

METRO

This pup is a cyber criminal's worst nightmare

By Carl Campanile

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Harley the cyber dog
Richard Harbus

She has baleful brown eyes and big, floppy ears — but it's that wet, pink nose that should make cyber criminals quake with terror.

Meet Haley the cyber dog — New York law enforcement's newest tool for sniffing out the hidden electronic devices that can put fraudsters, embezzlers, terrorists and pedophiles securely in jail.

K-9s have been trained to sniff out drugs and explosives for some time. But dogs like Haley can detect hidden computers, cellphones and thumb drives — and take a bite out of financial crime, child porn and terrorism.

Harley, a 2-year-old, female yellow Labrador retriever, will be deployed by the Westchester County Police Department and the FBI.

"Cyber crime is no match for Harley's nose," said Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino, who will appear at Harley's coming-out demonstration party at the Westchester Police Academy in Valhalla on Monday.

"This is old-fashioned policing catching 21st-century criminals," Astorino added.

"She is going to crack a lot of crimes with those nostrils. She's raring to go."

Astorino has seen Harley in action, sniffing out the signature chemicals in digital devices under the supervision of Westchester Detective Brett Hochron, who is assigned to the FBI Task Force.

When Haley detects the chemical compounds of circuit boards, CDs, DVDs and even old-school floppy discs, she sits down to alert human crime fighters of her find.

Then law enforcement's best friend gets a treat for her good deed.

Interest in the use of cyber dogs exploded in 2015 when authorities in Indiana deployed a Labrador named Bear during a search of then-Subway sandwich pitchman Jared Fogle's home.

Bear found a hidden thumb drive that contained pornographic images of minors. Fogle was later sentenced to more than 15 years in federal prison.

Just last week, British authorities reported they've also begun using FBI-trained cyber dogs to help catch suspected pedophiles.

Astorino said using cyber dogs is cost-effective as well.

It only cost a few thousand dollars to buy Harley and she was trained for free with the Connecticut State Police, one of the first agencies to train cyber dogs.

"If a device is hidden in a drawer, under a table, in a wall, the dog picks up on it," George Jupin, detective for Connecticut State Police Computer Crimes Unit [told Techrepublic.com](http://Techrepublic.com).



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