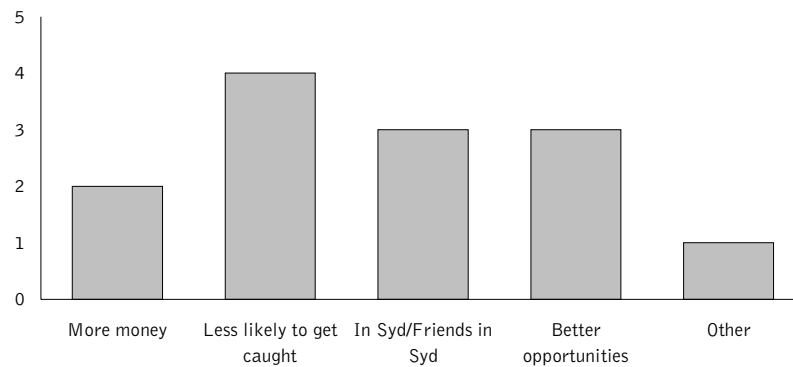


Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, ACT Property Offenders Survey, 2001 [computer file]

Moving Goods Interstate

Offenders were asked a series of questions pertaining to receivers of stolen items interstate, and the trading of stolen goods outside the ACT. Most sold their goods within the ACT (n=30), and 21 sold their stolen goods in the jurisdiction “all of the time”. They were asked whether the people they usually sold the goods to were planning to move the property outside the ACT; 22 offenders claimed that they were not planning to do so. Of the rest, most claimed that the goods were likely to have been moved to Sydney, Melbourne or Brisbane.

Figure 20: Reasons for selling outside of the ACT (number)



Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, ACT Property Offenders Survey, 2001 [computer file]

A small number sometimes sold stolen property outside of the ACT. Only one claimed to sell interstate “all of the time”, while 14 claimed to sell interstate “some of the time”. Over half of those who did sell interstate did so in Sydney (n=8). Offenders were questioned as to why they decided to sell the goods in places other than the ACT (see Figure 20). Offenders responded by claiming that they felt that they were less likely to get caught, that better opportunities existed elsewhere, they had contacts in Sydney and that they might receive more money interstate.

Price Received for Stolen Goods

The price paid for the vast majority of stolen goods seemed to be negotiated each time between the buyer and the seller. The amount received varied between one-quarter and one-half of the original value of the goods, but was usually around one-third of the original value. This was consistent across the range of outlets for disposal, including businesses, acquaintances and strangers. Property sold to family and friends was usually either given away or sold for a small amount of money. The amount received might also be much less if the offender desperately needed money for a specific reason, for example to purchase drugs.

When asked if they had made any money from stealing property in the previous two-year period, 27 said that they had. Five offenders said that they had made approximately \$1,000 per day; six estimated approximately \$300 per day; and seven reported making \$100 per day or less.

As one offender said: “You generally know what you can get for certain things; you can negotiate on the price you receive.” When exchanging goods directly for drugs some thought they obtained a better price, while others thought the opposite was true. However, the price was also influenced by the seller’s need for drugs.

A 20-year-old male burgled houses to support his \$800-a-day heroin habit. He said that there was a known market value for stolen goods. He suggested that he might receive \$600 for a television worth \$5,000. As did many offenders who were stealing to support a drug habit, he said that if he needed money he would sell things more cheaply—would receive perhaps \$10 or \$20 for an item he would sell to a family member.

Female, 25, thought that the price was determined by what the offender wanted the money for (for example, \$50 for one cap of heroin, \$100 for two caps) rather than what the goods were worth.

Female, 20, said if her husband was desperate for heroin they might sell a television worth \$3,000 for \$100.

Second-hand dealers reported that money was usually exchanged for the goods offered. Generally people would inquire as to “how much they can get for the goods”, and the store manager or employee would determine the selling price. One second-hand dealer reported someone willing to accept \$50 for Royal Doulton figurines, indicating either ignorance of the true value of the goods or indifference—they were just interested in getting some money. Another second-hand dealer offered credit for goods rather than money. Although this may have acted as a deterrent to some extent, it did not solve the problem because the goods received on credit could then be taken to another store and exchanged for cash. However, this may not be the preferred method of someone who wants cash quickly.

It was difficult for second-hand dealers to determine why their patrons want money. Store managers generally assumed money was for drugs or general living expenses (food, rent, family support). There was, however, very little upon which to base this assumption, apart from personal appearance and popular theories of why offenders want money. Second-hand dealers reported the money they offer is less than others who may be willing to accept second-hand goods because dealers are operating a business and need to maximise the return on any goods they purchase. Store managers conceded that there are likely to be more profitable ways to dispose of stolen property. This was confirmed by some offenders, who also felt that it was too risky to sell to second-hand dealers. As a result, many second-hand dealers reported that those who try to sell stolen goods are opportunistic offenders who want quick cash and not organised criminal networks.

Male, 47, received stolen goods. If he was unable to sell goods through his preferred avenues of market stalls or the newspaper he would take the goods to a second-hand dealer such as Cash Converters. This was a last resort because the price paid for goods was lower.

Male, 33, stole property from a house he was house-sitting over a three-week period. He sold property to second-hand dealers, and used the money to pay for drugs and to gamble. Sometimes he would ask other people to exchange the goods for cash with second-hand dealers. Second-hand dealers were chosen because the offender could obtain cash relatively quickly. The offender had also used these places in the past to sell his own property and therefore claimed he was not required to show ID.

Avoiding Police Detection

When asked the techniques they used to avoid getting caught by the police when selling to particular sources (see Table 9), a proportion of offenders reported actively employing methods to protect themselves. This included choosing “safe people” and “safe places” for business transactions when selling to friends and family, acquaintances and strangers. Other techniques used to avoid detection included having a neat appearance and behaving in a discreet manner, using a fake ID and avoiding or changing identified goods. Around a quarter of offenders selling to businesses reported doing nothing to avoid police detection while around a third who exchanged stolen goods for illicit drugs did nothing.

Table 9: Methods for avoiding police detection when selling (column percentages)

	Businesses	Family/friends	Acquaintances	Strangers	Drug exchange
Neat appearance	8	0	6	0	0
Discreet behaviour	22	0	12	15	19
Pick right people and place	0	47	41	38	24
Luck	9	0	12	0	14
Did nothing	26	29	24	23	38
Fake ID	9	0	0	8	0
Avoid/change identified items	9	0	0	0	0
Other	17	24	6	15	5
(n)	(23)	(17)	(17)	(13)	(21)

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, ACT Property Offenders Survey, 2001 [computer file]

Some methods of disposal were preferred over others because they were perceived to have a reduced risk of police detection. This included offenders selling to strangers (because they were unlikely to remember the seller) and to drug dealers (because they were unlikely to say anything about the stolen property due to their involvement in the illicit drug trade). Another preferred way to reduce the risk of detection was to unload goods as quickly as possible.

One young offender who used both amphetamines and heroin did not trade goods directly for heroin because he believed that heroin dealers were more closely watched than those supplying amphetamines. Several used fake ID cards if selling goods to second-hand dealers, although many avoided second-hand dealers because of the increased risk of being caught through having to show proof of identity. Overall, however, there was not a great deal of concern from offenders selling stolen property that they might be detected by the police.

One male, aged 29, thought that drug dealers and selling to people on the street are the best ways to get rid of stolen property. This is because drug dealers are not going to “dob-you-in” given that they are also doing something illegal, and strangers won’t really know or remember you to be able to positively identify you.

A female respondent in her 40s did engage in some behaviour to avoid getting caught by the police—mainly when dealing with people she didn’t know and when selling to businesses. This included meeting on “neutral turf”, not talking on the phone and using code when discussing activity.

Second-hand dealers reported that some of the people with whom they declined to trade would approach “third parties” to sell the goods on their behalf. This was a means of avoiding detection because they were removed from the transaction. Of the 23 who sold stolen property to businesses, 13 sold the goods to second-hand dealers. Of the 22 who answered whether they thought the business knew the goods were stolen, 20 agreed, one thought the store suspected the item was stolen and another didn’t know.

6. Recovering Goods

Little information was available on the extent to which stolen goods were recovered. The police data contained records on the number of goods recovered, although very little property is ever recovered (as discussed below). The lack of property marking has been noted as making recovery and return to owners difficult. In 2000, ACT Policing launched Operation Mark It, a campaign aimed at encouraging people to mark their property so that it can be identified with certainty. As part of the Operation, Cash Converters stores in two shopping precincts (Belconnen and Woden) were provided with ultra-violet lights to scan for laser pen identification information. Neighbourhood Watch funded the cost of the ultraviolet lights, laser pens and engravers that were made available for the public to use. Following Operation Mark It, ACT Policing launched the My Stuff program (in 2001). This program provided free CD-ROMs to households for itemising property. There is some reluctance to mark property, however. To do so is regarded by some people as defacing the item (Boogs 2000). Another factor is that, because insurance companies have replacement policies, people prefer to have new items rather than recover those that have been stolen.

Locating Stolen Goods

Second-hand dealers report that when goods are offered, there are generally key indicators that suggest if the item may be stolen. A predominant sign is the discrepancy between the type of person selling the goods and what they are offering, although it was conceded that personal appearance is not a very reliable measure. Managers relayed stories of people not knowing how to use the items they were trying to sell, not knowing how to turn electrical items on, play instruments, or the type of music on their CDs. In addition, the stories some people give to dealers were questionable.

Many second-hand dealers have their own processes for identifying and managing the risk of stolen property. These include:

- offering store credit as opposed to cash;
- asking people about the history of goods; and
- asking people about the value of goods.

Generally, managers are suspicious if people prefer cash payments to credit—particularly in cases when the amount of credit offered is greater than the cash payment—and if people have little knowledge of the history and/or value of the goods. Perhaps one of the more reliable methods for some store owners is intuition; many reported “just knowing” that the property was probably stolen. In fact, while conducting one interview for this study in a second-hand dealership, a young man came into the store wanting to sell a DVD player. The store manager declined the offer, basing his decision on “gut instinct”.

Perhaps surprisingly, cosmetics and food are the most commonly recovered stolen property. This may be due to the manner in which shoplifters are usually caught (that is, on the spot). Goods that were resold easily were the least likely items to be recovered. As Table 10 shows, car stereos, tools, televisions and jewellery are least likely to be

Table 10: Proportion of stolen goods recovered

	Stolen (n)	Recovered (n)	Recovered (%)
Cosmetics	700	148	21
Food	725	128	18
Handbags	3,538	392	11
Bank-related	1,460	127	9
Clothing	5,277	430	8
Wallets	2,859	179	6
Bicycles	2,218	138	6
Furniture	656	36	6
Keys	949	47	5
Alcohol	1,244	65	5
Luggage	2,279	108	5
Miscellaneous electrical	1,761	75	4
Sports equipment	1,961	77	4
Cameras	3,517	96	3
CD/video/DVD	3,750	114	3
Computers	3,602	100	3
Toys (incl. comp. games)	2,579	89	3
Electrical kitchen/white goods	521	14	3
Video/DVD players	2,274	61	3
Car-related	2,049	66	3
Garden tools/equipment	3,042	87	3
Stereos	3,639	88	2
Mobile phones	4,953	115	2
Jewellery	11,826	273	2
Televisions	1,601	36	2
Trade tools	3,025	56	2
Car stereos	2,150	26	1
Other/miscellaneous	5,362	300	6

Source: Australian Federal Police stolen property database [computer file]

recovered. Handbags and wallets,¹ bank-related items, and furniture are all relatively commonly recovered. These items usually cannot easily be sold or in some other way exchanged for cash or drugs. Compared to the less frequently recovered items, they can also be more precisely identified without model and identification numbers. Bank-related items, such as keycards and credit cards, are more commonly recovered because they must be kept in the thief's possession to remain valuable, heightening the chance of recovery. Also, an offender may be discouraged by the extra effort and risk of having to commit bank fraud.

Information was sought from the three insurance agencies about the recovery rate of items that had been stolen. These data were not available, and one company commented that the numbers were so low that details were not kept.

Measures to Improve Recovery

Marking property aids identification and has been encouraged by police and others as a way of improving the chances of recovery if stolen. In the present study several of the second-hand dealers interviewed suggested that this would reduce the frequency of

¹ It is not noted whether these are empty when they are recovered, although commonsense dictates that this would be highly likely.

goods being stolen. One second-hand CD dealer suggested that the theft of CDs would be dramatically reduced if they were clearly marked. The dealer also suggested that recovery of stolen CDs with clear identification would be a fairly simple process because of the small number of places in Canberra that buy second-hand CDs. ACT police report that they have a large stock of goods that have been recovered but because of lack of identification, they cannot be returned to their owners. Property marking could also make it easier for police investigating suspected cases of receiving stolen property.

Second-hand dealers reported mixed attitudes towards police and their response to the stolen property market. Some store managers said they generally had no problems with police and were willing to call them if they suspected they were being offered stolen property. Others, however, suggested that there was little value in notifying police.

One of the predominant issues raised by second-hand dealers was what to do if they suspected someone of trying to sell stolen goods. Many people were concerned about handling the stolen property and detaining the person until police arrived. Second-hand dealers reported that if they purchased the goods there would be no compensation should the goods be seized, and that it was difficult to keep people in the store. It was also noted that police seem more concerned about returning property to owners rather than apprehending the offenders or compensating second-hand dealers.

Two further issues were raised regarding the response of police:

- some officers apparently come into the store “like cowboys” making a scene which is bad for business, particularly if other customers are in the store; and
- some officers accuse store managers of buying stolen property.

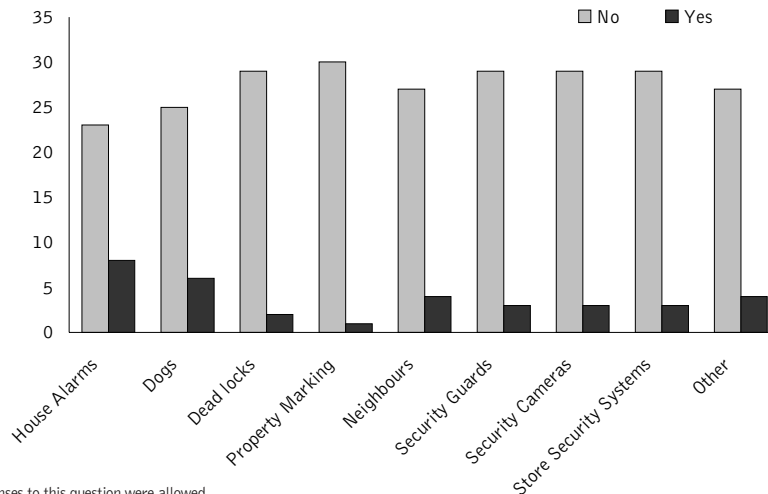
Many second-hand dealers said it is generally in the best interest of the store to decline offers of stolen property, preferring to let the seller go rather than report suspected offenders to police. It was also noted that reporting incidents to the police might result in a vendetta against the store or other adverse business consequences. One store manager relayed that two or three people per day come into the store looking for their stolen property. He reported that police referred victims of theft to his store because they were unable to offer any further assistance. The manager expressed that this does little to negate the store’s reputation as a receiver of stolen property.

While it is not mandatory for second-hand dealers to provide police with information about the number and characteristics of sales, many second-hand dealers do supply this information. It was acknowledged, however, that it is possible to restrict the supply of information to police to legitimate sales, withholding information relating to purchases of stolen property. Second-hand dealers report knowing very little about how police deal with the information they receive.

7. Deterrent Measures

Offenders were asked whether anything had ever deterred them from stealing property from a certain place. In every category of possible deterrents presented to the offenders, most indicated that they would not be deterred. The measures included property marking and the use of dead locks (See Figure 21).

Figure 21: Number who indicated the measure was a deterrent



Note: Multiple responses to this question were allowed.
Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, ACT Property Offenders Survey, 2001 [computer file]

House alarms were the largest deterrent among offenders (n=8). The presence of a dog at a property was also rated as a deterrent for a number of offenders. Other deterrents mentioned by offenders include the use of electronic tags, mirrors and “common sense” (all three falling in the “other” category).

Male, 29, said that he had developed an interest in security systems whilst a burglar. Now he regarded alarm systems as a challenge and beating them was his primary motive for breaking into premises.

Male, 19, thought that premises with alarm systems were more lucrative and mentioned several ways in which alarms could be defeated.

Female, 24, who claimed to have been shoplifting for seven years, said that she could recognise store detectives and was not deterred by electronic tags because they could be easily removed or overridden by the use of metallic-lined bags.

Despite claims from offenders that security systems were not a deterrent, properties which have alarms do seem to have a lower risk of being burgled, as do properties with a dog. This was suggested by the anecdotal information gained through conversations with offenders that such measures are intuitively part of the decision-making process when identifying a target.

Property Marking

Property marking enables police and others to more readily identify property that has been stolen. However, there are differing opinions contained in the research about the effectiveness of property marking in reducing the theft of goods. Clarke (1999) suggests

that the incorporation of theft prevention devices (such as security coding, micro-dot property marking and use of indelible dyes) could reduce theft. Kock (1996) agrees with this, pointing out that the marking of property is an important factor in increasing the difficulty with which stolen goods are sold. It would make it more difficult for dealers to argue that they didn't know the goods were stolen.

Sutton (1998), however, maintains that property marking is not a deterrent. When interviewing offenders he found that none was deterred by property being marked: security tags and serial numbers could be removed, engraved markings could be scratched out, and ultraviolet pen markings could be removed with detergent and a scourer. In a "sting" operation conducted by the NSW police it was found that 25 per cent of the goods brought in were marked, thus demonstrating its lack of effectiveness as a deterrent to burglars/thieves (Freiberg 1997). However, although these two studies demonstrate that property marking does not deter offenders, they do not show whether or not buyers are deterred by property marking.

There is also a lack of interest in property marking in some sectors of the community. Manufacturers and insured property owners may benefit from the goods not being recovered. When households lose property, sales by the manufacturer are increased, and people with insurance frequently have the stolen items replaced with new goods (Kock et al. 1996).

8. Cost to the Community

Analysis of the insurance data provides one indication of the size and cost of the stolen goods market in the ACT. During 1999–2000 the average cost per claim was \$2,334. During 2000–2001 the average cost was \$1,967 per claim. Overall, it is estimated that approximately \$10 million has been paid in household burglary, theft and housebreaking claims for the period 1999–2001. This estimate is taken from data provided by the three major insurance companies. Based on these figures, the average claim is approximately \$2,168. Thus, if we consider the number of household burglaries recorded by the AFP during 1999–2001 (n=10,850), and the average cost of an insurance claim made in the ACT during this time (\$2,168), we can broadly estimate the cost of household burglary to the ACT community at \$23,522,800 over a two-year period.

It is important to note that this estimate is based on figures provided by three major insurers in the ACT. It excludes people who either do not have home contents insurance or are insured through alternative insurance brokers. An additional issue to consider is that there is likely to be a number of victims who do not report incidents to police or do not claim the stolen items on their insurance.

Discussion

Most of the information on how stolen property is obtained and disposed of in this study was derived from interviews with ACT Corrective Services clients. Some information was gained from second-hand dealers. The recorded crime data were able to provide information on the type and number of goods stolen and a small amount of information on goods that had been recovered. Unfortunately there was no information in the recorded crime data as to where, or to whom stolen goods were on-sold. The insurance agencies were also unable to provide any information on the recovery of stolen goods. One insurer commented that the figures were so low that data were not kept.

The most commonly given reasons for stealing property were:

- to obtain money to buy illicit drugs;
- to exchange for illicit drugs; and
- to keep for personal use.

Although illicit drug use emerged as a recurring theme, the complex relationship between drug use and property crime is an issue beyond the scope of this research.

The findings show that stolen property is disposed of in a number of ways. Most offenders use more than one way to sell the goods they steal but, as other studies have found, the person to whom the thief/burglar passed the goods is usually not the end consumer. Most reported that they did not know what happened to the property they stole after they had disposed of it through their initial contact. Goods sold through the newspaper, at market stalls or garage sales were probably sold directly to the end consumer. It also seems likely that goods sold to strangers, family and friends were also going directly to the end consumer. For the other categories of people to whom goods were sold (businesses, people seen around, and drug dealers) offenders indicated that they did not know and did not care what happened to the goods.

A number of offenders indicated that selling to legitimate businesses other than second-hand dealers was common. Some of these businesses would take stolen property which they would then add to their stock, such as computer businesses taking computer-related goods, or local shops taking a range of goods that they would sell through their stores. Other businesses (such as restaurants) sometimes bought stolen goods unrelated to their legitimate business. However, when the goods were unrelated to the legitimate business, the interviewees did not seem to know what happened to the goods. Some thought that the business owners would keep at least some of the goods within their families (it was not clear whether they were bought by or given to family members) but the interviewees also thought they may have on-sold the goods. It was not possible to determine if goods went to the business or to specific individuals working for the

business. The link with legitimate business is consistent with the findings of Maher et al.'s (1998) study in Cabramatta and Fitzgerald et al.'s (1999) Melbourne study.

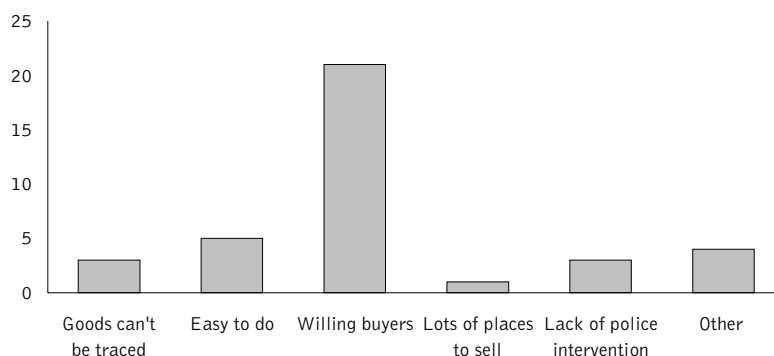
Some suggested that the person to whom they sold the goods had links with more organised networks through which stolen goods were distributed. Details of these networks, however, were not provided. Unfortunately it was not possible to determine the extent to which stolen property is moved out of the ACT, although the implication was that the more organised networks did so. Some offenders said they sometimes took goods to Sydney because they thought the risks were lower. One person who handled property on behalf of her husband (who was a burglar and a drug dealer) said that they sold some of the goods they stole to drug dealers in Sydney either for cash or in exchange for drugs. Overall it seems that most goods are sold within the ACT and that there is a ready market for stolen property within the Territory.

The most commonly stolen items were cash, electrical items (such as televisions, DVD and video players), computers and mobile phones. Jewellery was also stolen but it did not feature as strongly as in insurance and recorded crime data. It seems likely that stolen jewellery is moved out of the ACT because of the small size of the market and, therefore, increased risk of detection.

The offenders in the study identified shops as being the most frequent location from which goods are stolen, followed by residential dwellings. The recorded crime database shows residential properties as the most frequently targeted source of stolen property. As already noted, this discrepancy may indicate that:

- those offenders who usually steal from houses are more frequent repeat offenders than those who steal from shops; or
- the sample comprised offenders who were more inclined to shoplift rather than break into a residential dwelling; or
- shop owners may be less likely to know they have been a victim and to report to police.

Figure 22: Reasons for the ease of selling stolen goods in the ACT (number)



Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, ACT Property Offenders Survey, 2001 [computer file]

Male juvenile offenders are responsible for a significant proportion of theft and burglary within the ACT. Research with juveniles would provide greater insight into the demography of offenders and how stolen property is obtained. However, it is likely that juvenile offenders are not as organised as more experienced burglars/thieves and may not be able to provide much additional information on the paths through which stolen property passes.

One of the final questions asked of the offenders related to their overall impressions as to why it is easy to sell stolen goods in the ACT. By far the most frequent response was that the public was prepared to buy things that were a “bargain” and that there was a large market of potential and keen buyers (see Figure 22). In addition, many felt that there was little chance of being detected by police and that disposing of the goods was easy.

Policy Implications

There are three broad approaches that policy could take in order to reduce the amount of stolen goods and generally disrupt the market. These are:

- affecting the *source* of the stolen goods (through techniques such as property marking and other more general target-hardening measures);
- making *disposal* of stolen goods more difficult; and
- increasing the rate at which stolen goods are *recovered*, through techniques such as:
 - increased surveillance and control of popular disposal outlets; and
 - improvements in understanding the motives of possible receivers, including the general public's attitude towards purchasing stolen property.

Policies should be directed at participants in all stages of the stolen property market, including police, second-hand dealers, legitimate businesses, professional fences and, of course, the ultimate consumer—the general public. As has been mentioned, the complex issue of the connection between drug use and property crime is beyond the scope of this study, but should also be a consideration when deciding policy.

Police

A reason frequently given as to why stolen property was easy to dispose of in the ACT was the lack of a police presence when transactions were taking place. Many offenders said they did little to avoid getting caught by the police and did not think that there was much risk that they would be caught. In addition, the many ways and the ease with which burglars/thieves dispose of the property they steal makes targeting these outlets as a way of preventing theft a difficult task. As other researchers have suggested, a greater emphasis could be placed on how offenders were intending to dispose of the property they stole when apprehended by the police. Interviews with offenders could be used to gather intelligence on how and where stolen property is sold.

The Australian Federal Police have had success in reducing the burglary rate in the Australian Capital Territory through the introduction of intensive, intelligence-based policing campaigns targeting burglary. In July 2001 the Australian Federal Police released statistics showing that burglary had fallen by 21 per cent over the previous year. This fall has been attributed to a number of factors including:

- Operation Anchorage;
- changes to the Bail Act that effectively incarcerated repeat offenders; and
- the heroin shortage.

Second-Hand Dealers

At present there is a requirement that when a person sells property to second-hand dealers, including auctioneers, they must show some form of identification, the details of which are recorded by the dealer. It has been suggested by some offenders that in fact this amounts to nothing more than a protection used by second-hand dealers to cover themselves against accusations of accepting stolen property. Dealers are required to hold goods for five days. A dishonest trader could, of course, get around this by simply not registering the item.

One receiver of stolen property suggested that making second-hand dealers more responsible for having stolen property in their possession may tighten this outlet for disposing of goods. It should be noted, however, that many offenders in this study preferred not to sell stolen property to second-hand dealers, both because of the greater risks associated with doing so and the lower prices that were received. It is important that a balance be maintained about requirements for proof of ownership. Many people wishing to dispose of their unwanted property no longer have proof, such as receipts.

Legitimate Businesses

The use of second-hand dealers as an avenue for disposal did not emerge as the prominent method used by offenders; the use of legitimate businesses was favoured more highly. The readiness of many apparently legitimate businesses to buy stolen property makes targeting this outlet difficult. Obtaining information from people who have been apprehended for stealing property would seem to be the only way in which they can be identified. In November 1999 ACT police raided several businesses operating within the Canberra City markets that were believed to be trading in stolen property (Clack 1999). However, even when stolen property is found it may be difficult for the police to prove that the person knowingly accepted property that had been stolen. Legitimate businesses need to be educated that facilitating stolen property has wider implications including:

- their own businesses may become targets for offenders;
- their own home may be burgled; and
- their insurance premiums reflect the rates of stolen property.

Professional Fences

One area in which there could be success in reducing the amount of theft of property is by making it more difficult for offenders to develop a relationship with a fence. It has been suggested that burglars who were unsuccessful at disposing of stolen property at the beginning of their career were more likely to stop but that once offenders had established a satisfactory relationship with a fence they were more likely to continue (Sutton 1998).

Public Involvement

People who buy stolen goods are perpetuating the theft of property, even though they may not know the goods are stolen or that accepting stolen property is illegal.
(Swope 1998)

There is a large and willing market for stolen goods in the ACT according to offenders. The perceived ease of disposing of stolen goods to a wide variety of eager sources (including family, friends, acquaintances, strangers, drug dealers, second hand dealers and legitimate business owners) is provided as explanation and reason for involvement in the market in the ACT. Ultimately, it is the preparedness of the general public to buy stolen property that enables thieves and burglars to easily dispose of the property they steal. As Sheley and Bailey (1985) have found, the introduction of legislation to prevent these transactions occurring is difficult to enforce. The only way which is likely to succeed is through increasing public awareness of the implications of purchasing stolen goods.

Such rationalisations as “if I don’t buy it someone else will” or the acceptance of such statements as “it fell off the back of a truck” are difficult to overcome. However, if people are made aware of their role in perpetuating the theft of property, some impact on the stolen property market may be achieved.

There are many ways in which people rationalise buying stolen goods; for example, the item had already been stolen (Cromwell et al 1993), or the belief that “everybody does it” (Sutton 1998). It is seen as a “victimless crime” by members of the public, and this is particularly true of new items stolen from businesses rather than from people’s homes (Sutton 1995). The language used to cover the fact that the goods are stolen, such as “fell off the back of a lorry”, “bargain” and “damaged in transit”, assist in preventing the consumer feeling guilty about the purchase. Another approach to rationalising the action is by suggesting that the victim was insured anyway and hence will have new items to replace those stolen.

The acceptability of buying stolen goods is highlighted by the fact that many of the items are stolen to order. In the present study over half of the offenders stated that they had been asked to steal property and they were most commonly asked by a family member or friend.

While the public are prepared to buy goods that have been stolen it remains difficult to reduce the market for stolen property. There is a need to raise awareness that purchasing items that have been stolen effectively encourages property theft and increases insurance premiums. Greater community involvement in assisting in the detection of stolen property through reporting cases of being approached to buy goods that appear to have been stolen should be encouraged. Passing this information on to the police could increase the likelihood of cases being solved. Kock et al (1996) suggest that public awareness should be increased through a more visible police presence at car boot sales and other similar outlets. Awareness could also be increased with the distribution of leaflets informing people of the illegality of buying stolen goods.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to explain what happens to property after it has been stolen in the ACT. Its purpose was to collect and analyse data that would assist the ACT Government and police. From the data collected it was found that:

- most thieves do not know where most of the property they steal ends up;
- the property is usually sold on for money or exchanged for drugs; and
- some stolen property is kept for personal use, or as gifts for family and friends.

There is an active market in stolen property in the ACT, with a number of avenues open to thieves for disposing of the goods. As long as the risks involved in buying and selling stolen property remain small, the sanctioning of these acts will be ineffective. ACT police operations that have increased the risks to offenders have been found to reduce the incidence of theft and burglary. In addition, the small size of the Canberra market hinders the trade in some types of stolen property. However, this may result in certain property being traded outside of the ACT.

To strategically deal with the stolen property market, policy initiatives need to not only focus on offenders and “middle-men” in the transaction of stolen property, but also on the end consumers—the general public—whose purchase of “hot” property enables this costly trade to continue.

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Appendix 1: Literature Review

As early as 1795 it was suggested that if there were no market for stolen goods there would be no thieves (Colquhoun, cited in Cromwell et al. 1993). Others have suggested that the market for stolen goods will always exist while there is disparity between legitimate and illegitimate prices (Parker et al. 1988). Sutton (1998) argues that the stolen property market is both a consequence of and a motivation for theft. Based on the 1994 British Crime Survey, he found that people living in poorer areas were more likely to be offered and to buy stolen goods, but that it was not only the less well-off who are willing to accept stolen goods. Self-employed people were more likely to buy stolen goods, and this was consistent with other findings that small business owners were frequently sought out by thieves to dispose of stolen goods. For example, in Maher et al.'s (1998) study of the drugs market in Cabramatta, many users reported selling stolen goods to local businesses. More than half of the men interviewed in the study reported that they shoplifted for re-sale or trade purposes. The authors argue that few of these people would be classed as “professional” thieves and that both break-and-enter and domestic burglaries were typically opportunistic events.

Usually the original thief does not sell directly to the end consumer; there are various paths that the goods may take before reaching that point. Studies that have explored the possibility of disrupting the market for stolen goods have all highlighted the fragmentary nature of the market and the involvement of legitimate businesses in receiving stolen goods. This demonstrates a seamless link between legitimate and illegitimate businesses in the receiving of stolen goods (Klockars 1974; Hill 1992).

Research has relied on three main methods to investigate stolen property markets:

- ethnographic studies (participant observation) of professional thieves and fences (see Klockars 1974; Steffensmeier 1986);
- analysis of police records (see Walsh 1977); and
- interviews with people who sell and/or receive stolen goods (see Cromwell et al. 1991, 1993; Cromwell & McElrath 1994; Wright & Decker 1994; Sutton 1998; Stevenson & Forsythe 1998).

To a lesser extent, survey data has also been collected and analysed to determine the willingness of the public to purchase stolen goods (Sutton 1998; Allen 2000).

The literature shows that there are a variety of methods for disposing of stolen goods and most thieves have been found to use more than one outlet (Wright & Decker 1994; Stevenson et al. 2001). Having a fence purchase stolen goods with the intention of selling them is a common method of disposal. A fence is:

...someone who purchases stolen goods both on a regular basis and for resale. The fence has direct contact with thieves, he [sic] buys and resells stolen goods regularly and

persistently and in so doing he becomes a public dealer—recognised as a fence by thieves, the police and others acquainted with the criminal community.

(Steffensmeier cited in Sutton 1998, p. 13)

Fences can differ, however, in their methods and the extent to which they are engaged in handling stolen goods. Walsh (1977), who analysed police records, identified:

- the use of legitimate businesses as fronts for disposing of stolen goods; and
- illegitimate fronts, that is, fences without a business cover and thieves selling directly to end customers.

Walsh reported that stolen goods were sold more often through legitimate businesses than illegitimate outlets.

Cromwell, Olson and Avery (1991, 1993) interviewed 30 active burglars and six receivers, as well as 19 people who had purchased stolen property directly from a thief. They classified:

- professional fences;
- part-time fences;
- associational fences;
- neighbourhood hustlers;
- drug dealers; and
- amateur receivers.

These groups differed in the extent to which they were involved in the stolen property market, and in their relationship with the thieves. Analysis of the data showed that 21 per cent of stolen property was sold to professional fences and more than half (56 per cent) was sold to non-professional receivers, including drug dealers. Only 12 per cent was sold to pawn shops and about 10 per cent was kept for personal consumption, discarded, given away or recovered by police.

Wright and Decker (1994) had similar findings from interviews with active burglars. They found that the most common methods for disposing of stolen goods were through professional fences, friends and drug dealers. While a professional fence might be preferred for distributing stolen property, it was found that burglars who had not yet established a relationship with a fence may have sold directly to the end consumer. These burglars tended to be younger, just starting their criminal career, or drug addicts anxious to dispose of the goods quickly (and therefore prepared to take greater risks).

More recent work in Australia (Stevenson & Forsythe 1998) found that the most frequent way of disposing of stolen goods was by trading goods for drugs (70 per cent). On average, offenders used four methods of disposal. The most frequent ways were:

- selling to family, friends and acquaintances (63 per cent);
- selling to fences (62 per cent);
- selling to legitimate businesses (51 per cent);

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- selling to pawn and second-hand shops (49 per cent);
 - selling to strangers in a public place (30 per cent);
 - trading for other goods (19 per cent);
 - selling at markets (6 per cent);
 - selling at garage sales (3 per cent), and
 - selling through an auction house (2 per cent).

Cromwell and McElrath (1994) used a self-report survey to look at “how otherwise honest individuals become motivated to buy stolen goods” (p. 297). Their study found that when people were offered goods that may have been stolen they might accept them but that few of these people actively sought out opportunities to buy stolen goods.

Sutton (1998) did not classify the buyers and sellers of stolen property by income but rather by types of market. Five types were identified:

- commercial fence supplies, where fences have shops through which goods are distributed;
- commercial sales, where goods are sold without the consumer knowing the goods are stolen;
- residential fence supplies, in which distributors operate out of their own houses;
- network sales, through which word is spread that an item is for sale or conversely word may be passed that a particular item is sought; and
- hawking, in which thieves sell directly to the consumer, often through pubs or around the neighbourhood.

Tables 11 and 12 provide a summary of the major studies.

Distribution Outlets

Many offenders sell stolen goods to shops in their local neighbourhood. Sutton (1998), for example, reported that heroin users would target small businesses, citing the example of one user who said that she would approach shopkeepers that she had not dealt with previously and was often successful in disposing of goods through this outlet.

Stevenson et al. (2001) found that local stores would buy items they could re-sell through their shop as well as other things such as jewellery and electrical goods to dispose of through a network of family, friends and customers. It was found that a wide range of other businesses (including hairdressers, butchers, estate agents, doctors and government offices) would also buy stolen property. Jewellery stores would buy precious stones and gold because the jewellery could be melted down without losing value. Tradesmen would buy goods related to their business either for their own use or resale.

Sutton (1998) found that some businesses, although interested in purchasing stolen goods, did not use their business as a means of selling the goods.

Table 11: Research studies of “fences”

Researcher	Data source	Types of fences	Fronts
Walsh (1977)	Based on police records and interviews with district attorneys’ informants [US study]	Kinship network (familial ties)	Integrative front (for example, salvage companies, jewellery manufacturers, grocery stores, second-hand dealers) who sell directly to the end consumer.
		Work-a-day networks (employer–employee relationship between fence and thieves)	Functional-facilitating front (not as direct a line of sale as the integrative front) (for example, restaurants, bars, pool halls)—may sell to legitimate businesses or other fences before reaching the end consumer.
		Play network (a relationship between criminal entrepreneurs and “high quality” thieves)	Dissonant front (for example, light construction firms, medical supplies wholesalers, carpeting companies, art galleries, golf courses). In this case the criminal receiving is quite independent of the public enterprise.
Cromwell, Olson and Avery (1991, 1993)	Interviewed 30 active burglars, six fences and 19 people who had purchased stolen property directly from thieves [US study]	Professional fences (principal enterprise is the purchase and redistribution of stolen property)	May have a legitimate business as a front.
		Part-time fences	Fewer transactions than a professional fence, not their principal means of livelihood.
		Associational fences (legitimate occupations such as police officers, lawyers, bail bond agents may bring them into contact with thieves)	Accepting stolen goods may be the only form of payment lawyers or agents receive.
		Neighbourhood hustlers (low level of activity)	Often acts as a middleman.
		Drug dealer fences	Trades drugs for stolen goods to addicts.
Wright and Decker (1994)	Interviewed 105 offenders who were active at the time [US study]	Amateur receivers	People who buy for personal consumption.
		Professional fences	22% of offenders sold through a professional fence
		Friends	26% of offenders sold to friends/people they knew
Sutton (1998)	Information is taken by the 1994 British Crime Survey and 45 in-depth interviews with thieves and other handlers of stolen goods. [UK Study]	Drug dealers	23% sold to “neighbourhood” drug dealers
		Commercial fences	Had shops through which goods were distributed
		Commercial sales	Customers did not know goods were stolen
		Residential fences	Distributed stolen property from their own home
		Network sales	Use word-of-mouth to both distribute stolen items and request an item to be stolen
Klockars (1974)	Ethnographic study of a professional fence [US study]	Hawking	Stolen goods sold directly to the consumer through pubs or on street
			Had a legitimate store which was a front for selling stolen goods.

Table 12: Surveys related to markets for stolen property

Researcher	Data Source	Findings
Stevenson and Forsythe (1998)	Interviewed 267 people (adults and juveniles) incarcerated for break, enter and steal offences [Australian study]	70% traded goods for drugs 63% sold to family, friends and acquaintances 62% sold to fences 51% sold to legitimate businesses 49% sold to pawn and second-hand shops 30% sold to strangers in public places 19% traded for other goods 6% sold at markets 3% used garage sales 2% sold through auction houses Respondents used, on average, four methods of disposal
Allen (2000)	Survey of 5,000 NSW residents re offers of stolen property [Australian study]	5% of NSW population had been offered stolen goods in the past year Two-thirds of those received offers more than once 7% of men and 3% of women were offered stolen goods People under 30 were twice as likely to be offered stolen goods as people over 30
Cromwell and McElrath (1994)	A self-report survey sent to 1,200 randomly selected households— 739 surveys were returned [US Study]	Focuses on how buyers and sellers of stolen property come together and emphasises the conjunction of motivation and opportunity. 12% reported being willing to buy stolen goods 13% had purchased stolen goods 6% had been offered stolen goods
Kock, Kemp and Rix (1996)	Interviews with 29 police officers and support staff; five informants; and discussions with manufacturers, rental companies, insurance companies and security firms, and magistrates [UK Study]	Suggests ways in which police could more effectively disrupt the sale of stolen electrical items through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • greater consideration of the broader supply chain, not just burglary or theft • using their knowledge of offenders • greater cross-boundary cooperation between police services • encouraging the public to mark their property

Once it became known in the local criminal community that a shopkeeper would accept stolen goods, that shopkeeper might receive many offers of stolen property, and may be forced to continue to do so with threats of exposure by the thieves (Cromwell et al. 1993).

Receivers operating out of business premises offer “a convenient, visible and relatively safe place to sell stolen goods” (Sutton 1998, p. 29). They were also likely to have cash available to pay for stolen goods. Sutton found that burglars would seek out businesses which handled the goods they were stealing. Some business fences reportedly told thieves what goods they would like to obtain, and in some cases advised thieves of who had bought expensive items so that the thief could steal them back.

Drug dealers are often involved in the sale of stolen property, both as buyers and sellers. In fact, Stevenson et al. (2001) found this to be the most common way of disposing of stolen property. Offenders with a drug addiction were able to exchange stolen goods for drugs, thus removing the need to sell the goods for money first. This enabled quicker access to drugs and was regarded as safer because fewer steps were involved. Many offenders felt that they did not get as good a price for the stolen property when exchanging the goods for drugs but their need to obtain the drugs was greater than their

wish for a larger amount of money (Wright & Decker 1994). Exchanging drugs for goods also meant that dealers were able to broaden their market by supplying to people who did not have enough cash (Cromwell et al. 1993).

Wright and Decker (1994) found that thieves regarded dealing with a fence as safer because goods could be disposed of more quickly and reduced the risks associated with having to contact a number of potential buyers. When distinctive items such as jewellery were stolen, fences were able to dispose of the goods without the thief being linked. The business-like relationship with fences was also preferred by thieves because questions were not asked about where the goods had come from.

Although it is commonly believed that second-hand dealers and pawnbrokers are widely used as outlets for stolen property, tightened regulation of these businesses has increased the risk to thieves and may have decreased their use. Stevenson and Forsythe (1998) found that pawnbrokers and second-hand dealers were the fifth most common avenue for disposing of stolen goods and tended to be places of last resort. Only a small proportion of goods were sold to these dealers because it meant accepting a lower price and a greater risk of being caught. In a United States study, some offenders (13 out of 90) reported that they would use a pawnbroker they trusted as an outlet. These trusted pawnbrokers would bypass the requirement to take a photograph of all customers (Wright & Decker 1994).

It seems, however, that second-hand dealers are more interested in hearing a convincing story about where the goods came from rather than having any real interest in whether the goods were stolen or not (Sutton 1998). As a result, if the seller of the stolen property has a convincing “reason” for selling the items, the second-hand dealer is likely to accept the goods. The laws can also be circumvented by the thief through the use of false identification papers or by arranging for someone else to sell the goods on his or her behalf.

Wright and Decker (1994) found that 24 of the 90 burglars they spoke to mostly sold the stolen items to people they knew such as family or friends. Stevenson et al. (2001) also found that this was a popular method of disposal. The buyers knew the goods were stolen and often put in requests for particular items which the burglars would look out for when committing burglaries.

Thieves, at times, also sold stolen property to strangers, although they knew this to be more risky. They would take some precautions against being caught by selling the items in neighbourhoods where the police were unlikely to be called and would use hotels, bars and so on (Wright & Decker 1994; Stevenson et al. 2001).

Occasionally thieves would keep goods such as food or drugs for their own use (Wright & Decker 1994). Very occasionally thieves would also advertise goods in newspapers (Stevenson et al. 2001). Table 13 summarises the variety of distribution outlets identified in the literature.

Table 13: Distribution outlets identified in past research

Outlet	References	Comments	Research location
Legitimate business fronts	Sutton 1998	Relatively safe and have cash available	UK
	Cromwell et al. 1993		US
	Stevenson et al. 2001		Australia
Drug dealers	Stevenson et al. 2001	Most frequently used method	Australia
	Wright and Decker 1994	Quick method for obtaining drugs and relatively safe	US
	Cromwell et al. 1993	Exchange of goods expanded dealers' market for drugs	US
Professional fence	Wright and Decker 1994	Reduced risks	US
	Cromwell et al. 1993		US
Second-hand dealers/ pawnbrokers	Stevenson and Forsythe 1998	Decrease in use—fifth most common outlet	Australia
	Wright and Decker 1994	Some thieves had trusted pawnbroker, others took the risk	US
	Sutton 1998		UK
	Cromwell et al. 1993	US	
Family and friends	Wright and Decker 1994	Over a quarter of thieves used this outlet 63% used this outlet	US
	Stevenson et al. 2001		Australia
Strangers	Wright and Decker 1994	Greater risks attached but some precautions taken	US
	Stevenson et al. 2001		Australia
Keep goods for own use	Wright and Decker 1994	Occurred occasionally	US
	Cromwell et al. 1993		US

Who Steals Property?

A study of domestic burglary in the ACT found that half the burglaries where someone is caught are committed by offenders under the age of 18, and that 82 per cent of offenders are male. Burglaries usually were committed alone (70 per cent) with another 20 per cent being committed by two offenders working together (Ratcliffe 2001). This information is based on offenders who are caught, which may bias the sample toward the young; the number working together may also be biased by who is apprehended.

In interviews of offenders conducted by Stevenson and Forsythe (1998), 46 per cent said that they usually committed burglaries alone, although most juveniles burgled with accomplices.

Studies have found that most burglaries are committed when the offender needs money to solve an immediate problem. The purpose is not to accumulate savings (Wright & Decker 1994). Reasons for committing burglaries include:

- to buy drugs (the most common reason);
- for daily living expenses;
- to support a lifestyle;
- for buying “brand name” clothing;
- for excitement; and
- to right a perceived wrong.

Although drug use seems to be closely associated with property offending, and many offenders when interviewed reported spending all the money on drugs, this was found to not always be the case.

Domestic burglaries tend to be undertaken by inexperienced or younger offenders (Newbold 2000; Cromwell et al. 1991; Maher et al. 1998). Professional thieves focus on businesses; they regard this as being less harmful than stealing from “people”. Although risks associated with stealing from businesses are higher, the rewards are also greater. Cromwell et al. (1991) outline a broad picture of how people “grow” into burglary and drug abuse. Younger people aged from about 10 to 13 might join with a slightly older group, aged from 14 to 17, who shoplift or commit burglary in their local neighbourhood. After they gain a little experience they might venture out on their own but either keep the goods they steal or rely on a more experienced burglar to dispose of the goods for them in return for some of the goods or proceeds. At this stage the young person may begin trying drugs or alcohol. As they become more experienced and develop a relationship with a fence they move more into a delinquent community where drugs are more available. The adolescents then find they can commit burglaries more easily when using drugs and have the money to purchase more drugs. The two activities become intertwined (Cromwell et al. 1991, pp. 54–5).

Goods Stolen

Electrical items such as computers, VCRs, stereos and other related entertainment equipment are highly desirable, much more transportable than years ago, and there are more of these goods in people’s homes today than in the 1980s. These factors make the stealing of these items more attractive (NRMA Crimesafe 2000). According to Freiberg (1997) money was the most commonly stolen item, followed by televisions, VCRs, and then jewellery, power tools and audio equipment. Freiberg (1997) also noted an increase in the number of mobile phones being stolen. A more recent study of mobile phone theft demonstrates that such theft has continued to increase (Briscoe 2001). Clarke (1999) suggested an acronym for goods at most risk of being stolen: CRAVED (concealable, removable, available, valuable, enjoyable and disposable). The ease with which goods can be disposed is the most important factor.

From interviews with offenders, Wright and Decker (1994) found that pawnbrokers were unwilling to accept electronic goods and firearms because these had identification numbers. However, they were willing to accept jewellery because it could be melted down or rebuilt without diminishing its value. Their knowledge of the value of jewellery often gave pawnbrokers an advantage when negotiating a price.

Rewards

Sutton (1998, p. 57) suggested that it was a “general rule of thumb that the thief will be paid one-third of the retail price for new...stolen goods”. Prices vary with the condition of the items being sold. A new item still in its box may fetch the thief 50 per cent of the retail price, and a new but unboxed item may yield 30 per cent (Kock et al. 1996).

Sutton also suggested that while the thief might receive a third of the retail price from a fence, the fence would sell to the consumer for half the retail price. Hill (1992) agrees that while one-third is considered the standard proportion that is paid to the thief for stolen goods, in fact thieves usually receive less because of the controlling position the receiver has. In some circumstances the end consumer may not pay less than the retail price, particularly if it is sold by a commercial fence who can mix in the stolen items with legitimately acquired stock (Sutton 1998).

Drugs are often obtained as a direct exchange for goods, but the extent to which this happens is unknown (Freiberg 1997). People with a drug habit might exchange stolen goods for a mixture of cash and drugs (Sutton 1998). Among those Sutton interviewed there were differences about whether thieves thought they got a better exchange rate if accepting drugs or cash. The exchange rate, however, could be manipulated by the dealer depending upon the urgency with which the drugs were desired by the vendor of the stolen goods.

When dealing with fences, the burglars had to know the black market value of the goods they were trying to dispose of. They also needed to know which goods the fence would be interested in buying. The less experienced burglars, or those with different goods from those they normally stole, often had to accept what the fence was prepared to offer. Having more than one fence increased the opportunities for thieves to bargain over price. Burglars mostly relied on “word of mouth, commonsense, or past experience to determine what items were popular with fences” (Decker & Wright 1994).

Time Taken to Dispose of Goods

Because of the risk of being caught in possession, thieves were anxious to dispose of stolen goods quickly (Sutton 1995). Stevenson et al. (2001) found that about half the people interviewed disposed of goods within four hours, although less experienced thieves took longer. Kock et al. (1996) suggested that most burglaries took place in the morning and that the stolen goods were sold to handlers in the late afternoon of that day. Drug users tended to dispose of goods more quickly and at a lower price (Sutton 1998).

When goods were not disposed of immediately, they were stored in the offender’s home or a friend’s home. Other storage places include vehicles, the family home and lock-up garages. In order to prevent being caught in possession of stolen goods, the goods were often hidden in bushes and collected later (Sutton 1998).

Avoiding Detection

Thieves avoid detection mostly by dealing only with people they know and trust. As Sutton (1998) points out, this is significant because if this link were broken it would be more difficult for thieves to dispose of their stolen goods. Other methods of evading detection include:

- avoiding being seen;
- concealing the goods;

-
- making contact before meeting;
 - using middlemen;
 - using fake IDs when disposing of goods through second-hand dealers;
 - paying someone else to take the goods to second-hand dealers (Stevenson & Forsythe 1998).

Thieves might also agree on a location where the goods are to be left. This could be any agreed point, such as a parking lot, quiet street or loading platform (Hill 1992).

Policing the Stolen Goods Market

The prevalence of property crime, the resources required for policing it and the low clear-up rate have led police to look for alternative ways of preventing these crimes. Apart from apprehending offenders, police have sought to reduce property crime by:

- increasing the visibility of police in high crime areas;
- educating the public about ways of reducing the likelihood of being burgled or targeted for theft;
- using deterrent measures such as improved lighting, alarms, cameras, property marking; and
- focusing on premises that are targets of repeat victimisation (Queensland Criminal Justice Commission 2001).

However, it has been suggested that there is more that police could do to gather information on stolen property markets. When interviewing thieves, greater emphasis should be placed on the risks of possessing and selling stolen goods after the burglary/theft has taken place and attempts made to find out how stolen goods are disposed of by asking questions of the thieves about how they sell stolen property (Sutton et al. 2001).

Kock et al. (1996) support this view. Their study found that the police had considerable knowledge about the distribution process and how handlers of stolen property operated, including where and how stolen goods were sold to the public, but that this information was not brought together and analysed. It was also felt that the police made little effort to recover stolen property because of the difficulties associated with positively identifying the goods and also proving that the person in possession of the goods knew that the goods had been stolen. A national central record of stolen goods used to be kept by the London Metropolitan Police, however, the difficulty of identifying the goods has led to its being abandoned.

Some research has suggested that there is a need to change police culture and training which reinforces a narrow focus on crime solving. Kock et al. (1996) recommended that police take a more strategic view of theft crimes, including improved cross-border cooperation so that there is better identification of criminals. They suggest that the finding that most criminals commit crimes in the counties in which they live may be influenced by the detection rates. The lack of cross-border cooperation may be a factor in unsolved crimes committed by offenders who have moved across borders.

Practices which have been suggested to disrupt the disposal of stolen goods include:

- enlisting the cooperation of breweries in discouraging the buying and selling of stolen goods on their premises because of the popularity of pubs as an outlet for stolen property;
- advocating greater use of ultraviolet pens for marking goods and the use of lamps to detect these markings (Kock et al 1996);
- arresting those involved by targeting specific avenues of disposal by means other than surveillance (for example, examining business records);
- surveillance of places where it is believed transactions with stolen goods take place; and
- undertaking “sting” operations in which police set up second-hand or pawn shops to lure burglars to sell their stolen goods (Stevenson & Forsythe 1998).

Although sting operations were found to be successful in discovering who the offenders were in a particular area, it seemed that they also encouraged thieves to increase their rate of thieving by creating a ready outlet through which stolen goods could be disposed of (Langworthy & LeBeau 1992).

Appendix 2: Letter to Insurance Agencies

Dear

The Australian Institute of Criminology has been commissioned by the ACT Department of Justice and Community Safety to conduct research into the stolen property market in the Australian Capital Territory.

The aim of this project is to learn more about what happens to property after it has been stolen. Specifically the project will seek to determine:

- the size and value of the recorded stolen goods market;
- the types of goods stolen;
- the drivers that lead to the selection of these goods;
- channels for transportation and disposal of goods; and
- the value of goods throughout the disposal process.

This research will assist the ACT Government in developing crime prevention policies and programs, and also assist the ACT Police in operations targeting property crime and the stolen goods market.

As part of our research, we would like to access any available insurance data related to stolen property claims, excluding theft of motor vehicles. It is envisaged that this data will provide us information regarding the types of goods stolen, the value of stolen goods, and the recovery of stolen property. It is important to note that we **do not** wish to access personal information about «Company» clients or their claim histories. Rather, we are interested in information surrounding the characteristics of stolen property.

The Australian Institute of Criminology and the ACT Government would appreciate any assistance the «Company» can provide. If you would like any more information about our research or this request, please contact Frances Gant on 6260 9227.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Graycar
Director
Australian Institute of Criminology
July 2001

Tim Keady
Executive Officer
Dept Justice and Community Safety
July 2001

Appendix 3: Letter to Second-hand Dealers

Attention: Store Manager

The Australian Institute of Criminology has been commissioned by the ACT Department of Justice and Community Safety to conduct research into the stolen property market in the Australian Capital Territory.

The aim of this project is to learn more about what happens to property after it has been stolen. Specifically the project will seek to determine the size and value of the recorded stolen goods market, the types of goods stolen, and the distribution of stolen property.

This research will assist the ACT Government in developing crime prevention policies and programs, and also assist the ACT Police in operations targeting property crime and the stolen goods market.

As part of our research we would like to interview licensed second-hand dealers in the ACT about their experiences, if any, of being **offered** property which they think may have been stolen. It is important to note that we are not concerned about whether a second-hand dealer actually bought or accepted stolen property. Rather, we are seeking information about the characteristics of the offer.

We are keen to interview second-hand dealers of jewellery, CDs, computer equipment and electrical goods. You have been selected as a possible interviewee from a list of licensed second-hand dealers in the ACT provided by the Magistrates Court. The interview is expected to take about 30 minutes, and your name and business details will not be recorded.

The Australian Institute of Criminology and the ACT Government would appreciate any assistance «Company» can provide. If you think you can help with our research or you would like more information about our project please contact Frances Gant on 6260 9227.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Graycar
Director
Australian Institute of Criminology
July 2001

Derek Jory
Coordinator, Crime Prevention Strategy
Dept Justice and Community Safety
July 2001

Appendix 4: First Public Survey Email

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN OFFERED PROPERTY THAT YOU THINK MIGHT HAVE BEEN STOLEN?

The Australian Institute of Criminology is conducting research in the ACT to find out where property goes after it has been stolen.

We are interested in information relating to the **OFFER** of stolen property to the public in the ACT. It is important to note that we are **NOT interested in whether someone actually bought or accepted stolen property**. Rather, we are seeking information about the particulars of the offer.

The research has been commissioned by the ACT Government and will assist them to develop appropriate crime prevention policies and programs. It will also assist the ACT Police in operations targeting theft and the stolen goods market.

As part of this research we are conducting a public survey. We would like to hear from people who have been, or think they have been offered stolen property in the ACT in the past 2 years.

Participation in the survey is voluntary and all responses are completely confidential.

The survey does not record the names of people who participate in the research, nor does it seek to identify particular people who may be involved in the stolen property market. The survey will take about 10 minutes to complete.

If you think you can help with our research, or would like more information, please contact Diana Nelson by phone 02 6260 9256 or email: property@aic.gov.au.

If you cannot assist, please forward this email to others who may be able to help.

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Appendix 5: Second Public Survey Email



AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGY

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY STOLEN PROPERTY SURVEY

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN OFFERED PROPERTY IN THE ACT THAT YOU THINK MIGHT HAVE BEEN STOLEN?

The Australian Institute of Criminology is conducting research in the ACT to find out where property goes after it has been stolen.

We are interested in information relating to the **OFFER** of stolen property to the public in the ACT. It is important to note that we are **NOT interested in whether someone actually bought or accepted stolen property**. Rather, we are seeking information about the particulars of the offer.

The research has been commissioned by the ACT Government and will assist them to develop appropriate crime prevention policies and programs. It will also assist the ACT Police in operations targeting theft and the stolen goods market.

Participation in the survey is voluntary and all responses are completely confidential. The survey does not record the names or personal details of people who participate in the research, nor does it seek to identify particular people who may be involved in the stolen property market.

If you have been offered property in the ACT that you think may have been stolen, please complete the following survey. The survey will take about 5-10 minutes to complete.

Please click here to open survey: <http://www.spssmr.com.au:8080/AIC-SURVEY/index.htm>

The survey has been set up by SPSS Consulting. The software used by SPSS, for and on behalf of the AIC, for the public survey employs a "cookie" to indicate participation and completion of the survey. This software does not use cookies to gather personal information about users other than what is disclosed by the user during the AIC survey. Further information on the SPSS Privacy Policy can be found on: <http://www.spss.com/Customercentric/Common/privacyPolicy.htm#1>.

Information about the Australian Institute of Criminology can be found on their web site <http://www.aic.gov.au>.

If you have any queries or concerns about this survey, please contact Diana Nelson on diana.nelson@aic.gov.au.

PLEASE FORWARD THIS EMAIL TO AS MANY ACT RESIDENTS AS YOU CAN.

With many thanks for your help.

Appendix 6: Interview Schedule

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
FOR
THE STOLEN PROPERTY
MARKET IN THE A.C.T.**

**CORRECTIVE SERVICES
CLIENTS**

August - December 2001



AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

My name is Fran/Diana and I am from the Australian Institute of Criminology.

We're doing some research to find out about what happens to property after it has been stolen in the ACT.

I would like to ask you some questions which will take about 30 minutes.

Your name isn't recorded anywhere on this form so everything you say is completely private. I cannot tell anybody anything about what we talk about today, that includes the police and corrective services. So it's completely confidential.

It is important that you know the following things. Firstly, that you don't have to do this interview if you don't want to. Secondly, that you don't have to answer any questions that you don't want to. Thirdly, that you can stop the interview and leave at anytime you want.

If you have any concerns or problems with the way this interview is conducted you can tell your case manager who will report this to the AIC Ethics Committee or you can contact the AIC yourself.

Is that all okay? YES NO **If no, STOP.**

Okay, lets begin.

**Australian Institute of Criminology
GPO Box 2944
Canberra ACT 2601**

**Leanne Huddy
Executive Officer, Research
Ph: 6260 9255
Fax: 6260 9203**

CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

<p>1. In the past 2 years have you committed one or more of the following in the ACT: (read out)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theft (excluding motor vehicles) • Burglary • Handling stolen property 	<p>1 Yes</p> <p>0 No End interview</p>																																													
<p>2. Sex? (interviewer to indicate)</p>	<p>1 Male</p> <p>2 Female</p>																																													
<p>3. How old are you?</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>-1 Refuse to answer</p>																																													
<p>I would like to ask you some questions about property related activity in the past 2 years.</p>																																														
<p>4. In the past 2 years, did you steal property (not including cars)?</p>	<p>1 Yes Skip to Q6a</p> <p>0 No</p>																																													
<p>RECEIVING</p>																																														
<p>5a. In the past 2 years, did you receive, handle or possess stolen property?</p>	<p>1 Yes</p> <p>0 No End interview</p>																																													
<p>5b. What type of property did you usually receive, handle or possess? (indicate all cited responses)</p> <p>Skip to Q8a.</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Cash</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Credit cards</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>CDs/Videos/DVDs</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Television</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Stereo players</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Video/DVD players</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Jewellery</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Drugs</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Electrical appliances</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Tools</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Camera</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Computer/laptops</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Other (specify)?</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>_____</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Yes	No		1	0	Cash	1	0	Credit cards	1	0	CDs/Videos/DVDs	1	0	Television	1	0	Stereo players	1	0	Video/DVD players	1	0	Jewellery	1	0	Drugs	1	0	Electrical appliances	1	0	Tools	1	0	Camera	1	0	Computer/laptops	1	0	Other (specify)?			_____
Yes	No																																													
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THEFT			
6a. When you were most active, how often did you steal property? (indicate cited responses)	Every day or almost every day?		How many times per day?
	Several times a week?		How many times per week?
	Every week or almost every week?		How many times per month?
	Less than every week?		How many times per year?
	Less than every month?		How many times?
	Other (describe)?		
6b. Why did you steal property? (if not sure, ask – did you want the property for something?)			
<hr/> <hr/>			
6c. Where did you usually steal property from? (indicate all cited responses)	Yes	No	
	1	0	People's houses (not including garages and sheds)
	1	0	Garages and sheds
	1	0	Flats or apartments
	1	0	Shops
	1	0	Licensed premises
	1	0	Factories
	1	0	Office buildings
	1	0	Other (specify)
<hr/> <hr/>			

6d. Roughly how often did you steal property from **(ask for each identified in 6c)?**

	All of the time	Most of the time	About half of the time	Some of the time	Once
1. Houses	1	2	3	4	5
2. Garages/Sheds	1	2	3	4	5
3. Flats/Apartments	1	2	3	4	5
4. Shops	1	2	3	4	5
5. Licensed Premises	1	2	3	4	5
6. Factories	1	2	3	4	5
7. Office buildings	1	2	3	4	5
8. Other	1	2	3	4	5

6e. Why did you choose to steal property from **(ask for each identified in 6c)? Prompt if necessary – easy to break into?**

Houses	
Garages/Sheds	
Flats/Apartments	
Shops	
Licensed Premises	
Factories	
Office buildings	
Other	

6f. How did you decide which particular places to steal property?

6g. Did you usually steal property alone or with others?	1 Alone Skip to Q6j
	2 With Others
6h. How many other people did you usually steal property with?	_____

6i. Were these people? (Read out)	1 Family 2 Friends 3 Partner 4 People you see around 5 Other? (specify) _____ -1 Refuse to answer -2 Don't know																																	
6j. Has anything ever stopped you from stealing stolen property from a place? (read out)	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>No</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>House alarms</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Dogs</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Dead locks</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Property marking</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Neighbours</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Security guards</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Security cameras</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Store security systems</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">Other? (specify)</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">_____</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	No		1	0	House alarms	1	0	Dogs	1	0	Dead locks	1	0	Property marking	1	0	Neighbours	1	0	Security guards	1	0	Security cameras	1	0	Store security systems	Other? (specify)			_____		
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1	0	Security guards																																
1	0	Security cameras																																
1	0	Store security systems																																
Other? (specify)																																		

6k. Did you make any money from stealing property in the past 2 years?	1 Yes 0 No Skip to Q7a																																	
6l. when you were most active, roughly how much money did you make? _____																																		

6m. What did you usually do with this money?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Buy drugs</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Pay living expenses(rent/food/bills)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Buy clothes/shoes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Buy alcohol</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Gamble it</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Other? (specify)</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>_____</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Yes	No		1	0	Buy drugs	1	0	Pay living expenses(rent/food/bills)	1	0	Buy clothes/shoes	1	0	Buy alcohol	1	0	Gamble it	1	0	Other? (specify)			_____			_____																		
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STOLEN PROPERTY																																														
7a. What type of property did you usually steal (indicate all cited responses)?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Cash</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Credit cards</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>CDs/Videos/DVDs</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Television</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Stereo players</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Video/DVD players</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Jewellery</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Drugs</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Electrical appliances</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Tools</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Camera</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Computer/laptops</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Other (specify)?</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>_____</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Yes	No		1	0	Cash	1	0	Credit cards	1	0	CDs/Videos/DVDs	1	0	Television	1	0	Stereo players	1	0	Video/DVD players	1	0	Jewellery	1	0	Drugs	1	0	Electrical appliances	1	0	Tools	1	0	Camera	1	0	Computer/laptops	1	0	Other (specify)?			_____
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1	0	Computer/laptops																																												
1	0	Other (specify)?																																												

7b. Did you know what property you wanted before you decided to steal it?	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Yes</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>No</td> <td>Skip to Q7d</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	1	Yes		0	No	Skip to Q7d																																							
1	Yes																																													
0	No	Skip to Q7d																																												

7d. How did you decide what property to steal?	
<hr/> <hr/>	
7e. How did you take the property away from where you stole it? (read out)	1 Carried it Skip to Q8a 2 Backpack/bag Skip to Q8a 3 Car 4 Bike Skip to Q8a 5 Van/Truck 6 Other (specify)
7f. Was the car/van/truck stolen?	1 Yes 0 No
DISTRIBUTION OF STOLEN PROPERTY	
8a. Did you keep any of the property for your own use?	1 Yes 0 No Skip to Q8c
8b. How often did you keep the property for your own use?	1 All of the time 2 Most of the time 3 About half of the time 4 Some of the time 5 Once
8c. Did you give or sell property to other people?	1 Yes 0 No
8d. Did you store stolen property between stealing the goods and selling/giving to other people?	1 Yes 0 No Skip to Q9aa
8e. How long did you generally store the goods for?	<hr/>

8f. Where did you usually store the stolen property? (read out)	1 Own Home 2 Friends home 3 Family home 4 Lock-up garage 5 Car/van 6 Other (specify) -1 Refuse to answer -2 Don't know										
Now I would like to ask you some questions about getting rid of stolen property											
PATHS OF PROPERTY DISTRIBUTION Businesses											
9aa. Did you sell stolen property to someone who owned or worked for a business in the past 2 years	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="896 904 992 949">1</td> <td data-bbox="992 904 1331 949">Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="896 949 992 1034">0</td> <td data-bbox="992 949 1331 1034">No Skip to Q9ba</td> </tr> </table>	1	Yes	0	No Skip to Q9ba						
1	Yes										
0	No Skip to Q9ba										
9ab. What type of business were they? (If second hand dealer ask 9ac) _____											
9ac. Did you ever have to show ID?	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="896 1164 992 1209">1</td> <td data-bbox="992 1164 1331 1209">Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="896 1209 992 1272">0</td> <td data-bbox="992 1209 1331 1272">No</td> </tr> </table>	1	Yes	0	No						
1	Yes										
0	No										
9ad. How often did you sell stolen property to these businesses?	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="896 1272 992 1317">1</td> <td data-bbox="992 1272 1331 1317">All of the time</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="896 1317 992 1361">2</td> <td data-bbox="992 1317 1331 1361">Most of the time</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="896 1361 992 1406">3</td> <td data-bbox="992 1361 1331 1406">About half of the time</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="896 1406 992 1451">4</td> <td data-bbox="992 1406 1331 1451">Some of the time</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="896 1451 992 1563">5</td> <td data-bbox="992 1451 1331 1563">Once</td> </tr> </table>	1	All of the time	2	Most of the time	3	About half of the time	4	Some of the time	5	Once
1	All of the time										
2	Most of the time										
3	About half of the time										
4	Some of the time										
5	Once										
9ae. How did you come across these businesses? _____ _____											

<p>9af. What did you usually get for the stolen property? (read out)</p>	<p>Yes 1</p> <p>No 0</p>	<p>Money Skip to Q9ah</p> <p>Drugs</p> <p>Alcohol Skip to Q9ah</p> <p>Clothes Skip to Q9ah</p> <p>Vehicle/ parts Skip to Q9ah</p> <p>Other Skip to Q9ah (specify) _____</p>
<p>9ag. What type of drugs did you get for the property?</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	
<p>9ah. How did you work out how much to sell/trade the property for?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>		
<p>9ai. Do you know what the businesses generally did with the stolen property?</p>	<p>1</p> <p>0</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No Skip to Q9ak</p>
<p>9aj. What did they do with the stolen property? (Prompt: sold through business or on the side?)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>		
<p>9ak. Roughly how long did it take from stealing property to get rid of it through these businesses</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>-2</p>	<p>hours</p> <p>days</p> <p>Don't know</p>
<p>9al. Do you think the businesses knew the property was stolen?</p>	<p>1</p> <p>0</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>
<p>9am. When you were selling to these businesses how did you avoid getting caught by the police?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>		
<p>Family and Friends</p>		
<p>9ba. Did you sell stolen property to family or friends in the past 2 years?</p>	<p>1</p> <p>0</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No Skip to Q9ca</p>

9bb. How often did you sell stolen property to family and friends?	1 2 3 4 5	All of the time Most of the time About half of the time Some of the time Once
9bc. What did you usually get for the stolen property? (read out)	Yes 1 1 1 1 1 1	No 0 0 0 0 0 0 Money Skip to Q9be Drugs Alcohol Skip to Q9be Clothes Skip to Q9be Vehicle/ parts Skip to Q9be Other (specify) Skip to Q9be _____
9bd. What type of drugs did you get for the property?	_____	
9be. How did you work out how much to sell/trade the property for? _____ _____		
9bf. Do you know what your family and friends did with the stolen property?	1 0	Yes No Skip to Q9bh
9bg. What did they do with the stolen property? _____ _____		
9bh. Roughly how long did it take from stealing property to get rid of it through family and friends?	_____ _____ -2	hours days Don't know
9bi. Do you think your family and friends knew the property was stolen?	1 0	Yes No
9bj. When you were selling to these people how did you avoid getting caught by the police? _____ _____		

See Around People (Not Family and Friends)		
9ca. Did you sell stolen property to people you see around (not family and friends) in the past 2 years?	1 0	Yes No Skip to Q9da
9cb. How often did you sell stolen property to these people?	1 2 3 4 5	All of the time Most of the time About half of the time Some of the time Once
9cc. Where did you usually sell property to these people?	1 2 3 4 5 6	Pub/bar Hotel Party On the street Shopping centre Other (specify)
9cd. What did you usually get for the stolen property? (read out)	Yes 1 1 1 1 1 1	No 0 0 0 0 0 0 Money Skip to Q9cg Drugs Alcohol Skip to Q9cg Clothes Skip to Q9cg Vehicle/ parts Skip to Q9cg Other Skip to Q9cg (specify)
9ce. What type of drugs did you get for the property?	_____	
9cf. How did you work out how much to sell/trade the property for?	_____ _____	
9cg. Do you know what these people did with the stolen property?	1 0	Yes No Skip to Q9ch
9ch. What did they do with the stolen property?	_____ _____	

9ci. Roughly how long did it take from stealing property to get rid of it through these people?	_____	hours
	_____	days
	-2	Don't know
9cj. Do you think these people knew the property was stolen?	1	Yes
	0	No
9ck. When you were selling to these people how did you avoid getting caught by the police?	_____	

Strangers		
9da. Did you sell stolen property to strangers in the past 2 years?	1	Yes
	0	No Skip to Q9ea
9db. How often did you sell stolen property to strangers?	1	All of the time
	2	Most of the time
	3	About half of the time
	4	Some of the time
	5	Once
9dc. Where did you usually sell property to strangers?	1	Pub/bar
	2	Hotel
	3	Party
	4	Door to door
	5	On the street
	6	Shopping centres
	7	Other (specify)
9dd. What did you get for the stolen property? (read out)	1 0	Money Skip to Q9dg
	1 0	Drugs
	1 0	Alcohol Skip to Q9dg
	1 0	Clothes Skip to Q9dg
	1 0	Vehicle/ parts Skip to Q9dg
	1 0	Other (specify) Skip to Q9dg
9de. What type of drugs did you get for the property?	_____	

9df. How did you work out how much to sell/trade the property for? _____		
9dg. Roughly how long did it take from stealing property to get rid of it through strangers?	_____	hours
	_____	days
	-2	Don't know
9dh. Do you think these people knew the property was stolen?	1	Yes
	0	No
9di. When you were selling to strangers how did you avoid getting caught by the police? _____		
Markets		
9ea. Did you sell stolen property on a market stall or by someone who ran a market stall in the past 2 years?	1	Yes
	0	No Skip to Q9fa
9eb. How often did you do this?	1	All of the time
	2	Most of the time
	3	About half of the time
	4	Some of the time
	5	Once
Auctions		
9fa. Did you sell stolen property through an auctioneer in the past 2 years?	1	Yes
	0	No Skip to Q9ga
9fb. What type of auction was it?	_____	
9fc. How often did you do this?	1	All of the time
	2	Most of the time
	3	About half of the time
	4	Some of the time
	5	Once

Garage Sales		
9ga. Did you sell stolen property through a garage sale in the past 2 years?	1	Yes
	0	No Skip to Q10
9gb. How often did you do this?	1	All of the time
	2	Most of the time
	3	About half of the time
	4	Some of the time
	5	Once
Other Avenues of Disposal		
10. Are there any other outlets that you have used to sell stolen property that I have not mentioned?	1	Yes (please specify) _____
	0	No
11. Which is the best way to get rid of stolen property – why? _____ _____		
DRUG EXCHANGE		
12a. Did you trade stolen property for drugs in the past 2 years?	1	Yes
	0	No Skip to Q13
12b. Did you trade stolen property with a drug dealer?	1	Yes Skip to Q12d
	0	No
12c. Was this person? (Read out)	1	Family
	2	Friends
	3	Stranger
	4	People you see around
	5	Other? (specify) _____
	-1	Refuse to answer
	-2	Don't know

12d. How often did you trade stolen property for drugs?	1	All of the time
	2	Most of the time
	3	About half of the time
	4	Some of the time
	5	Once
12e. What type of drugs did you get?	_____	
12f. Do you know what the person did with the stolen property?	1	Yes
	0	No Skip to Q12h
12g. What did they do with the stolen property?	_____ _____	
12h. Roughly how long did it take from stealing property to get rid of through drug exchange?	_____	hours
	_____	days
	-2	Don't know
12i. When you were trading goods with these people how did you avoid getting caught by the police?	_____ _____	
ORDER STOLEN PROPERTY		
13a. Did other people ask you to steal property in the past 2 years?	1	Yes
	0	No Skip to Q14
13b. How often did people generally ask you to steal property?	1	All of the time
	2	Most of the time
	3	About half of the time
	4	Some of the time
	5	Once

13c. What type of people usually asked you to steal property? (read out)	1 2 3 4 -1 -2	Family/friends businesses People I see around Other? (specify) Refuse to answer Don't know																												
13d. What type of property did these people want? _____ _____																														
13e. Do you know what these people did with the stolen property?	1 0	Yes No Skip to Q13g																												
13f. What did they do with the stolen property? _____ _____																														
13g. Roughly how long would it take you to get the goods from the time you were asked to steal it?	_____ _____ -2	hours days Don't know																												
13h. How did these people generally pay you for the goods? (read out)	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> <th></th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Money</td> <td>Skip to Q13j</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Drugs</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Alcohol</td> <td>Skip to Q13j</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Clothes</td> <td>Skip to Q13j</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Vehicle/ parts</td> <td>Skip to Q13j</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>Other (specify)</td> <td>Skip to Q13j</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes	No			1	0	Money	Skip to Q13j	1	0	Drugs		1	0	Alcohol	Skip to Q13j	1	0	Clothes	Skip to Q13j	1	0	Vehicle/ parts	Skip to Q13j	1	0	Other (specify)	Skip to Q13j
Yes	No																													
1	0	Money	Skip to Q13j																											
1	0	Drugs																												
1	0	Alcohol	Skip to Q13j																											
1	0	Clothes	Skip to Q13j																											
1	0	Vehicle/ parts	Skip to Q13j																											
1	0	Other (specify)	Skip to Q13j																											
13i. What type of drugs?	_____ _____																													
13j. How did you work out how much to sell/trade the property for? _____ _____																														

INTERSTATE TRADE		
14a. Did you sell stolen property within the ACT (not including Queanbeyan?)	1	Yes
	0	No Skip to Q14f
14b. How often did you sell within the ACT?	1	All of the time
	2	Most of the time
	3	About half of the time
	4	Some of the time
	5	Once
14c. Do you know if the people you usually sold to were planning to move the stolen property outside the ACT?	1	Yes
	0	No Skip to Q14f
14d. Where were they planning to move it? _____ _____		
14e. How were they planning to move it there? _____ _____		
14f. Have you sold stolen property to someone not in the ACT?	1	Yes
	0	No Skip to Q15
14g. How often did you sell outside the ACT?	1	All of the time
	2	Most of the time
	3	About half of the time
	4	Some of the time
	5	Once
14h. Where did you generally sell it? _____		

14i. How do you know the people you generally sold to? (read out)	1	Family
	2	Friends
	3	People I see around
	4	Drug dealer
	5	Other? (specify)
	-1	Refuse to answer
	-2	Don't know
14j. Why did you decide to sell property outside the ACT?		

Conclusion		
15. What do you think makes it easy for people to sell stolen property?		

16. Is there anything else you would like to say about stolen property in the ACT?		

O.K That's it. Thanks for helping out today.

