

Cognitive science and the law.

Posted At : April 2, 2008 8:27 AM | Posted By : [Tim Brunson, PhD](#)

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Numerous innocent people have been sent to jail based directly or indirectly on normal, but flawed, human perception, memory and decision making. Current cognitive-science research addresses the issues that are directly relevant to the connection between normal cognitive functioning and such judicial errors, and suggests means by which the false-conviction rate could be reduced. Here, we illustrate how this can be achieved by reviewing recent work in two related areas: eyewitness testimony and fingerprint analysis. We articulate problems in these areas with reference to specific legal cases and demonstrate how recent findings can be used to address them. We also discuss how researchers can translate their conclusions into language and ideas that can influence and improve the legal system.

Trends Cogn Sci. 2007 Mar;11(3):111-7. Busey TA, Loftus GR. Department of Psychology, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405, USA. busey@indiana.edu
