



# BJIS UPDATE

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## JUSTICE PROFESSIONALS STILL LACK INFORMATION TO MAKE GOOD DECISIONS

*BJIS UPDATE will be running a series of articles that excerpt key language and findings from the IJIS Model Project Report ("Report"). This Report was composed over a three month period by a working group, comprised of experts in the fields of justice and technology, from District Attorneys' Offices, the State Public Defender, the Department of Justice, Crime Information Bureau, the Wisconsin State Patrol, Police and Sheriffs' Departments.*

Examples of such problems cited by justice experts include:

- Inability to positively identify and track offenders using unchangeable attributes, such as fingerprints.
- Paper or isolated electronic files in district attorney (DA) offices with key criminal history information that can't be collected or viewed statewide.
- Thousands of paper files on

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**A**ll too often, . . . justice professionals lack the basic information they need to make good decisions that protect public safety. The information they lack is not *new* information. It is information generated or collected by others, sometimes several times, that simply doesn't get to the right person at the right time to make the right decision related to an individual offender.

## CCAP TACKLES YEAR 2000

*By Jean Bousquet, CCAP Director*

The Circuit Court Automation Program (CCAP) is in the final stages of successfully completing all of the initiatives outlined in its aggressive annual plan for the 1999 calendar year. The 1999 plan focused on bringing all software and hardware into Year 2000 compliance, lifting the moratorium on additional CCAP installations in the counties and upgrading outdated equipment. With this plan



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offenders in Department of Corrections (DOC) with information that can't be shared electronically.

- Lack of transfer of accurate and timely sentencing information between courts and corrections.
- Inability of officials in one county to check for a suspect's activities in other counties or states.
- Inability of public defenders to locate their clients housed in corrections facilities because of reliance on paper files.

Specifically, the Report examines the obstacles that justice agencies face every day by giving a step-by-step account of events that occur in a typical adult felony case. In this issue of BJIS Update, we will be looking at the first stages of a felony case – the initial contact and investigation and the booking process.

### Initial Contact and Investigation

When a law enforcement agency (LEA) becomes aware of a problem, an officer investigates the incident and determines what action to take. During the initial investigation, the LEA officer can get helpful information from multiple sources. One of these is the Department of Justice's (DOJ) TIME system, which includes information on motor vehicle registration, driver's licenses, criminal history, probation and parole status, arrest warrants, wanted persons and more. (See appendix for listing of types of information TIME contains.) To access TIME, the LEA officer must have the alleged offender's name and date of birth—except for State Patrol officers, who are able to search TIME under other parameters.

Some local LEAs also have in-house systems that might contain useful data related to the incident or suspected offender. In addition, the LEA might check numerous, diverse information sources, ranging from county social services departments to the Midwest Organized Crime System to the U.S. Secret Service to Canadian Motor Vehicle Records.

Yet another information source vital to LEAs, but often unavailable, is court-related documents, such as bail conditions, restraining orders and so on. This information may reach LEAs after a delay, or they may never get it. Also, court documents are available only from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays.

#### Key Problems:

- LEA officers lack immediate access to TIME or other databases. For

instance, an officer may have to call the dispatch center, which then conducts a search and reports back to the officer. But officers need speedy, reliable information—before approaching a vehicle, building or suspect—to assess a potentially dangerous situation.

- Only about half of Wisconsin's 690 LEAs have direct access to the TIME system, and that number may decrease as connection costs rise. Cost is the major barrier between smaller LEAs and TIME access.
- Due to the fact that the State Patrol, unlike other LEAs, can access TIME under parameters other than name and date of birth, many LEAs call upon the State Patrol to run TIME searches for them.
- Some key providers of information entered into TIME—such as the Department of Corrections (DOC), district attorneys (DAs) and small LEAs—lack fully operational, statewide automated systems. Thus, data in TIME may not be as complete and up-to-date as it should be. Information needed by an officer on the street may not be available when it's needed most.
- Lack of access to court documents (such as restraining orders) 24 hours a day, seven days a week, seriously impedes LEA officers in carrying out one of their primary duties: protecting citizens' safety.

### Generating Forms, Documents and Reports

The LEA officer reporting to the scene completes an "Initial Contact" form, or incident report, typically containing such as information as:

**Officers lack immediate access to TIME or other databases. For instance, an officer may have to call the dispatch center, which then conducts a search and reports back to the officer.**

- Contact data: name, address, work and home phone numbers, date of birth
- Physical description, including scars, marks and tattoos
- Observed behavior
- Location of incident
- Date and time of incident
- Witness and victim statements

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nearly completed, CCAP has recently turned its attention to the creation of the annual plan for the year 2000. It is anticipated that the creation and implementation of electronic interfaces with a variety of state and local justice agencies will be a prominent fixture among the wide range of CCAP projects planned for the year 2000.

In preparation for these year 2000 data interfaces, CCAP worked with various agencies in the development of a new more robust interface standard. The result of these efforts was the creation of CCAP's *Simple Transaction Exchange Protocol (STEP)* interface architecture. STEP provides the technical infrastructure and software libraries necessary for any Internet-connected agency to electronically share information with the circuit courts.

The need to migrate to a robust and maintainable interface architecture became obvious as the number of potential point-to-point interface opportunities grew into the hundreds. In response to the need for secure, and flexible court interfaces, STEP was developed as the standard interface mechanism for all agencies wishing to share information with the circuit courts. CCAP's resource constraints and the demands of other court-specific projects make this

single interface architecture approach a necessity before CCAP can proceed on any interface implementations.

### Overview of CCAP STEP Technology

One of the primary goals for STEP was to make it as easy as possible for interface partners to develop and implement their interface applications. The physical connection to CCAP is via the Internet, and the transmission protocol is HTTP. If an agency can browse the World Wide Web using a standard web browser, they can communicate with CCAP using the STEP technology.

The software necessary to perform the actual transmission of the information between agency-specific interface applications, of STEP clients has been developed by CCAP. CCAP's JAVA based software will be provided to all interested interface partners. CCAP is committed to maintaining, upgrading, and supporting this software as enhancements to STEP occur in the future.

Two basic requirements for a STEP client application are:

- The application must be running on an Internet-attached computer and able to access the World Wide Web using a web browser.

- The application must be written in the Java programming language.

Detailed information about the STEP architecture can be found at the STEP website:

<http://step.mom.courts.state.wi.us/StepSite/Andex.html>

This architecture allows each interface partner to focus entirely on their internal database and application requirements, while CCAP handles the software and the technical details of securely transmitting data across the Internet.

### Ongoing CCAP Interface Projects:

#### Crim e Information Bureau

CCAP is currently piloting a criminal disposition STEP interface with the Wisconsin Crime Information Bureau (CIB) in Marathon and Iowa counties. Full implementation in all counties is scheduled for October 1, 1999. This interface is relatively simple in that it is a one-way interface. As criminal cases are disposed on the CCAP system, they are electronically transferred to the STEP server, where they are picked up by CIB's client application through the CCAP STEP client software.

A major factor in the success of this project was the joint effort and understanding between CIB and CCAP

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When a call about an incident comes in, the communications (dispatch) center typically assigns a LEA case number. The officer also might call in a request for a case number. Different LEA offices have diverse methods for assigning case numbers. The LEA also classifies the events in the incident, adding this information to the police report. Again, classification methods vary widely from one LEA office to another.

The officer forwards the completed "Initial Contact" form to the LEA Records Bureau (or similar designation), which in turn passes the information on to other appropriate agencies if necessary, such as DOC's Probation and Parole. If there was no arrest, the "Initial Contact" form gets filed at the LEA office. Later on some of the contact information, but not the content of the report itself, may be captured electronically by the LEA.

If multiple officers assist on the case, each initiates a report. All reports then are collected and filed by appropriate agency case number. Later, copies of these will be included in paperwork delivered to the DA.

Besides the officer's report, a myriad of other information is generated and collected. For example, the dispatch center has a dispatch log; property has a property log. Some LEAs keep a daily log. The LEA must complete a Uniform Crime Report (UCR) for the Office of Justice Assistance (OJA). The list could go on. In law enforcement alone—before a matter gets to the DA's office—the same agency may enter the same basic information into the justice system anywhere from 26 to 41 times.

#### Key Problems:

- LEAs enter the same information, for the same case, into the justice system over and over again, representing wasted time and effort.

Electronic collection and transmission of LEA information still is not widespread in Wisconsin. Thus, LEAs often send information to other agencies by U.S. mail or by fax, leading to delays, postage costs and non-local phone charges.

#### **Booking Process**

If an arrest is to be made, the LEA officer takes the alleged offender into custody and escorts him or her through the booking pro-

cess. The arresting officer fills out a booking sheet, which contains the same information as the "Initial Contact" form completed earlier, and then takes the suspect's fingerprints and a photograph. The LEA once again collects information from the TIME system. Also, the LEA issues an arrest tracking number during the booking process, usually when taking fingerprints. If the matter involves a repeat offender, the LEA has to repeat the information-gathering process during booking, even though the information is already on file.

Positive identification is a crucial stage in the booking process. Without positive identification, the LEA may not find out about an outstanding warrant on the suspect. Or the LEA could hold the wrong person in custody.



*LEAs enter the same information, for the same case, into the justice system over and over again, representing wasted time and effort.*

As vital as positive identification is, it's also time-consuming and tedious. Alleged offenders themselves can't be relied upon for accurate personal information. Fake driver's licenses, phony names or false Social Security numbers are common ploys offenders use to avoid being identified. Therefore, LEAs turn to fingerprints and

photographs as more reliable sources. Even these, however, are not fail-proof, as we'll discuss below.

If an alleged offender is booked and released, the information flow is the same as described above, although not all forms may be used.

In some circumstances, the LEA may need to transport the alleged offender to a detoxification center, a mental health facility or a hospital, rather than to jail. The booking process resumes when the suspect's condition stabilizes. Paperwork moves manually between the LEA and the health facility.

#### Key Problems:

- Information collection and entry are redundant.
- Information often moves manually, on paper, from one location to another, leading to inefficiencies and delays.
- In the pursuit of positive identification, LEAs will try to find the most recent photograph possible. Searching for one is time-consuming, especially because standards and systems for managing photographs are diverse. Obtaining a recent photograph may entail sending an officer to the county

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about what the interface goals were and being dedicated to accomplishing them. Both CIB and CCAP supplied dedicated technical resources to the project. This dedication resulted in a relatively quick implementation, even though the STEP infrastructure was being developed in parallel to the client applications.

#### DA/BJIS Interface

CCAP and BJIS have agreed to use CCAP STEP technology to pilot a DA interface with the circuit courts potentially starting as early as October 1999. Discussions regarding the information that will be shared between the partners have taken place and agreements have been made on the format of each message that is developed.

The DA interface will consist of four messages:

1. **Complaint.** This message is sent from the DA to a specific CCAP circuit court. This message contains all information necessary to initiate a criminal case with the courts.
2. **Case Information.** This message contains nearly all information that is available on the CCAP system about a criminal case. It is sent to the DA system anytime information on a case is changed. This message can be used by the CMS (PROTECT) system to maintain up-

to-date and accurate information about all cases before the court, including disposition information.

3. **Case History.** Each time a court record event is added to a case history on any particular criminal case, the entire history of events for that case will be supplied to PROTECT.
4. **Calendar.** Each time an activity is scheduled on a criminal case, the entire schedule of events for that particular case will be supplied to PROTECT. This should allow the DA to remain completely up-to-date in regards to court appearances.

This interface will include additional messages in the future, such as the ability for the DA to file amended motions and complaints. These additional features will be discussed later in the year 2000.

#### Milwaukee County Juvenile (JIMS) Interface

CCAP and Milwaukee County Information Management Systems Division are preparing to implement an interface between CCAP and the Juvenile Information Management System (JIMS). The JIMS system will service the District Attorneys, Sheriff's Department, Health and Services as well as other county juvenile justice agencies. This interface will utilize the STEP technology and provide court information to a

variety of county business partners.

#### Department of Transportation

CCAP and DOT have been coordinating on the process of electronic transfers of citations from the State Patrol officers, to the circuit courts. The second phase of the interface would electronically send court adjudication, court ordered suspensions and revocations, and conviction status reports from the courts to State Patrol and Department of Motor Vehicle databases. While a definite timeline has not been set, both CCAP and DOT are committed to implementing an interface as early as possible in the year 2000. CCAP STEP technology will be used in the implementation of this interface.

#### Other Interface Work in Progress

CCAP is preparing to use the same STEP technology and data elements with other information systems used in Milwaukee, Dane and Waukesha counties. At this point the Milwaukee and Waukesha interfaces will be in place by the second quarter of 2000. Dane county's interface has not been formally scheduled.

#### **Invitation to Potential Interface Partners**

CCAP is interested in determining the number of state and local agencies that are interested in interfacing electronically with the cir-

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cuit courts. If your agency is interested, please contact CCAP Director Jean Bousquet at (608) 267-0678 or [jean.bousquet@courts.state.wi.us](mailto:jean.bousquet@courts.state.wi.us) to begin preliminary discussions.

## BJIS UPDATE

BJIS Update is published to inform and update the State of Wisconsin justice community of information and technology related projects. BJIS Update is published by the Bureau of Justice Information Systems, Division of Technology Management, State Department of Administration.

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line to pick one up from another county's LEA. When an officer has to drive 30 miles to a neighboring county seat to act as a courier—sometimes several times a day—the result is an enormous waste of human resources and valuable time.

- Police and sheriff departments often both take photos of an alleged offender for their identification needs, representing duplicated effort that could be avoided with an electronic system.
- Fingerprints often are done manually, sometimes resulting in smudges and other distortions that can lead to failure to identify a suspect. Mailing or faxing copies of prints leads to fur-

ther distortions. (Digital scanning is one answer, as the technology becomes more affordable.)

- Fingerprint data goes to the Crime Information Bureau (CIB), which is responsible for the TIME system (criminal history). CIB has to convert manual prints, which may have imperfections, into electronic form for the Automated Fingerprint Information System (AFIS). AFIS is a vital link in the positive identification process.

The next issue of BJIS Update will look at key problems that arise as the alleged offender proceeds through the justice system, and there is initial defense and district attorney involvement.



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