The Fear of Crime Application (FOCA) is a data collection technique that samples people’s everyday experiences to provide space, time, and individual information about fear of crime in their entire activity space (all places people interact with day-to-day).

The FOCA is deployed as a questionnaire on a mobile device. It is a powerful way of seeking information from people during (and about) their daily activities. Utilising in-built sensors of phones allows for real-time collection of spatial (GPS) and temporal (time and date) information about the report. This means that when a participant answers the question “In this moment how worried are you about becoming a victim of crime?” information is collected about their characteristics, when and where they feel worried, as well as their answer. The following will outline and illustrate how this works:

1. Participants download the application from an app store onto their own mobile devices.
2. The first time the app is launched, users fill out a quick demographic survey to collect information such as age, gender, etc. This only needs to be completed once, and is linked to all submitted reports.
3. Participants are sent reminders or “ping”s to complete the questionnaire. This can be set to remind them at certain times (e.g. during morning peak travel times and evening peak travel times) or in certain locations (e.g. when they come within 50 meters of Camden Town Station).
4. When participants receive this ping they open the application and complete the survey questionnaire about their current state.
5. Participants can also report something un-prompted. So if they experience a fear of crime event at a non-ping time, they can still send a report about it.
6. Retrospective annotation option is also offered for participants if they would prefer to remove themselves from a dangerous situation before using their (potentially) valuable phones. In this version participants are offered the option of finding the location of the event on the map, and telling how many hours ago the incident happened, allowing for an adjusted GPS and time-stamp value that is still accurate to the report.
7. Finally the data collected will contain demographic information (who sent the report), GPS (where it was sent from), date and time (when it was sent), what the person felt (fear of crime), which option they used to send the report (responding to a ping, voluntarily, or retrospectively), and any additional questions put to participants (in this case whether they are on public transport or not) (Figure 1).