In this Issue

Introduction to Criminal Justice Data Integration & *Integration News*

The concept of "criminal justice data integration" has been a focus of government discussion and initiatives for the past several years. Even before 911, state and federal criminal justice agencies were discussing and launching initiatives to integrate criminal justice data. After 911, the intensity of the discussions and the pace of initiatives increased. Not only are government agencies today focused on the integration of data with respect to crimes committed by citizens, they are also focused on the integration of data with respect to foreigners and terrorist activities. 911 shined a spotlight on the gaps in criminal justice information systems and our intelligence, and heightened the nation's interest in data integration for the purpose of improving public safety.

But what is "data integration" and what does it mean in the context of criminal justice? What are the problems today and what are the goals? What does the future of data integration look like? What does it mean for the rights of offenders and the public?

This article is an introduction to criminal justice data integration and its many dimensions and issues. It questions the definition of criminal justice data integration and highlights some of the underlying problems with existing criminal justice information systems.

This new publication, *Integration News*, continues where this article leaves off on the topic of criminal justice data integration. As a bi-monthly publication, *Integration News* will bring you detailed coverage of:

- Trends and National Developments
- Technology
- Business Process Reengineering
- Creative Funding and Grant Opportunities
- Law and Policy

in-te-grate \in-te-grat\ vb 1: to form or blend into a whole: UNITE 2 a: to unite with something else b: to incorporate into a larger unit.

What is criminal justice data integration?

in-te-grate \in-te-grat\ vb 1: to form or blend into a whole: UNITE 2 a: to unite with something else b: to incorporate into a larger unit.

If only it were that easy. If only we could just blend or unite all the databases into one to solve all the problems. I think we can

agree, that the above definition doesn't quite cut it. It does not consider the complex technology, organizational issues, business process changes, and legal and policy issues involved. So what are we really talking about when we speak of criminal justice data integration?

According to the National Conferences of State Legislatures, an integrated criminal justice information system is one that "uses technology to allow seamless sharing of information," where the information shared includes "all criminal justice related data, including photographs, fingerprints, DNA identification records, case records, court calendars, electronic messages and documents."[i] According to the National Association of State Chief Information Officers:
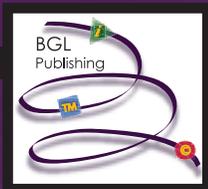
Integrated justice requires the on-line, instantaneous sharing of arrest information between law enforcement agencies (at the local level), with the local prosecutor and court, and with the state criminal history records repository, but also with other governmental agencies (e.g., Department of Health and Human Services), private licensing boards (e.g., Day Care Licensing Boards), and the general public. Moreover, the shared information includes not only specific data elements recording the arrest offense and the offender's identification information (e.g., name, data of birth, height, weight, hair color, etc.), but also digital mug-shot photographs, electronic fingerprints, document images and criminal history record information. [ii]

A more exhaustive definition of information to which criminal justice agencies should have access through data integration was published by Minnesota in 2000:

Electronic fingerprint and photo images

Warrant status

Pretrial release status

Current processing status in all Minnesota counties

Domestic and other restraint conditions

Conviction status on all offense levels, including serious misdemeanors

Post-conviction restrictive probation conditions and status

Weapons prohibition status

Alcohol and driving restrictive conditions

Juvenile arrests and conviction status

Total case record from incident report all the way to outcome and sanction compliance and completion. [iii]

Others, including Minnesota, sometimes simplify the definition of criminal justice data integration by describing it as "access to the right information at the right time."

Whatever words may be used to craft a definition, criminal justice data integration is best defined by the problems that exist, the gaps in the system, the goals being set, the approaches being taken, the vision of future systems; and the availability of funding—all of which are varied and change from day-to-day. Consequently, criminal justice data integration may escape a straightforward definition. It is a moving target that will require redefinition at many milestones along the road.

Problems That Exist Today

Every state, federal, and local agency knows best the specific problems that exist with respect to its own operations and data access points. However, it may not be commissioners or directors who know the problems; in many circumstances it may just be the individual worker or practioner who understands his or her needs for additional data on a day-to-day basis. The problems are not documented or well defined. To make matters worse, some workers may not even know that information that they need to do their job may be available from another source. Often, these problems do not surface and are not identified until a specific project or initiative is launched to analyze information flows and the need for additional information across agencies. Even then, agencies do not like to air dirty laundry and tend to keep the problems quiet until they are fixed.

Consequently, legislators and the public are not as informed as they should be about information gaps in the overall criminal justice system. Often, it takes a newsworthy event to shine light on data access problems and to get information out to legislators and the public. For example, the following news reports provide some insight into the types of problems that exist in the flow of criminal justice information:

Two months before Mohammed Atta is alleged to have led the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, he should have been arrested by police in Palm Beach County, Fla. Stopped for a traffic violation, Atta was ticketed and drove off after police checked his record and found it clean. They didn't know that there was an outstanding bench warrant issued for Atta in adjacent Broward County for failure to appear in court on charges of driving with an invalid license.

    STATES TRY TO TAKE A BITE OUT OF CRIME, GOVERNMENT TECHNOLOGY MAGAZINE (WINTER 2003)

Doug Welch is serving a 39-year prison sentence for murdering his ex-wife, Ilka Mondane, in 1997 in Minneapolis while he was released from jail on another charge. If a judge who released him had his complete record, Welch would not have been able to post bail.

August 1993 – Welch convicted of simple robbery in Ramsey County.

1994 – A former girlfriend gets an order for protection against Welch after she said he

> *"Legislators and the public are not as informed as they should be about information gaps in the overall criminal justice system."*

threatened to shoot her.

March 1994 – His probation is revoked and he's sent to prison for nearly two years on the robbery conviction.

August 1997 – Welch arrested after another girlfriend told police he put a gun to her head and threatened to shoot her. He was not charged but was released.

August 19, 1997 – Welch arrested for shooting Mondane's boyfriend in the foot.

September 5, 1997 – Welch pleads guilty to a reduced charge of illegal possession of a weapon. He posts bail that day.

September 29, 1997 – Welch shoots Mondane in the head.

> MINNESOTA CRIMINALS SLIP THROUGH COMPUTER NET, ST. PAUL PIONEER PRESS (MN) (FEB. 15, 2000)

The Grant County Sheriff's Department will be installing new records management computer software in the coming month. According to [the sheriff], the software will link information from the [county] dispatcher, sheriff's office and the jail into one computer system. . . . "We should be able to find information more quickly instead of digging through files."

> SHERIFF'S OFFICE WILL RECEIVE NEW SOFTWARE, GRANT COUNTY REVIEW (SD) (FEB. 12, 2003)

Issues Surrounding Criminal Justice Data Integration

Data integration is not just about technology—some say that technology is the easy part. The challenges of data integration include reengineering business processes, defining business rules and security levels, developing policy and changes in law, securing funding, and establishing cross-agency cooperation. These are major challenges that are being addressed, across the country, in different ways. *Integration News* is dedicated to covering the breadth and depth of these issues, and helping agencies monopolize on the ideas of others, without reinventing the wheel.

Technology. Most existing criminal justice information systems were designed to support the operations of a single agency. They were designed several years ago, without considering the information needs of other agencies. Even though systems designed in the last twenty years were designed with some capabilities for reporting to other agencies and legislatures, in compliance with state, federal, or local reporting requirements, they were typically not designed to support the operations of other agencies.

A variety of technical approaches, and combinations thereof, exist to improve agency access to the data they need. So many exist that the National Association of State Chief Information Officers has not endorsed any particular technology approach. Rather, it recognizes multiple approaches and combinations. *Integration News* will provide coverage of different technology approaches, as well as details about implementation. We start this coverage in this issue with a report on Ohio's recent approach to providing agencies better access to data. *"Search"ing for Justice: Data Integration in Support of Ohio Law Enforcement,* describes Ohio's recent development of a search engine to search across agency databases, analogous to Google (www.Google.com). Read about the details of this implementation beginning on page 12.

Funding. Funding may be one of the most difficult hurdles on the road to integration. Integration projects tend to be very costly, due not only to the cost of technology, but to the cost of reengineering business processes, developing new business rules, formulating new policy, managing cross-agency projects, and obtaining consensus. Because adequate funding is hard to acquire, many agencies are exploring

creative funding approaches. *Integration News* will provide coverage of funding issues and the creative approaches being adopted by agencies throughout the country. We begin this coverage in this issue with *Funding Criminal Justice Data Integration Through Grants*. The author, Jeff Barlow, helped the State of Missouri obtain many different types of grants to supplement their data integration efforts. Another article in this issue, *Integrated Justice in Washington State: An Interview with Program Director Brian LeDuc*, explains that Washington State recently released a Request for Information (RFI) that asks the private sector to prepare an integration plan, including a proof of concept or pilot, at no cost to the state. Turn to page 6 to read more about Washington's approach and read excerpts from the RFI. We will follow up on the success of this approach in a future issue.

Law & Policy. Another difficult hurdle for data integration efforts is understanding existing law and policy and proposing changes to facilitate appropriate data access, without violating the rights of offenders and the public. Each state and local agency has a quagmire of statutory provisions and case law that it must follow, with respect to data disclosure. Sometimes agencies come up with good data integration solutions, but then run into legal problems at implementation. The editorial board at *Integration News* includes attorneys and technologists to help sift through the difficult law and policy issues, and provide clear summaries and explanations in this complicated area. Our next issue will include an informative piece on law and policy with respect to cross-agency data access. Watch for it.

Forums. Several forums exist for agencies to obtain and share information on criminal justice data integration. These include but are not limited to:

- Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative (Global) Advisory Committee(GAC)

- Integrated Justice Information Systems (IJIS) Institute

- National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO)

- National Governor's Association (NGA)

- National Task Force For Interoperability (NTFI)

It is hard to keep abreast of the developments stemming from all of these forums. *Integration News* will cover the work of these and other forums and groups, with summaries and detailed references. We begin this coverage by featuring a recent report of NASCIO that should be on every agency's bookshelf. Turn to page 14 for a summary of the report and a reference link to the free publication.

Criminal justice data integration will surely be an active topic and area of initiatives for the next decade. It will change and grow with respect to definition, scope, technology, business process, law and policy, and funding. *Integration News* is the first and only publication dedicated to covering these issues and helping agencies and companies keep up with the flood of activity throughout the country. We will highlight important technology and policy developments, and keep agencies up-to-date.

(i) Heather Morton, *Integrated Criminal Justice Information Systems*, National Conference of State Legislatures (Nov. 2001).

(ii) *Concept for Operations for Integrated Justice Information Sharing*, National Association of State Chief Information Officers, Ver. 1.0 (July 2003).

(iii) *Minnesota Criminals Slip Through Computer Net*, St Paul Pioneer Press (MN) (Feb. 15, 2000) at http://www.twincities.com/mld/twincities/archives/.

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"Sometimes agencies come up with good data integration solutions, but then run into legal problems at implementation."

Brian LeDuc obtained his J.D. from the University of Notre Dame Law School. He has extensive domestic and international experience in the integration of new technologies and procedures into cultural, justice, and law firm environments. Immediately prior to accepting the position as Program Director in Washington, he served for three years as Counsel on the Electronic Public Access Program to the Administrative Office of the United States Courts. He can be contacted via email at BrianLeDuc@aol.com.

Integrated Justice in Washington State:

An Interview with Program Director Brian LeDuc

The Justice Information Network (JIN) is a collection of individuals and institutions in Washington State dedicated to improving the exchange and quality of information in the justice community. Although constituents such as the courts, state patrol, and local entities have made considerable improvements to their business processes over the last 10 years, the achievement of actual integration—and the anticipated improvements to efficiency and quality that accompany this goal—has proven particularly elusive.

Brian LeDuc became Washington State's Justice Information Network Program Director in April 2003. A former counsel to the electronic public access program of the federal courts and American Bar Association liaison on a legal reform project in Macedonia, Brian shares his current Top 6 list for successful justice integration efforts, as well as a bit of history about Washington's program.

Q: What prompted the formation of the Washington Integrated Justice Information Board?

The Integrated Justice Information Board (the Board) has been around in one form or another since 1984, at which time the Criminal Justice Information Act (CJIA) established an Executive Committee to recommend improvements to felony criminal justice information. Eight years later another committee—the Justice Information Committee (JIC)—was created to offer policy and direction to the CJIA Executive Committee and to provide a governance structure for justice integration efforts. JIC membership included cabinet-level members from state government and local elected officials. In 1993, as part of its Strategic Plan, the JIC created the concept of the "Justice Information Network" to connect all state criminal history databases in an "unbroken chain of information at every level of the justice enterprise."

In August 2002, because the work of the two bodies was viewed as largely duplicative, the JIC was disbanded in favor of a reconstituted CJIA Executive Committee. The Executive Committee was then expanded to include former members of the JIC and additional representation from state and local agencies.

In 2003, Governor Locke signed a bill that codified the membership of the Executive Committee (renamed the Washington Integrated Justice Information Board). The law allocated no funds to the effort, but it does mandate a September 2004 report to the Governor, the Supreme Court, and the Legislature detailing plans and requirements for achieving integration statewide.

Q: So, how did you get here?

Around the same time as the Board was created, four state agencies (the Washington State Patrol, the Departments of Corrections (DOC), Information Services (DIS) and Licensing (DOL)), and the Administrative Office of the Courts,

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THE JIN AND THE BOARD

The Board, which meets monthly, is the governance structure for the Justice Information Network (JIN).

The JIN is the means by which the justice community exchanges information. Although the extent of the "network" is still being defined, it may include the development of plans, policies, and standards, the co-ordination of resources and the development and operations of the structure under which certain exchanges take place.

created a program office for the JIN and established the position of Program Director, housed at DIS.

This is the situation to which I arrived in April 2003. In addition to discovering a talented group of dedicated individuals, I found a wealth of planning documents to educate me, including a host of strategic plans, "blueprints," and feasibility studies, as well as a number of agency-specific projects, many of which had received funding from block federal grants for integrated justice. That said, the very abundance of personal visions, strategic materials, and individual projects left me less than certain about the "big picture" plan for integration in Washington State. Conversations with Board members and other observers reflected a similar confusion. Over the past several months, the following issues have risen to the top of my understanding of how to realize the goal of integration in Washington. What I have found over the last six months is that the state is poised to make a significant leap forward in the near future.

Q: What have been your biggest challenges?

Two of our challenges—which I believe are fairly common to all states—have been the lack of personnel and funding dedicated solely to justice integration efforts, and the sheer complexity of bringing together members from across the state for a regular meeting.

Typically, the implementation of justice integration efforts takes place through various individuals and resources that have either volunteered or been assigned to assist the program. This approach is laudable but ultimately ineffectual, because it is a secondary assignment and individuals have difficulty seeing projects through to completion, given the demands of their "day jobs."

In addition, bringing together people from across a large state to discuss specific tasks is very difficult. It often takes a month to schedule a meeting and, due to work schedules that are already overburdened, meetings finish with a number of tasks that are either unassigned, given to the program director for completion, or simply tabled until the next meeting.

Q: With so many different players and independent systems, how are you approaching justice information integration efforts?

After a short six months, I've come to realize that it will be difficult to effect change quickly. With some basic principles, however, I believe we can be successful if we address a handful of issues, both organizational and circumstantial.

1. Governance structures are insufficient to deliver results.

A governance structure for the JIN has existed for almost 20 years. No one disagrees with the premise of integrated justice systems or individual commitments to that end. The problem is that a governance structure which focuses purely on sharing information about separate projects developed by different entities is educational, but doesn't particularly bring about changes in behavior or expenditures.

Traditionally, and even today, the membership on the JIN includes state and local government stakeholders. In the case of local stakeholders, many "represent" statewide professional associations and do not have decision-making authority for their colleagues. This is further complicated by local jurisdictions that pursue their own integration plans or automate specific aspects of the justice process without the involvement of the statewide JIN community or the knowledge of their JIN representative.

The Board needs to establish some rules and standards for the JIN, so that local

". . . a governance structure which focuses purely on sharing information about separate projects developed by different entities . . . doesn't particularly bring about changes in behavior or expenditures."

projects have data to assist in developing their own systems and proposals. We can't put restrictions on what locals do, but I would hate to be a project manager having to explain why a delayed or unsuccessful project does not follow the state playbook.

2. Clearly define terms and how to measure success.

It's interesting to note that even after 20 years, no definitions exist for the Justice Information Network, and Board Members differ on whether it is a thing (providing connectivity, developing and operating applications) or a concept (a collection of individuals exchanging information).

In developing a vision and plan for integrated justice information, it is imperative that all players understand and have common definitions of guiding principles. For instance, a 1998 Memorandum of Understanding, signed by all CJIA Executive Committee members, states that the criminal justice community agrees that:

> . . . *no Justice Information Network related system or component will be developed or integrated into the network without effective participation of state and local stakeholders.*

This appears to reflect statewide commitment to integrated justice, and the Memorandum is often cited today by government officials as controlling authority. But closer scrutiny reveals some gaping holes in the language—terms that are either undefined, or that no one seems able to explain. For example, what is "effective participation of stakeholders?" How can something that is purely a concept have systems or components? Such terms are so general that they are essentially meaningless. In addition, since the JIN governance structure has only minimal authority over the allocation or expenditure of funds, the manner in which a violation might be addressed is undocumented.

3. Individual projects do not amount to integration.

Using technology to improve the business of individual JIN stakeholders has facilitated tremendous progress in recent years. Examples include upgrading various legacy systems and the purchase of Livescan machines to improve the handling of fingerprints. These projects do not, however, support a clearly defined plan for integration or fit within an established enterprise architecture.

One of our challenges (and a legislative requirement) this year will be to develop a comprehensive plan by September 2004 that describes the steps and funding necessary to achieve more success with justice information integration. Indeed, the lack of such a plan makes it difficult to find funding—one of the reasons I was hired—from various sources, including the federal government.

4. Grants administration needs to be open and documented.

Given the budget difficulties states are facing across the country, it is not surprising that funding is at the center of most debates about integrated justice. The current economic climate is the main reason that the Board decided not to seek state funding for the program office, choosing instead to pool funds to hire a program director.

Of particular interest to the JIN is the availability of block grants for integrated justice from the federal government through the Department of Justice. I have found, however, that the process of applying for and securing grants from the state agency charged with their disbursement and management is hindered by a lack of evaluation criteria, and that project oversight by the granting authority is inadequate. Moreover, the same requests are funded every year for the same projects, without a comprehensive review by the Board to measure how the project is furthering integration efforts.

"Given the budget difficulties states are facing across the country, it is not surprising that funding is at the center of most debates about integrated justice."

To be successful, the Board must find ways to assert the state's collective interest so that grant applications and awards reflect the community's goal of integrated justice, and projects are measured against clear criteria on a regular basis. This includes:

- While federal deadlines are not static, states need to be more attuned to when grants will be announced each year;

- State offices administering the federal grants should provide sufficient information about grant opportunities, deadlines, and the criteria by which projects will be measured. In addition, it is critical that administrators have expertise in the justice and project management process, so they are able to offer meaningful oversight.; and

- The Board, or a designated subcommittee, must actively participate in grant applications review, conducting interviews, and ranking projects by priority. In Washington State, I have suggested the Board revisit its current priorities (set in 2001) and create a steering committee that will oversee the administration of a transparent, criteria-driven, and well-documented process.

5. Outside resources are available, informative, and free.

In addition to my colleagues throughout the country in the emergent field of justice integration, who have been very willing to respond to e-mails or phone calls from me without introduction or warning, a number of groups are available to support a state's pursuit of integrated justice.

Washington has received technical assistance this year from SEARCH, the Center for Society Law and Justice, and the National Governor's Association. Staff members at these organizations are extremely knowledgeable and willing to provide assistance with the state effort, including support for member surveys, strategic planning sessions, and reviewing project material and researching justice information integration in other states.

I have also found members of the various user groups, such as the Justice Information Sharing Professionals (www.jisp.us/) to be extremely helpful in answering questions about legislative changes, project documentation, and best practices.

Finally, the private sector appears to be willing to take on projects in the hope of winning future business. Like many other states, Washington recently prepared a Request For Information (RFI)(*See page 11*), which essentially asks the private sector to prepare an integration plan (including a proof of concept or pilot) at no cost to the state. We received eight responses from the vendor community, all of which offered to do no-cost, proof-of-concept projects for the state. The responses were informative and of good quality, and we expect the September 2004 report required by the legislature will reflect a thorough and workable solution for the state.

6. Homeland Security expectations must be tempered.

Among my responsibilities as Program Director is, of course, raising funds for the JIN. The advice I have received in meeting after meeting is to focus on "homeland security money." My inquiries into this area, however, have revealed a federal agency that is still in the process of getting organized.[i] Added to these growing pains is the fact that none of the existing JIN planning documents focus on security or public safety. Rather, JIN planning to date has been about increasing efficiency and reducing costs, which are only tangentially related to homeland security.

Additionally, there seems to have been a distinction made at a higher level in the state between "justice information" and "intelligence," which has resulted in the organization of committees and the beginning of information-sharing projects without

"The private sector appears to be willing to take on projects in the hope of winning future business."

the involvement of the Justice Information Network.

Not surprisingly, I found this frustrating, suspecting that gobs of money were being spent on the construction of intelligence-sharing networks, while the existing state networks and the inchoate justice information sharing projects stood idle or unacknowledged. This fear has been tempered by my experience visiting with one of the committees. What I found was a group of public and private employees who didn't have a clear understanding of what they were being asked to do or how such a collective effort would be organized, and, even more surprisingly, were being asked by the federal government to fund the majority of the effort themselves. This was a long way from the free-flowing federal money I had envisioned or been told about.
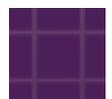
I am buoyed by the existence of similar challenges in the world of homeland security and confident that consolidation is inevitable, particularly if JIN can establish itself as a leader in the state and the region in connecting the diverse members of the justice community and establishing protocols for the necessary exchanges of information.

Conclusion

Six months into this challenge, I am beginning to understand the process and the challenges. This is a much different point than where I saw myself when I started. Besides the lack of resources, the biggest challenges have been a governance structure with various levels of commitment and competing interests; a management of available resources that is incomplete, disorganized and exclusive; a tendency toward meetings, conferences and plans, rather than action; a lack of cooperative projects; and no unifying vision of where this effort wants to be or how we are to get there.

On the positive side, I have found a community of smart, resourceful people; a willingness among those at the highest level to commit themselves to the project and to provide candid and thoughtful guidance; a wealth of outside reference and consulting resources available for free and willing to do meaningful work in response to most any question; and a challenge to help design and build something of present and lasting value for a wonderful community. I am confident that my report six months from now will show a hint of progress, and perhaps even a return of the brash confidence with which I arrived in Washington.

(i) *See Government's Hobbled Giant,* Washington Post, Sept. 7, 2003

Excerpts from Washington's RFI

In October 2003, Washington State issued a Request for Information (RFI) to obtain assistance in the design and implementation of a statewide, integrated Justice Information Network (JIN). By the release of this issue of *Integration News*, several responses had already been received, and will be discussed in a future issue.

Here are some interesting excerpts from that RFI:

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The goal of the RFI process is to . . . develop an integration plan [that] addresses the following questions:

- What are the functional capabilities of an integration solution?

- What are the technical components and architecture of an integration solution?

- What are the predominant technologies involved in integration?

- How do the various solutions align with and support the existing technical infrastructure and operational requirements of the State?

- What are the initial procurement costs, implementation costs, and total cost of ownership of an integration solution?

- What are the impacts and risks associated with implementing an integration solution?

- What is the optimum order of implementation for an integration solution?

● ● ●

The Washington Justice Information Network has four current goals:

1. Information about justice status will be complete and accurate;

2. Information about justice status will be timely;

3. Information about justice status will be entered only once;

4. Information about justice status will be accessible to all practitioners in a single computer session method.

● ● ●

General Capabilities. . . .
Data/application access

Application indexing

Data exchange

Data migration

Workflow management

Transaction management

Application/interface development

Metadata management

Data warehousing

Report tools

Administration Tools Exchange Methods. . . .
Query an information source

Push information to a recipient agency

Pull information from an agency

Publish information for general ad hoc access

Subscribe to an information source

Read the entire RFI at:
http://techmall.dis.wa.gov/procurement/procurement.asp?pid=64

Proof of Concept. Each response should discuss the Respondent's willingness to develop a proof of concept or pilot at no cost to the state . . . . The ideal [proof of concept] would include a state, county and city in different geographic locations . . . Respondents should consider the following as candidates:

- Washington State Patrol
- Administrative Office of the Courts
- Department of Corrections
- Department of Licensing
- King County Sheriff's Office
- City of Seattle Municipal Court
- Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs
  Pierce County LINX
- Counties
- Other cities, towns, and jurisdictions

The Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) is the lead justice planning and assistance agency for the State of Ohio. Through its research, technology, grant administration and programmatic initiatives, OCJS serves agencies and communities committed to reducing and preventing crime across Ohio.

"Search"ing for Justice: Data Integration in Support of Ohio Law Enforcement

by Jerry Zachariah and Andrew Arana

Jerry Zachariah became Director of Justice Technology at OCJS in 2002, managing initiatives for the state and local level. Mr. Zachariah's fourteen years of experience in the information technology industry spans both state and private sectors. Mr. Zachariah received his Honors Bachelor's from St. Xavier's Calcutta, India, and his Post Graduate Diploma in Business Management with a specialization in Finance from the Indian Institute of Social Welfare & Business Management.

Andrew Arana is the OJIN Technical Director at the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS). Mr. Arana manages a team of software developers, network analysts, and contractors that designs and writes computer programs that support the major functions of OCJS. Mr. Arana is a Microsoft Certified Solution Developer (MCSD) with skills in object-orient programming and the software development life cycle.

The following article demonstrates the forward-thinking of the original developers of the Ohio Justice Information Network. Rather than creating a massive database to house information from various criminal justice agencies, the decision was made to develop a "search engine" with the ability to access those databases remotely. OCJS faced the challenge of creating a law enforcement and justice search engine that was easy to use, functional, secure, and not costly to develop.

The need for a search engine that integrates information from criminal justice databases in Ohio was initially identified in the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) Improvement Plan of 1996. The search engine had to be functional, secure, maintain local control of data, and could not be overly costly to develop. The need for projects that allow criminal justice agencies to share information was made even more evident by September 11. The economic downturn of the past three years reinforced the need to rein in project costs. OCJS has accomplished these objectives by developing the Ohio Justice Information Network (OJIN) project one spoke at a time.

Individuals play various roles in the criminal justice system. Therefore, criminal justice databases store information on individuals who are suspects, victims, witnesses, and other roles. OJIN uses a person-centric approach to search for and retrieve information on individuals. OJIN searches critical local criminal history

information including warrants, incident reports, field interviews, and mugshots.

OJIN retrieves information from data providers such as courts, jails, police departments, sheriff's offices, and regional information systems. The data providers either use Records Management System (RMS) vendors or develop their database in-house. Because each vendor or data provider is free to choose the Data Base Management System (DBMS), OJIN has to work with data from a wide variety of databases. The OJIN application exemplifies data integration by bringing together searches of all these database types using one unified interface. Different vendors proposed a variety of data integration solutions to OCJS. The OJIN team quickly realized that the project would not make use of most of the functionality in these packages. The OJIN team instead developed a template that allows them to integrate other systems easily and efficiently.

An early architecture choice was to determine whether the project should perform a distributed search of provider databases, or whether OCJS should establish a data repository. The OJIN project avoids the traditional data repository approach for live searches of the site databases. With the repository approach, data providers send data updates to a central repository on a set schedule, such as weekly or monthly. This means that data in the repository is old. Since OJIN searches the database live, users can see updates committed to the database a few seconds before they perform a search. This approach also reduces the administrative and server resources it would take to store all the data in a centralized manner. Additionally, data providers do not have the burden of submitting data. No data integration story is complete these days without mentioning XML. In this case the XML standard works as designed to organize the information retrieved from the databases.

Having an architecture that works well does not mean that the project is without its challenges. It is a challenge creating a portal that is useful to criminal justice professionals while addressing security, usability, performance, and privacy concerns.

The challenge of creating a functional interface that criminal justice agencies find useful has also been met. The search engine Google is a hit because its interface is very simple. The OJIN user interface is also very simple.

No one wants to enter a search then wait several minutes before results are returned. To avoid this, OJIN employs a queued component that works by asynchronously searching the data providers. When the initial results come back, the interface presents the results to the user while continuing the search in the background. New results are presented on demand. The OJIN interface has the potential to work on PDAs, which is an option that will be explored.

Individuals who are interested in using the OJIN application have to verify their identity. The OJIN system follows a very strict security policy. For additional security, OCJS has to maintain data on all searches performed by all users for a period defined by State and Federal standards.

OJIN uses a Virtual Private Network (VPN) scheme for the connections to data providers because of lower cost and faster implementation than using a dedicated leased line scheme such as T1 lines. T1 leased lines are provided by telephone companies and are commonly used for communication between offices. Historically, leased lines, Frame Relay, or dial-up lines were the only way to securely access remote data. Due to their cost, these options were only affordable by large companies. VPNs work by using encryption to create a secure tunnel for transmitting data through the unsecured Internet. Since VPNs use existing, regular Internet lines, they present an innovative approach that makes it easier to access data from the data providers securely and inexpensively. The site-to-site VPNs that the OJIN project uses can be set up quickly and are easier to maintain and more secure than leased lines.

For more information on the Ohio Justice Information Network contact zacharia@ocjs.ohio.gov.

The Road Map to Integration

If you are just getting started on the road to criminal justice data integration, or if you are well down the path, a recent publication by the National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO) is the roadmap you need.

It's called The Concept for Operations for Integrated Justice Information Sharing (ConOps). *The manual is practical, giving examples of the need to share information with various agencies, defining roles for local and state agencies, providing a sample scenario of the general capabilities of integrated justice, and offering an overview of operational requirements. The report takes a look at justice integration projects around the country and briefly touches on outcome measures and performance metrics. Anyone involved in developing integrated information systems can benefit from the clear and concise information it contains. The following is an excerpt from the report.*

The Universal Operational Requirements for Integrated Justice Information Sharing below is excerpted from the Concept for Operations for Integrated Justice Sharing v1.0, page 38. They are derived from the general principles for integrated justice and a study of the operational requirements from representative jurisdictions.

1. Ability to query and retrieve information from relevant information systems throughout the justice system, and other relevant governmental agencies, without having to have prior specific knowledge of the detailed structure of these systems

2. Ability to electronically send/transmit information from operational information systems in one agency/jurisdiction, for inclusion in another (recipient) information system

3. Ability to request information from one system and incorporate it into another system, without human intervention

4. Ability to be notified of critical events, actions, and transactions on a case, person or event

5. Ability to trigger events and other actions in other systems based on actions taken in operational justice information systems

6. Ability to transmit electronic documents between organizations, including tagged data elements

7. Ability to ascertain or confirm the identity of an individual, and link identity to documents, decisions and other official actions

8. Ability to determine the current legal status of an individual

9. Ability to manage and process the collection and distribution of fines, fees, costs, restitution, assessments, and other types of monetary accounts across organizational boundaries

10. Ability to discover agencies which have information concerning a specified individual (raises question concerning need for centralized indices or search engines operating against "exposed" portions of CJ databases)

11. Ability to discover the information needed to address a message to the criminal justice agency having jurisdiction in a specific geographic locale

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ConOps is a 60-page report on the strategies, tools, and guidelines needed to establish information technology (IT) infrastructure for effective information sharing among law enforcement/justice agencies and courts. The entire report can be accessed at www.nascio.org/publications/index.cfm.

Funding Criminal Justice Data Integration
by Jeff Barlow

Establishing initial and continued funding is critical to the success of any integration project. In the following article Jeff Barlow provides guidelines for establishing a firm foundation for financial support of criminal justice integration projects and several leads on prospective grants.

If you've ever been on a basketball team, you know that coaches focus on the fundamentals. All coaches have a playbook, and at the professional level they track statistics and provide feedback to players on their successes. These statistics also help focus efforts on areas in need of improved performance.

Launching information technology initiatives is just like coaching sports. Somebody has to work on the fundamentals (e.g., system design) and develop a playbook (e.g., strategic plan and budgeting) in order to be successful. In today's environment, tracking and reporting performance is also a requirement for most criminal justice integration projects.

The lack of a strategic budgeting plan inhibits an agency's or a program's ability to serve the varied criminal justice needs in our communities. Many times, strategic plans are created but do not identify potential funding methods (e.g., user fees and grants) to help achieve program goals. Instead, strategic plans should anticipate funding sources as part of the plan. It is best to consider all funding sources within the jurisdiction *as strategies are evaluated.*

Ultimately, public sector recipes for successful information technology integration vary from one jurisdiction to another. However, federal trends and mandates are pushing programs to have a state-level strategic plan in place to be eligible for grant funding. The goal of this article is to provide you with a few important resources to aid you in getting your integration projects funded through grants.

Planning for Grants

A valuable first resource is the **Missouri Guide to Strategic Planning** (www.mri.missouri.gov/sp/splan.html). This online resource is important because there are many funding streams that require a strategic plan or require that you begin working on one prior to receipt of grant funding. **Missouri Guide to Strategic Planning** provides a wealth of information on the process of developing a strategic plan. Developed for all Missouri government agencies, it is generic enough to work for any discipline, yet detailed enough to help you write measurable objectives with ease. In addition, the site provides a comprehensive guide to strategic planning and, under the "Strategic Planning Resources" section, includes a simple document entitled *The Nuts and Bolts of Strategic Planning.*

A second resource to note is the **Department of Justice's web site for Information Technology Initiatives** (http://it.ojp.gov/). This web site contains a wide variety of information, including sample strategic plans and funding resources for criminal justice integration efforts from Arizona to Virginia to Washington State. It is also a prime resource for reading about integration efforts in the various states, and is linked to SEARCH and other organizations that specialize in criminal justice data integration.

As for funding issues, the Department of Justice's site also provides links to private foundations dedicated to the causes served by criminal justice systems. As stated on the site, "Foundations and private funding can be a valuable resource for justice and technology related projects." While these organizations are not

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government related, due to their mission statements, they may provide a non-tax revenue source for limited funding of criminal justice integration projects. However, with private entities prescribing their own application requirements, strategic planning becomes even more important when approaching such entities for funding.

Finally, a third resource that is helpful is the **Criminal Justice Grants Information Center** (www.1hawthorn.com). This web site includes information, PowerPoint presentations, and links to a variety of sites that help identify grant opportunities for integration efforts, such as: all Federal agencies, search engines to search the Federal Register for funding opportunities, links to United States Department of Justice Grants, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, just to name a few. The site also provides links to tools and resources designed to help state agencies and officials develop and write their grant proposals.

Where are the Grants?

The State of Missouri has received several different types of grants for data integration that may be applicable to your project. The *Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies Program* at the Violence Against Women Grants Office provided funds for automation of adult protection orders from courts to law enforcement. The *Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant Program* provided funding to help promote juvenile justice information sharing across 5 different agencies in the state. The *Federal Motor Carrier Program for Commercial Drivers* has provided funding to automate the reporting of records of convictions for drivers. The *National Criminal History Improvement Grant Program* provided funds to automate the reporting of court dispositions to the Criminal Records Repository in Missouri. These are just a few examples of the different grants available for criminal justice integration systems.

The *COPS Technology* program is another area to consider, as well as the Department of Homeland Security. Since its 1984 inception, the COPS program, dedicated to improving and enhancing community policing, has provided over eight billion dollars to advance community policing through a wide range of activities. In 2003 the program was appropriated $188,719,000 to be used specifically for technology grants. Homeland Security has also been funding a significant amount of interoperable communication needs across the county.

Many more grants exist for information sharing or system integration efforts. However, tapping into them requires strategic thinking and planning. Reviewing the web sites mentioned above should be a good start.

Tracking Performance to Keep the Money Flowing

Funding often comes with strings attached. Specifically, Federal funding requires agencies to track the performance of programs to evaluate the effectiveness of tax dollars spent.

The Governmental Performance and Results Act, originally passed in 1993, has recently taken root in the performance measurement and budget process, managed by the Office of Management and Budget. In 1993, Congress sought to: 1) improve the confidence of the American people in the Federal Government; 2) initiate program performance reform by setting goals, measuring performance, and reporting on the progress; 3) improve Federal program effectiveness; 4) improve service quality and delivery; 5) improve congressional decision-making; and 6) improve internal management of the Federal Government. To that end, Congress required Federal agencies to track and report on the costs and effectiveness of each agency's programs. The *Performance and Management Assessments, Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2004,* contains the evaluations and analyses of programs and

> *"Federal funding requires agencies to track the performance of programs to evaluate the effectiveness of tax dollars spent."*

management at federal departments and agencies. These assessments are used as leverage by the administration in proposing appropriation increases or decreases of certain types of grant programs such as the *Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant Program*.

As Federal grants usually pass through Federal Agencies in pursuit of internal agency goals and purposes, the mandates for accountability on federal spending are also passed down to local grantees, so tracking performance is required. Consequently, state and local government grant recipients are required to track performance from federal funding initiatives. In other words, all coaches must track performance.

Don't Forget Your Team

If you want a successful criminal justice data integration project and support from grant funds, put the right players on the field. Establish a playbook and a season strategy. Find a qualified person in your office to dedicate a significant portion of their time to grant funding, or hire the right outside talent to get the job done. Do the research, complete your planning, and get those grants!

Database Shutdown Due to Privacy Concerns

In December 2003, the lights went out on a massive Minnesota statewide database of police records. "We are out of business," said Dennis Delmont, executive director of the Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association.[i] The Multiple Jurisdiction Network Organization database, commonly known as MJNO, contained police contacts, investigative, and other data from more than 175 Minnesota police agencies and a handful in Wisconsin. The data had been characterized by some as "active criminal investigative data" to shield it from public view under the Minnesota Data Practices Act. The database has been in use for several years, and accessed by police agencies that policed more than two-thirds of the state's population. At one point in time, the database contained up to eight million records.[ii]

Concerns about the database began surfacing in the Fall of 2003. As reported by the St. Paul Pioneer Press: "An analysis by the state Department of Administration, in response to questions from Rep. Mary Liz Holberg, R-Lakeville, [in November], determined that the network appeared to violate privacy protections in state law in several important ways, including its treatment of juvenile records and gun permit data."[iii]

In response to this issue, on January 22, 2004, the Minnesota House Civil Law Committee is holding a hearing on CriMNet Data Practices for Statewide Databases.

Watch for more detailed coverage and analysis of this story in an upcoming issue of *Integration News.*

(i) Patrick Howe, *Police Database Shutdown*, Associated Press, St. Paul Pioneer Press (Dec. 18, 2003).
(ii) *Id.*
(iii) *Id.*

Massachusetts Chooses Open Source

With a recently issued statement, Massachusetts became the first state to adopt a broad-based strategy of moving its computer systems toward open standards. While some critics claim the new rule limits choice and is bad for taxpayers, others see it as a brilliant idea that may give Microsoft a run for its money. According to the Initiative for Software Choice, a software industry trade group, there are open source mandates in 24 countries. And, IBM claims it has sold 175 Linux systems to publicly-funded buyers.

The statement reads in part, "Effective and efficient government service delivery requires system integration and data sharing Technology investments must be made based on total cost of ownership and best value to the Commonwealth. Component-based software development based on open standards allows for a more cost-effective build once, use many times approach." To read the complete statement, go to www.state.ma.us/itd/openstandards.htm.

Conferences and Events

Enterprise Architecture Summit
January 21-22, 2004, Washington, DC
Want to share data across governmental departments? Want to bridge the gap between unstructured and structured data? Then attend the Zachman-Inmon Architecture Summit and learn from keynote speakers John Zachman and Bill Inmon. Learn about the FEA, GIF, Zachman framework, and building really large data warehouses. For more information: www.inmongif.com/specialevents.ivnu.

COMNET Conference and EXPO
January 26-29, 2004, Washington, DC
The networking landscape is changing fundamentally. COMNET Conference & Expo will enable you to make informed technology evaluations and purchasing decisions for the year ahead. For more information: www.comnetexpo.com.

4th Annual Privacy & Security Summit & Expo
February 18-20, 2004, Washington, DC
Sponsored by the International Association of Privacy Professionals, the Fourth Annual Privacy & Data Security Summit & Expo will provide answers to today's daily operational challenges with input from front-line experts. For more information: www.privacyassociation.org.

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Thirteenth Annual RSA® Conference
February 23-27, 2004, San Francisco, CA

This is the must-attend event for organizations that deploy, develop or investigate data security or cryptography products. Don't miss this opportunity to learn fresh approaches and develop creative solutions. For more information: www.RSAConference.com.

National Association of Counties (NACO)
2004 Legislative Conference
February 27- March 2, Washington, DC

NACo's Legislative Conferences invite county officials to hear presentations by key national leaders, receive legislative updates, discuss legislative priorities, network with other county officials and exchange information in a national forum in the nation's capitol. For more information: www.naco.org.

41st Annual Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS)
Conference "One Goal; Multiple Approaches"
March 9-13, 2004 Las Vegas, NV

For more information: www.acjs.org/pubs/167_668_2915.cfm.

SEARCH 2004 Symposium on Integrated Justice Information
Systems: Supporting the Homeland
March 22-24, 2004, Washington DC

The 2004 Symposium is your premier opportunity to hear and see the latest information, tools and techniques on integrated justice and its critical role in Homeland Security initiatives. At this conference you will:

   • Examine emerging trends in non-traditional public and private information sharing partnerships.

   • Explore best practices for planning and procurement.

   • Discover innovative developments in justice XML applications.

For more information: www.search.org/conferences/2004symposium/default.asp.

NCSC's Planning, Acquiring, and Implementing
Court Technology
April 26-28, 2004, Williamsburg, VA

Discover how to develop an effective technology budget request, use the National Model RFP, and understand and better negotiate technology purchase and maintenance contracts. Court managers must have an understanding of how to acquire, implement, and manage court technology effectively. For more information: https://secure.ncsc.dni.us/icm/reg.html.

Government Technology Conference (GTC)
May 10-14, 2004, Sacramento, CA

GTC features nationally known speakers, dozens of relevant workshops and seminars and exhibits from hundreds of computer and telecommunications firms featuring information technology solutions for state and local government.
For more information: www.govtech.net.

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