

To Catch A Suspect — On Pinterest

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Pinterest is known as a place where people share recipes, crafts or fashion. But a new set of images have started showing up on the social media site: mug shots.

Bonnie Stankunas has come to the post office in Pottstown, Pa., her entire life. She remembers, as a kid, spotting "most wanted" posters hung on a wall.

"It kind of reminded me of the Wild, Wild West," Stankunas says.

None of the people at this post office remembers exactly when the posters went away, but the FBI stopped sending the notices out a couple of years ago.

People often see wanted people on television news or online news sites. Stankunas says she has heard of Pinterest but hasn't figured out how to use it.

She's not alone, but Pinterest is one of the fastest-growing social media sites out there. It works best to share images — or, as it's called on Pinterest, "pin" them.

A crime reporter at *The Mercury* in Pottstown had the idea to start a [gallery](#) of mug shots of people wanted by the police. Pottstown Police Capt. F. Richard Drumheller says calls came in to his tip line right away.

"We've actually seen a 57 percent increase in our warrant services, and we actually got more people based on our tips and our calls," Drumheller says.

"Warrant services" is police speak for arrests.

"For us it's like, 'Yes,' because it's very enjoyable in police work when the public helps you," Drumheller says.

This isn't a most wanted list. Pottstown has a couple of dozen photos up at a time, all people with outstanding warrants — from DUI to theft to assault. Drumheller says some people even called to say they had seen their own mug shot online and asked how to turn themselves in to authorities.

"Yeah, it's funny how you act sometimes when people know what your business is," Drumheller says.

When it comes to social media, police departments can overshare like the rest of us. Lauri Stevens does social media consulting for law enforcement. She says people got upset

when a prosecutor in Texas started tweeting names of people arrested for DUIs on holidays. But Stevens says Pinterest has a lot of potential.

"This is a way to get all of those people out there all the time in front of more people," Stevens says.

Women make up 80 percent of Pinterest users, so they're especially likely to be exposed to the images.

"It's going to be the younger-ish women, who are decision-makers, heads of households, or at least the decision-makers running the family. They are the ones who are going to be most engaged," Stevens says.

This tool can also shine a spotlight on a small police department. The results in Pottstown got noticed by police in Philadelphia, who were already solving crimes with social media.

Philadelphia's use of social media has produced tips leading to arrests in a lot of cases — from a man who killed an officer to someone in South Philly who kept stealing fake flowers off of someone's porch. The department is using [Pinterest](#) in the same way, to help identify suspects, thanks to Cpl. Frank Domizio. His wife was already a fan.

She encouraged him to start the police department's site, which he did last month. He says he's pressuring her to start repinning some felons.

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