The Compiler

Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

Winter/Spring 2000

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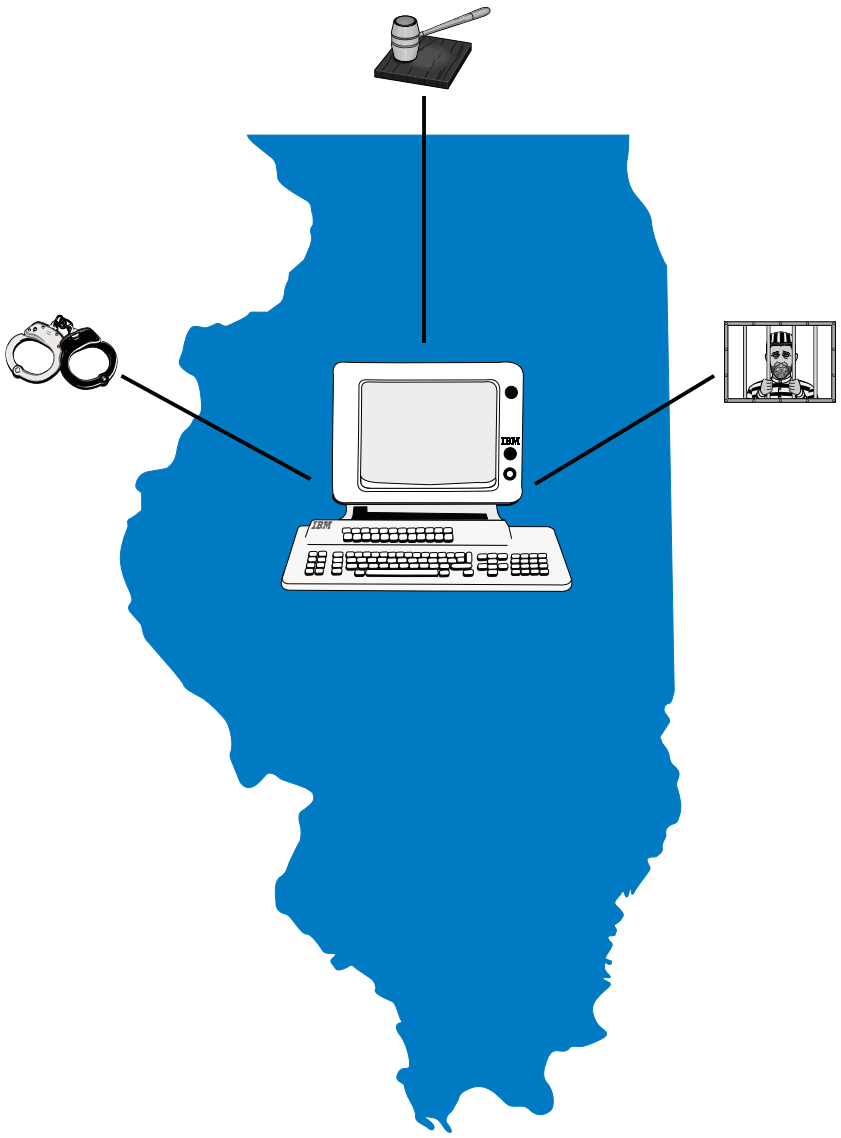
The case for integration of criminal justice information systems



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Created in 1983, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority is a state agency dedicated to improving the administration of criminal justice. The Authority works to enhance the information tools and management resources of state and local criminal justice agencies, and it serves as a statewide forum for criminal justice coordination, planning, and problem solving. It also is responsible for research, information systems development, and administration of federal anti-crime funds. The Authority's specific powers and duties are spelled out in the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Act [20 ILCS 3930/1 et seq.].

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority is governed by a 16-member board of state and local leaders from the criminal justice system, plus experts from the private sector. Authority members help develop priorities and monitor their progress. The agency's day-to-day work is carried out by a full-time professional staff working out of the Authority's Chicago office.

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In Brief

Bensinger, Piland appointed to commission to rewrite criminal code

Authority Chairman Peter B. Bensinger and member John Piland were appointed May 4 to a commission to update the Illinois criminal code.

Gov. George H. Ryan appointed Bensinger, Piland, and other leaders in the criminal justice community to the commission, which will aim to create a code that makes Illinois criminal law more fair for victims and defendants and easier to read and understand.

Bensinger will serve as a vice chairman of the commission. The Illinois criminal code was first drafted in 1961.

Jurkanin joins Authority

Thomas J. Jurkanin, executive director of the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board, became a member of the Authority on Jan. 1. Legislation approved in the fall designated the executive director of the training board as a member of the Authority.

The Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board administers and certifies police and correctional training programs in Illinois. Jurkanin has been involved with the board for the past 20 years, with 25 years of experience in the criminal justice field. He is vice chairman of the governor's Law Enforcement Medal of Honor Committee, and secretary-treasurer of the Law Enforcement Foundation of Illinois.

Authority represented on Elder Abuse Task Force

Authority members Jim Ryan, Illinois attorney general; Sam W. Nolen, director of the Illinois State Police; Norbert Goetten, director of the Office of the State's Attorneys Appellate Prosecutor; and Thomas J. Jurkanin, executive director of the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board; along with Authority Executive Director Candice M. Kane, were among those recently named by Gov. George H. Ryan to serve on the state's new Elder Abuse Task Force, which will focus on helping seniors who are financially abused.

The task force of 31 individuals representing legal, banking, and social service and advocacy networks, will work in conjunction with the Department on Aging to formulate recommendations for the governor and general assembly. Lt. Gov. Corinne Wood will serve as honorary chair, and Department on Aging Director Margo Schreiber will serve as chair of the task force.

Authority participates in victim advocacy hearings

Executive Director Candice Kane and Information Systems Unit Assistant Director John Evans joined Attorney General Jim Ryan and other members of the Crime Victim and Witness Notification Advisory Committee during a series of hearings on automated victim notification efforts in Illinois.

Victim advocates from around the state attended several hearings during National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 9-15. Kane was a panelist at a Waukegan hearing April 13. Evans joined the panel for a hearing in Carbondale April 10.

Authority member Michael Waller, Lake County state's attorney, is chairman of the attorney general's advisory committee, and Authority members Donald N. Snyder Jr. and John Piland also are on the committee.

The hearings were conducted to discuss automated victim notification with victims and advocates. The advisory committee will use information gathered at the event as they implement Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE), an automated phone system that notifies victims when their perpetrators are released from prison.

Federal fiscal year 1999 Local Law Enforcement Block Grant funds awarded

The Authority distributed $1 million to local law enforcement agencies for police safety and operating equipment as part of its Local Law Enforcement Block Grant program, which is funded through the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance. A request for proposals from police and sheriff's departments was issued in 1999. Nearly 350 proposals were received requesting $5.3 million. The Authority made awards to 67 jurisdictions for equipment.

Federal fiscal year grants designated

The Authority received designations for several grants from the U.S. Department of Justice for federal fiscal year 2000, which began Oct. 1, 1999.

The **Residential Substance Abuse Treatment** (RSAT) program received $1.9 million to continue providing assistance to state prisoners. The Illinois Department of Corrections will receive most of these funds.

RSAT programs must provide treatment for six to 12 months, offer services in a residential setting away from the general inmate population, focus on substance abuse, and develop inmates' social, cognitive, behavioral, and vocational skills.

Illinois received $19.8 million under the federal **Anti-Drug Abuse Act** (ADAA), also know as the **Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Formula Grant Program**. Byrne funds support government programs that enable the enforcement of Illinois drug laws and help decrease violent crime. The designation is about $500,000 less than the amount received in federal fiscal year 1999.

About $15.5 million was received to administer the **Victims of Crime Act** (VOCA) in Illinois. Funded with fines paid by those convicted of violating federal laws, VOCA supports direct services to victims of violent crime. The act requires that priority be given to services for victims of sexual assault, domestic abuse, child abuse, and other groups identified by the state as underserved victims of violent crime. The 2000 VOCA designation is $5.8 million more than the federal fiscal year 1999 award.

Illinois received $5.1 million under the **Violence Against Women Act** (VAWA). VAWA funds are used to improve the response of the criminal justice system to victims of sexual assault and domestic violence.

Funding drop anticipated

A decrease in federal fiscal year 2000 funds is anticipated for the Local Law Enforcement Block Grant, Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant, and Violent Offender Incarceration/ Truth-in-Sentencing Grant programs. The U.S. Department of Justice selected these programs for funding decreases in response to a congressional mandate to make spending cuts.

Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council appointments made

Gov. Ryan reappointed several members of the Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council. Paul A. Logli, Ronald R. Brown, Michael Burnside, Linda L. Laurich have been reappointed. Their terms will expire Jan. 20, 2003. Donald L. Sauzek also was reappointed for a term that expires in January 2004.

In addition, Beau W. Parillo, vice president of United Automobile Insurance Co., was appointed to the Council as a new member effective March 29.

Criminal Justice Facts brochures

The court system and criminal sentencing are the focus of the Authority's next two *Criminal Justice Facts* brochures. The new brochures will be available to criminal justice agencies and the public in late spring, along with updated versions of previously published brochures on law enforcement, victims rights, and juvenile justice.

Initiated in 1998, *Criminal Justice Facts* is a series of informational brochures describing the criminal justice system in Illinois. Copies are available through the Authority's Criminal Justice Information Clearinghouse: 312-793-8550.

Kane approved as Authority executive director

Candice M. Kane's appointment as executive director of the Authority was confirmed by the Senate in April. Gov. Ryan appointed Kane to the position last year; she had been acting executive director of the agency since 1996.

Boehmer re-elected to NCJA

Authority General Counsel Robert Boehmer was re-elected in April as regional representative to the National Criminal Justice Association's Advisory Council. He also serves on the association's board of directors. The Washington, D.C.-based NCJA is a nonprofit association that represents state and local governments on crime and public safety issues.

Editor's note: This is a combined winter-spring 2000 issue of The Compiler.■

Integration of criminal justice systems: plenty of pains, but everyone gains

By Steve Prisoc

Imagine this scenario: A man is arrested for a crime involving a handgun. After the arrest, the suspect's fingerprints are taken electronically and immediately forwarded to the state agency responsible for classification and identification. Within minutes the prints are matched to an existing electronic criminal history file, or "rap sheet," which is immediately sent back over a statewide network to the police station. Included with the rap sheet is an electronic notification of several outstanding warrants with digitally imaged copies of the actual warrants. The booking officer notices that on this particular rap sheet, conviction information on a previous gun-related felony is highlighted. This previous conviction requires charging the defendant at a higher class for the current felony, and the booking officer makes the adjustment to the charge with one mouse click.

Once the subject is charged, all of the upstream justice agencies, such as the state's attorney's office, the public defender's office, the circuit clerk's office, and the probation department, are electronically notified of the new case and begin their preparations. This electronic notification happens with no human involvement. In fact, defendant identification and classification takes place without any manual intervention. In addition to text-based information, agencies can receive digital fingerprint images, mugshots, streaming video, and digital images of old paper documents. And this is only the beginning of the process.

Is this an accurate portrayal of the criminal justice system? Judging by movies and television it would certainly seem so. After all, that is the way things often work in the private sector — insurance companies, hospitals, and many other types of organizations are keeping records in ways that enable immediate and complete access to accurate information. But unfortunately, such an integrated system is rare in criminal justice. There is, however, much progress being made toward integration throughout the United States.

Maximizing efficiency through the flow of information

Integrated systems provide all needed information and they structure the delivery of information in ways that enhance ideal work flows and individual worker productivity. These systems completely eliminate redundant data entry, and they may even eliminate data entry altogether. The best systems dole out information in ways that maximize efficiency through the use of notification mechanisms, access to imaged documents, and instantaneous communication between departments. Private sector systems are built in this fashion because they are ultimately cheaper, more efficient, and more effective.

While progress has been made toward the integration of criminal justice systems, there is still much work to be done. The effort is hampered by the patchwork of expensive, but disparate, systems now in existence, and by the overall complexity of criminal justice systems. Integration would be easier if there were no existing systems, so system designers and developers could start from scratch.

According to Mark Perbix, chief information officer for the Colorado Integrated Justice Information System, another impediment is that people have naturally grown comfortable with inefficient procedures and systems. Others resist integration because they want to retain control over the information they now have in their systems and they don't want to exchange information with other agencies, he said.

"Some agencies see themselves as being at the center of the universe and have difficulty seeing value in sharing data with others. They see their own systems as being the best, or most reliable, and don't want to acknowledge that other systems may be a more suitable source for information," Perbix said.

Under these circumstances, managers may resist sharing information even though it means they have to spend more for data entry operators and suffer inaccurate data due to the inevitable human errors that are compounded every time the same piece of information is entered on a different system. Perbix also said that computer systems people can sometimes be resistant to integration. "Sometimes they think they have the best system, it's the ego factor," he said.

Early systems weren't designed to share

The current state of affairs has its roots in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when case-tracking systems first became widely available. As early systems were imple-

Steve Prisoc is associate director of the Authorty's Information Systems Unit.

mented, they made document production more efficient and enabled agencies to perform automated statistical analyses. These systems were created by individual criminal justice agencies addressing their own operational needs. These agencies created their own data standards on the fly as their projects proceeded, without regard to what other agencies were doing with their systems. Few considered the need for communication between systems.

This lack of standards resulted in a group of disparate systems that served the same purpose but could not interact, thus necessitating human intervention whenever information needed to flow between systems. Everything worked fine until information had to be transferred to another agency. To make that happen, a document had to be printed and delivered to the receiving agency, where the information would then be manually entered into that agency's system.

Statutory reporting requirements were handled similarly: a report or document was printed and then mailed to the recipient agency. That agency then entered the data into its own system. With this re-entry of data, it did not matter that the systems had been developed with different standards. As long as the person who handled data entry for the receiving agency was trained to interpret data from the sending agency, it did not matter that the systems were different. In jurisdictions that rely on several disparate systems to support criminal court processes, it was not unusual to have a large percentage of employees handling data re-entry duties with many of these staff members being devoted exclusively to the task.

At some point in the last few years, it became obvious that printing a document from a computer system and delivering it to another agency for entry into that agency's system was not particularly efficient. Why not just electronically transfer the information between agencies?

Those who investigated the possibility of automatically transferring data were no doubt frustrated when they discovered that not only were the databases defined differently, but allowable database values also were completely different. That is what happens when systems are designed in isolation.

New justice systems need to be able to share information with other systems to avoid wasteful, redundant data entry. Such redundancy leads to incomplete or inaccurate information.

To make matters worse, multiple systems may exist within the same agency that cannot communicate and exchange data. An example of this is when a court clerk has two different systems, one for limited jurisdiction courts and another for general jurisdiction courts. When a case goes from preliminary hearing in the limited jurisdiction court to trial in the general jurisdiction court, the data must be manually re-entered from one system to another within the same agency.

Perbix said such a situation still exists in Denver, although the rest of Colorado has been integrated. "In Denver, in order for systems to communicate, data must be re-keyed between county court and district court whenever there is a finding of probable cause and the case is bound over to district court. For the rest of Colorado, the systems are integrated and don't require re-keying," he said.

New justice systems need to be able to share information with other systems to avoid wasteful, redundant data entry. Such redundancy leads to incomplete or inaccurate information due to the inevitable errors generated by successive keying of data from one system to another.

Data entry errors can be managed but only through time-intensive methods. One is to simply have data entry workers key the same information twice. If both of the entries are identical, the system accepts the entry; if not, the operator is prompted to try again. Another approach is intensive auditing, which involves a person comparing printed data entry output with the original source documents. Both methods are so labor intensive that very few agencies can afford to implement them.

The consequences of errors are severe. One common error is the transposition of fingerprint-based identification numbers. This prevents successful posting of the final disposition when the results of the case are finally reported to the state criminal history repository. The arrest may be posted to the criminal history repository, but without the disposition the arrest information is of limited value to those who must make charging and bail decisions.

Motivation for integration

Without a compelling and obvious need, integration will not happen. It's not enough that it is a good idea or a good policy.

The first motivation to integrate may come from an audit or a report that draws attention to the inefficiencies of fragmented systems. Such a report might point out how missing or inaccurate information could bring risks to law enforcement officers and the public. The result might be a mandate by a public official or a legislative body, which could lead to funding for an integration project. For example, a study that pointed out the lack of any kind of coherent system for managing juvenile cases in Cook County led to the creation of the Cook County Juvenile Enterprise Management System (JEMS).

Complexity of the system

The criminal justice system is made up of a series of subsystems and the flow of information between them is extremely

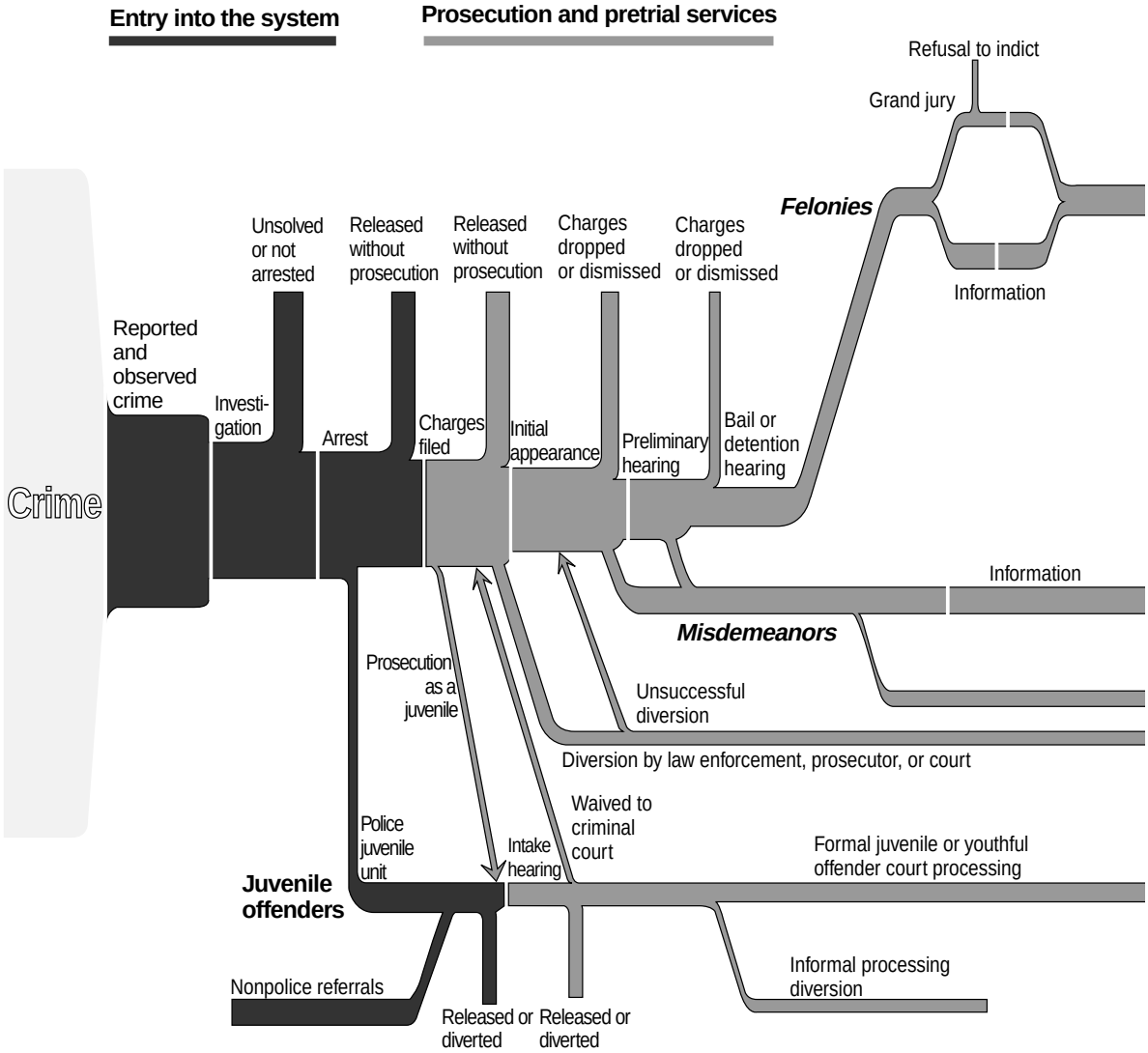
complex. Among the complexities that system developers must take into consideration:

- Arrests, typically the beginning of a case file, can come at different points in the process, and may occur more than once while a case winds through the system. Or an arrest may involve multiple cases.
- Charges can be filed in different ways, including by police, by prosecutors, or as the result of a grand jury indictment.
- Cases may proceed in different ways. Instead of going to court, the defendant may be referred to a diversion program. Plea agreements along the way may result in a change in the charges.
- Postadjudication may involve following the offender through probation and into special programs, such as drug treatment. If certain conditions are not met, probation may be revoked, the offender arrested again, and the case sent back to the courts with new charges.

These are just some issues involved. A sense of the complexity of the criminal justice system can be derived from the chart below depicting caseflow.

Complexities of the criminal justice sytem: caseflow

What is the sequence of events in the criminal justice system?

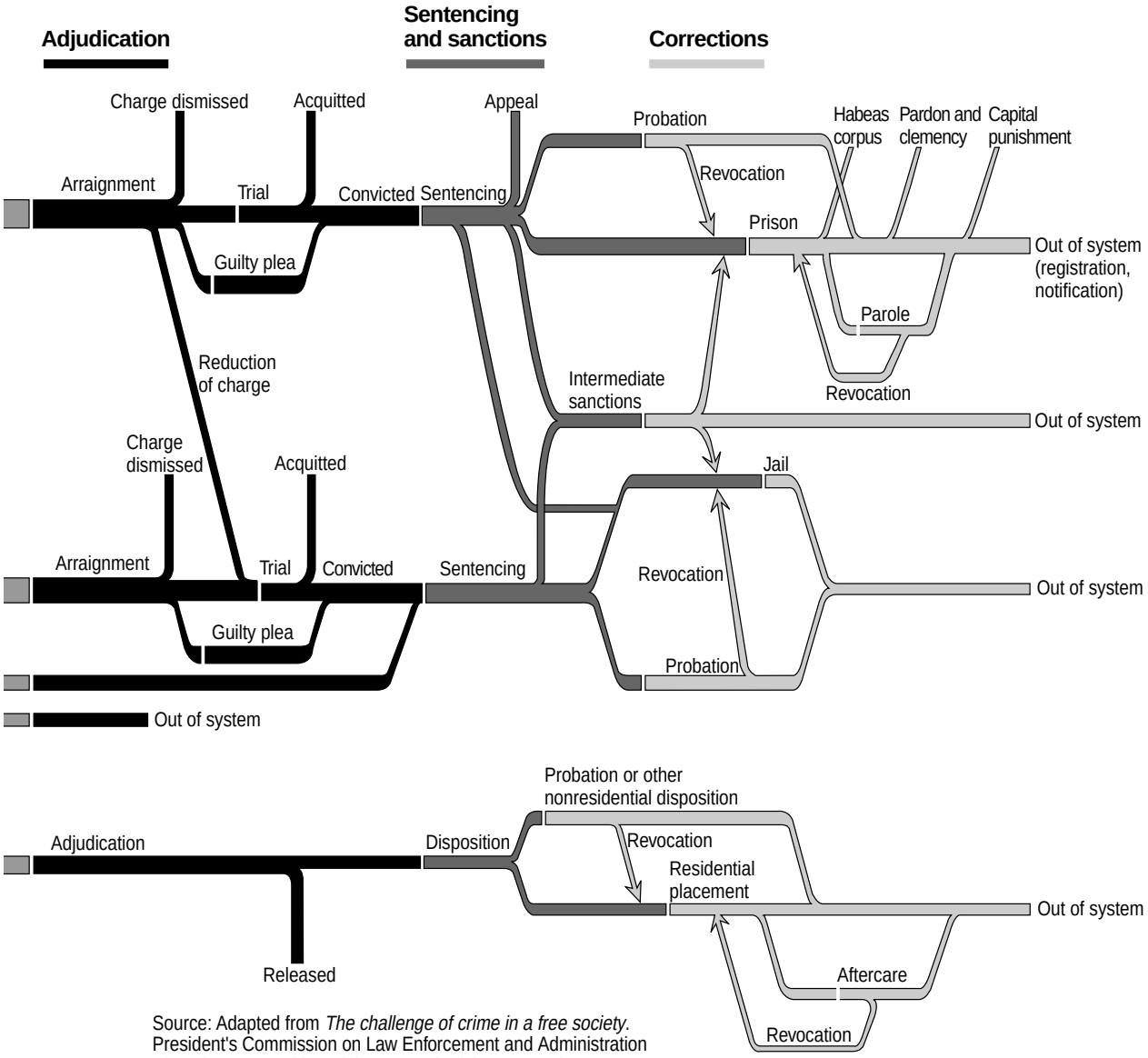


Note: This chart gives a simplified view of caseflow through the criminal justice system. Procedures vary among jurisdictions. The weights of the lines are not intended to show actual size of caseloads.

All such conditions must be fully known and understood before actual integration can begin. It would be a huge mistake to make assumptions about integration projects related to cost or scope without having a complete understanding of the business rules.

The complexities of building an integrated court system were examined in a 1999 monograph, "Report of the National Task Force on Court Automation and Integration," published by the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance. According to the authors of the report:

"Systems that reflect the real complexity of the process are very expensive to develop and difficult for users to administer. Flexibility is needed — something that works for most cases and does not fail with exceptional ones. At the same time, the information system must be affordable and simple to operate. This may help to explain why some criminal justice information system projects have not succeeded."



Source: Adapted from *The challenge of crime in a free society*. President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967. This revision, a result of the Symposium on the 30th Anniversary of the President's Commission, was prepared by the Bureau of Justice Statistics in 1997.

Risks involved

Any large information technology project has a high risk of outright failure or failure to meet the expectations of the participants. Most projects that fail lack certain characteristics and most projects that succeed share certain characteristics. The key to success is to observe the best practices incorporated in successful projects and make those characteristics part of the new integration project.

In 1995, the Standish Group published a widely quoted study, "The Chaos Report," on the reasons for project failure. According to the study, 31 percent of software development projects were canceled before completion, and 52.7 percent came in over budget, without promised features, or significantly late. This means that only 16.2 percent were completed on time, on budget, and with all of the original features. This could be discouraging news, but Standish Group's study defines the characteristics of successful projects. The study's top six reasons for project success are:

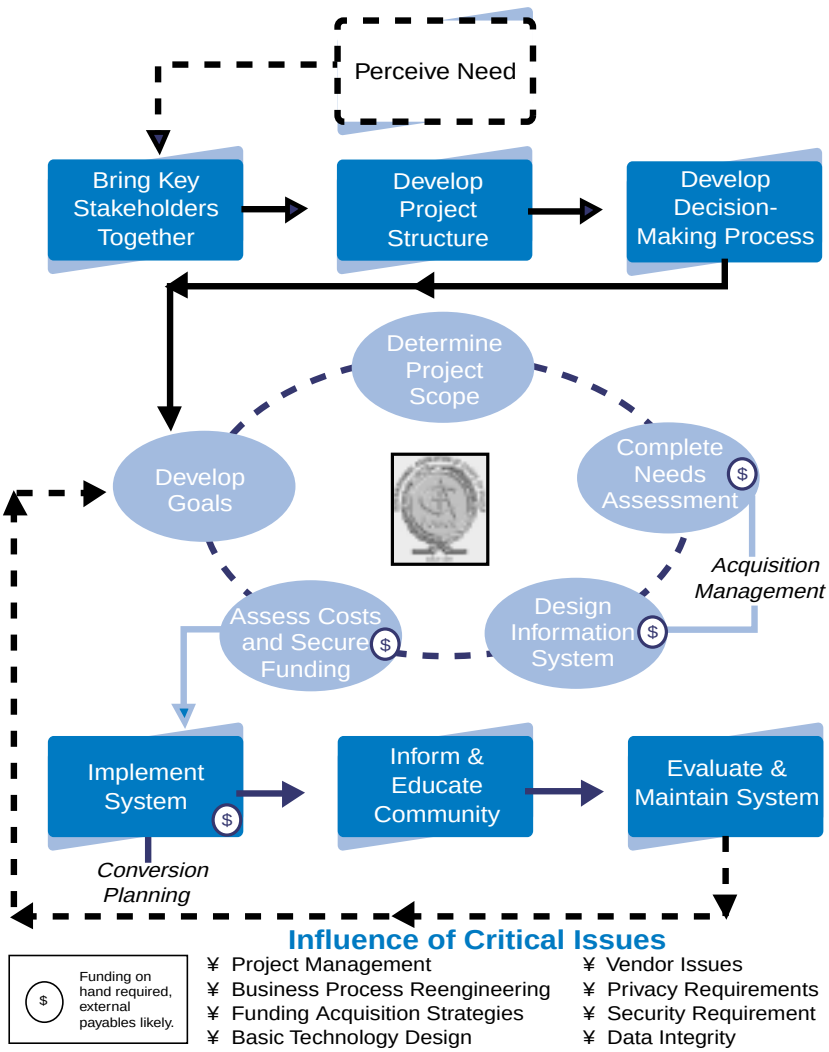
- User involvement
- Executive management support
- Clear requirements
- Proper planning
- Realistic expectations
- Smaller project milestones

These six points lay the groundwork for a successful integration project. Effective governing bodies that direct and oversee projects can ensure user involvement and executive management support. Most, if not all, successful integration projects have governance structures that include executive groups and user groups. Including executives and users in the process from the outset facilitates user involvement and executive support. If the groups are properly utilized, the projects should have clear requirements, proper planning, and realistic expectations.

In contrast, if one office or individual makes an independent effort to develop an integrated system without including key executives and users from all agencies, the chances of project failure will be quite high. While integrated justice projects can benefit by having a champion agency or public official, the actual governance of the project must come from the key executives and users from all involved agencies.

There are different approaches to integration and each has advantages and disadvantages. The trick is to tailor the approach to actual needs and available budget. But no matter which technical approach is adopted, the most important single factor in reducing the risk of failure is to make sure the actual users will be involved in planning, design, development, and implementation. The easiest way to do this is through governance structures that include the actual users as well as the chief executives from all involved agencies. Integration is initially costly and risky, but the business of criminal justice information processing can no longer be accomplished under limitations imposed by disparate, noncommunicating systems.■

Draft planning model for integration of criminal justice information systems, developed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police



Agency collaboration in McLean County results in a model integration effort

By Cristin Monti

After eight years of collaborative planning, development, and implementation, McLean County's mission to create an integrated justice information system is nearly complete. The state's attorney, public defender, circuit court, sheriff, probation department, and various local law enforcement agencies will share data ownership in 2001.

Elected officials and appointed leaders of the agencies formed an integrated justice committee that met weekly in the planning stages of the integration process, which was born out of a private consultant's study revealing numerous office inefficiencies. Data entry was consuming more time than ever in the growing county, the study showed.

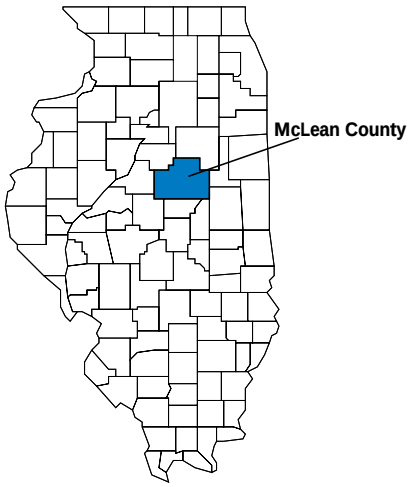
"We knew we had to change the way we do business or expect every year from now to add people just to keep up with the workload," said County Administrator John Zeunik.

McLean is geographically the largest county in Illinois, and it has a population of about 140,000. The county's criminal justice system began experiencing the pressures of an increasing workload in the early 1990s. A surge was seen throughout the decade in the number of cases filed by the State's Attorney's Office, assignments to the Public Defender's Office, and adult and juvenile detention facility populations.

Increased paperwork and data entry coincided with the growing caseloads. It also was determined that 64 cents of every county tax dollar were being spent on its justice system.

It became evident that a more advanced automated system was necessary to handle several tasks that were manually performed. The system they were using required a large amount of repeated data entry. Each department compiled its own case data, causing the same information to be entered four or five times throughout the county. This contributed to a backlog of data entry, and ultimately the need for additional staff. In addition, it created more instances in which data could be entered incorrectly.

"When we first started meeting, we knew two things — we weren't efficient and we were expensive," said Circuit Clerk Sandra Parker.



Researching a system

The committee wanted a system that could provide basic case information in a seamless manner to each entity of the county's criminal justice system while curbing the need to enter data that already had been captured by another office. Committee members set out to create a system that would enable each department to work more efficiently while allowing faster, broader access to more accurate information. But after conferring with justice information system experts at the National Center for State Courts in Williamsburg, Va., they learned such a product did not yet exist.

"There was no third party, shrink-wrapped product we could buy," Zeunik said. "We were basically charting new ground. There was no roadmap to tell us how to do this."

They researched vendors that had the ability to develop an integrated justice system. While TRW Systems and Information Technology Group (then BDM Technologies) had not yet created a truly integrated system, they were up to the task when approached by McLean County administrators.

Developing the system

The team started by defining the requirements of each department, reviewing the current flow of information, and setting the direction for the system's applications. Parker said the process helped the integration committee develop a better understanding of day-to-day operations in other departments.

Cristin Monti is a public information officer with the Authority.

"As soon as we started exchanging information about what it's like in our offices, we began to see how the big picture fit together," she said. "People became more sensitive to the needs of the other departments."

The development of a standard police incident crime report, jail management system, and records management system for the Sheriff's Department, with links to the county's local law enforcement agencies, laid the project's foundation. With an arrest, local police officers complete the crime report and send the information electronically to the Sheriff's Department. The data is then used to book inmates at the McLean County Adult Detention Facility.

TRW later created a warrant system, a case initiation module for the state's attorney, and a court case management system for the circuit clerk. A cash management, docketing, and criminal case calendaring system also will be developed for the Clerk's Office.

Eventually every application will be designed to accommodate each element of the county's criminal justice system. The system also allows the ability to restructure as laws change or as called for within each department.

The circuit clerk's information system is scheduled to connect this spring to the county's integrated system, which already is used by the Sheriff's Department, State's Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, and police agencies in Bloomington, Normal, Chenoa, LeRoy, and Danvers.

So far the system has cut jail booking time in half, which will allow the budgeted number of correctional officers to accommodate an increasing workload. It also provides judges with substantially more background information on cases before them than the old system.

"If I have to set bond today in a case involving a defendant who was arrested last night, there isn't much time to study that person's background," said Circuit Judge Charles Witte. "The new system lets me review the criminal record much faster and that helps me make a better judgment of what the proper bond amount should be and what conditions should be set."

The system will enter its fourth and final phase early next year. The $5.1 million project has gained international attention; Zeunik has received inquiries from as far as Australia and South Africa.

Since initiating the McLean County project, TRW has installed integrated systems on a smaller scale in Oklahoma, New York, and New Mexico. These projects were completed faster and less expensively due to the availability of the basic software applications that were created initially for McLean. Additional hardware and software upgrades in McLean County considerably increased costs associated with its integration.

"We couldn't have done it without forking over all of the traditional jealousies about turf and agreeing we were going to invent a new way of conducting business." — *McLean County State's Attorney Charles Reynard*

Collaborative efforts

Commitment from key players fuels McLean's integration efforts. The project has required vigilant involvement, including regular discussion on long-range planning, group decision-making, flexibility, and cooperation.

"The biggest reason McLean County has been so successful is that all of the departments have been involved since the very first phases of the project," said Todd Thompson, TRW project manager. "They realized what they were working toward and were committed to seeing the project through."

Committee members knew up front that the project's success would require tireless cooperative efforts, and setting pride aside. McLean County State's Attorney Charles Reynard said the team agreed to be flexible and open to the ideas of others. "We couldn't have done it without forking over all of the traditional jealousies about turf and agreeing we were going to invent a new way of conducting business," he said.

Testing the applications and training staff members to use the system has been the most time consuming part of the project, Zeunik said. Developers met with actual users and tailored software to fit their information and workflow needs. They also conducted joint application development sessions to gather requirements and create prototypes with the input of individuals who would be using the system every day.

The collaborative stamina of those involved in making McLean County's integration efforts a success is what observers find most surprising, Parker said.

"It is hard when you have four or five elected officials who are used to having their own way – we are kind of known for having strong opinions," she said. "But a project like this has to have give and take. Everybody that was sitting around that table in the beginning is still at the table."

The staying power of these visionaries has paid off. After years of collaboration McLean County reaps the benefits of its newly integrated system with faster, more efficient ways of administering criminal justice. "It's been a refreshing experience," Reynard said.■

How an integrated system can help fill the gap in criminal justice data

By Mark Myrent

For years, Illinois researchers have sought detailed information on crimes and offenders, and justice system transactions, including arrests, charges, dispositions and incarceration data. At the county, regional, and state level, it is more efficient to collect statistical information from centralized data repositories than from individual criminal justice agencies. For example, the Illinois State Police (ISP) collects offense and arrest statistics from law enforcement agencies under the Illinois Uniform Crime Reporting (I-UCR) program; the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (AOIC) collects criminal court statistics from each of the circuit clerks, as well as data from county probation departments; and the Illinois Department of Corrections collects statistics from each county jail.

Collected data lacks details

Unfortunately, data collected from criminal justice statistical repositories have been insufficient to support most policy-related research, and state-level planning is undermined by the poor quality of data that does exist. While local police, courts, probation departments, and jails regularly submit statistics to state agencies, the information generally provides little detail.

The primary objective of state statistical repositories such as the I-UCR is to provide an overall measure of offenses, offenders, and criminal case volume at various stages of the criminal justice system. Because the repositories were not established to provide data resources to support policy analysis, program evaluation, and other types of criminal justice research, the absence of detail in the data collected from local agencies is not surprising. State agencies have traditionally sought to simplify the reporting processes. The overriding philosophy seems to have been that reporting greater detail by police agencies, circuit clerks, jails, and probation departments would pose a tremendous and unnecessary burden that would divert them from their primary agency responsibilities.

This philosophy has persisted even as local agencies have entered the Information Age and implemented increasingly sophisticated record system technology. Technological solutions exist that can minimize any burden involved in reporting even the most detailed of local agency records. A state-level integrated criminal justice system could close the gap between the data that is collected and data needed to be of use to researchers.

Much information kept locally

Much of the detailed data coveted for research and planning already is collected and maintained by local agencies on source documents and in-house computer systems. For example, police and sheriff's departments throughout the state typically maintain specific incident, arrest, and property reports that capture information such as the age, sex, and race of alleged criminal offenders and their victims. These reports also contain information on victim-offender relationships, use of weapons, drugs involved, injuries to victims, and property that was stolen, damaged, or destroyed.

While local agencies have increasingly automated their records management systems, much of this detailed information never finds its way to state systems. For example, the I-UCR program currently requires law enforcement agencies to report only monthly offense totals for each of eight Index crimes (murder, criminal sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, theft, motor vehicle theft, burglary, and arson). The reported data also include arrest totals — adult and juvenile combined — for index crimes and four categories of drug crimes.

Although some detailed reporting has been added in recent years, it has been for a very narrow range of offense types, such as domestic violence, hate crime, crimes against children, and crimes against school personnel. Only a portion of arresting agencies in the state reports these offenses.

Court data is another case in point. Circuit clerk offices maintain manual case files and, usually, automated records concerning the specific charges for which defendants are prosecuted and adjudicated. The data collected by AOIC, however, include the number of case filings, convictions, and sentences for all felony cases combined; no breakdowns by offense type or even by felony class are available for analysis.

Mark Myrent is a senior research analyst with the Authority's Research and Analysis Unit.

Since the purpose of an integrated system is to facilitate the transfer of case-level records across agencies and jurisdictions, a statewide network could serve as a pipeline through which detail-rich case-level information could be routed from local agencies to the state statistical repositories. An integrated system will enhance the level of detail available for research and planning in ways that extend beyond the networking feature.

Integration also merges information within an agency

An integrated system would include separate records management modules for each criminal justice agency type. In that sense, the notion of integration encompasses more than simply the interconnectivity between different agencies. It also includes the merging, or integration, of all record input and output functions within a given agency. Police, for example, would enter all data fields currently contained on their incident, arrest, and property reports. The records management software would then configure the data to produce each of the reports needed by that agency — patrol deployment plans, officer shift scheduling, budgeting, crime analysis, as well as detailed offense and arrest statistical reports. Therefore, the production of a detailed statistical report would be fully automated, requiring no additional effort by agency personnel.

Similarly, circuit clerks would enter all data fields contained in the charging documents, court sheets, and other court documents. The court records management module would then configure the data fields to produce statistical reports containing the numbers of people who were charged with various offenses and how many individuals in each offense category were subsequently convicted, acquitted, or had charges dropped. The number of offenders who received prison, jail, or probation sentences could be retrieved from such a system, along with the length of their sentences.

Benefit of caseflow statistics

Perhaps of greatest interest to researchers and planners is the potential of an integrated criminal justice information system to produce statistical reports that provide comprehensive case flow statistics for particular categories of offenders. Since true integration planning would allow for the linking of related case records across the various component agencies, researchers would be able to study system-wide responses to specific types of offenses and offenders. For example, prior to introducing legislation to increase the penalties for the unlawful use of a weapon, legislators could call for an analysis that provides trends over time regarding the number of individuals arrested for that offense who were subsequently charged and convicted, and what portion of those convicted were subsequently incarcerated, their average sentence length, and their average length of stay.

A statewide integrated criminal justice information system would represent a quantum leap for researchers and planners. Their ability to assess crime problems, evaluate agency performance, test innovative solutions and plan for future issues would be dramatically improved. Closing the gap between local and state record-keeping would ultimately benefit everyone.■

Foundation Principles of Integration

There are several principles that should be incorporated into the overall integration effort:

1. Data should be captured at the originating point, rather than trying to reconstruct it down line or have others capture it.

2. Data should be captured once and used many times, leveraging existing resources and improving data quality.

3. The integrated system should be driven by the operational systems of participating agencies, not separate from the systems supporting the agencies.

4. The capabilities for generalized automatic query, push, pull, publish and subscription should be constructed as general capabilities of the system so that, for example, additional automatic reporting can easily be implemented as additional requirements are identified.

From: Integration in the Context of
Justice Information Systems:
A Common Understanding

A SEARCH Special Report Revision Date: March 2000.
By Dave Roberts, Deputy Executive Director, SEARCH Group
www.search.org

The traditional approach to building an integrated system

The traditional approach to building an integrated justice system is to create a large system on one mainframe computer that will serve all criminal justice agencies in a particular jurisdiction or municipality. If there are no existing systems in a particular jurisdiction — an unlikely situation these days — the most economical and logical approach to integration is to combine all agencies on one system and computing platform. It may even be the best solution if existing systems have outlived their usefulness and are all in need of replacement, particularly if there has been no recent investment in the existing systems.

Harris County, Texas

Harris County, Texas, which includes Houston, is an early pioneer in systems integration. The county's Justice Information Management System is an effective example of the traditional, or "big box," approach to building an integrated system. Even though all agencies are on the same system, the security of each agency's data is carefully protected and they do not all have access to the same data.

In the late 1970s, when integration work began in Harris County, the big box approach was the best and only practical approach available to integration planners. This very successful system is still in operation—in a greatly enhanced form over its original 1970s implementation — and all criminal justice agencies in Harris County participate.

The Harris County system has a large technical and administrative staff dedicated to operations and enhancements. But to keep the system working, all criminal justice agencies play an active role in its administration. An executive board made up of Harris County criminal justice agency heads — both elected and appointed — makes all policy and strategy decisions. The composition of this board ensures that each agency will be involved and represented on every issue involving the system. In addition, there are several subcommittees that are responsible for implementing the policies approved by the executive committee. These subcommittees are made up of staff members from the various agencies.

McLean County

McLean County, which includes Bloomington and Normal, is another example of a big-box system. The box, however, is not a mainframe, but a much smaller IBM RS6000 minicomputer. McLean is smaller than Harris County, but the same basic principles are at work. The McLean County system was created through a partnership with the TRW Systems & Information Technology Group, and has successfully joined law enforcement, prosecution, courts, and defense on one system.

The McLean County system is being implemented in a modular fashion, allowing for one module or phase to be made operational before moving on to the next phase. The governing body that directs the effort is comprised of criminal justice elected officials and agency heads. Additionally, there is a committee of users and technologists who implement the policies and procedures mandated by the executives.

Cook County juvenile system

Another example of this type of system is the new Cook County Juvenile Enterprise Management System (JEMS). With JEMS, Cook County agencies with responsibility for juvenile justice and child protection contribute to a shared database that resides on a large central IBM AS400 computer. Even though many agencies contributing to JEMS have their own case-tracking and processing systems, the intention of JEMS is to eventually replace these systems.

JEMS was designed as a system for processing juvenile delinquents and to handle child-protection matters. These features include the on-line production and distribution of the outputs normally required during the juvenile court process, including subpoenas, petitions, memoranda, charging documents, and so on. The ultimate goal of the system, according to Michael McGowan, director of electronic information for the Office of the Chief Judge, is to reduce paperwork and facilitate more efficient court operations. The advantages of this type of system are centralized administration, elimination of data redundancy, and the consolidation of resources required to run a large, enterprise-wide system.■

— Steve Prisoc

Integration using modules

One approach for developing an integrated system that will meet the complex needs of criminal justice is to implement small, manageable modules in successive phases. A good place to start is with a module that serves law enforcement, such as a police records management system. This module would record all arrests and incidents and would be the originating point for a criminal case.

A police records management system that captures essential data and can pass that data to other systems could be the linchpin of an integrated system. Once the police records management system is in place, then other modules can be implemented. Large tasks that must be completed before implementation, such as analysis, design, and development, can also be broken into modules. Such a system could be built by adding one agency at a time.

— S.P.

Integrating by linking existing systems using "middleware" technology

By Steve Prisoc

While the benefits of integration have become obvious to most criminal justice decision-makers, the cost of integrating disparate systems can be quite high, especially if the approach taken is to replace existing systems by combining all agencies on one system on a central computer. Recently, the favored integration approach for jurisdictions having large investments in existing systems has been to use software to join the various agency systems into a "virtual" system. By implementing these virtual systems, agencies do not have to migrate their data to a computer shared by all criminal justice agencies, and they can continue to operate using their existing data structures and business rules. An added benefit is that workers who have become accustomed to their old systems and procedures do not require much retraining.

Using middleware to create virtual systems

An example of how a virtual system can operate is when police enter arrest and incident data into their existing system and that same data is immediately transferred to the prosecution, defense, and court clerk systems in a way that eliminates re-keying of critical information. In turn, prosecution data can be instantly transferred — in real-time fashion — to the court clerk's system as charging decisions are made. From the clerk's system information is piped directly to state repositories as defendants' court cases are disposed of. None of these transactions requires human intervention. This type of virtual system is best conceptualized as a consortium of different systems that instantly reuse the same data as cases travel upstream through the justice process. The data is automatically available to agencies that need it.

This type of integration is achieved through the use of software called "middleware." Middleware performs both routing and translation functions so that while agencies still maintain their own systems, information entered in those discrete systems can be used to populate databases in other agencies' systems, and thus reduce or eliminate redundant data entry. Middleware acts as a United Nations-style translator. The translation occurs immediately and accurately, and the listener (receiving computer) hears in its own language what the speaker (sending computer) is saying in an entirely different language. This is made possible by use of a translator (the middleware). Reducing redundant data entry increases data accuracy by eliminating successive re-keying of data from one system to the next. Data entry errors make it harder to link local records to state-level records when dispositions are finally reported. If disposition records cannot be linked to arrest records at the state repository, the dispositions of those cases cannot be posted and will not appear on rap sheets.

Los Angeles County

The first system that used a middleware approach was the Los Angeles Proactive Information Exchange (PIX) system. This system, first implemented in 1989, gradually brought individual agencies on line. Sherron Trawick, systems manager for the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office and one of the charter PIX participants, said information sharing among agencies was a major issue from the beginning. "We knew we would never get all criminal justice agencies to agree on one common database, so we sought a solution like PIX that would allow each agency to determine what data they would give to other agencies." PIX allowed each agency to determine what data they would send to other agencies and when they would send the information.

The high cost of replacing existing systems also influenced the choice of PIX. "We adopted the middleware approach because several agencies had old legacy systems that we knew we couldn't afford to replace," Trawick said. "In fact, thanks to the approach we took, we are still using these same legacy systems many years later." The $3.2 million annual operating cost of the system is funded by the county's general fund.

A recent enhancement to the Los Angeles County system is the Consolidated Criminal History Reporting System (CCHRS). This system, which uses PIX for information exchange, records booking information from the sheriff's system, and case rejections from the district attorney's office, as well as critical court information. The system serves as a criminal history repository for anyone arrested in the county. The system also links nonarrest criminal records — those cases initiated by summons instead of arrest — with arrest records.

Defendants arrested in the county are fingerprinted using electronic fingerprinting and classification technology (livescan), but defendant's whose cases

are generated by a summons are never fingerprinted or classified. Many of the people who receive summonses have previous arrests, however, so CCHRS has automated processes for linking fingerprint-based records to records that do not include fingerprints. This has allowed for much more complete and accurate criminal history records within the county.

The system in Los Angeles County resembles a state-level system and, in many respects, the county resembles a large state. Its geographic area is larger than some states, and with a population of more than 9.2 million, the county has more people than all but eight states. What Los Angeles County has that states don't have, and many municipalities also lack, is a strong, centralized city and county government that can direct and fund technology efforts and mandate changes. It is perhaps for this reason that Los Angeles, despite its size, had one of the earliest integrated criminal justice systems in the country.

The Colorado system

The Colorado Integrated Criminal Justice Information System (CICJIS) uses the middleware approach to systems integration. Prosecution, courts, probation, and law enforcement share the system. The system was mandated and funded by the Colorado legislature in 1995, and system design began in 1996. One of the main goals of the project was to keep autonomous agency systems intact, while enabling communication between systems, and thus creating one virtual system. For this to happen, all agencies had to agree upon a unique defendant identifier that would be used as a primary medium of exchange. The identifier selected was the state identification number. This number is a fingerprint-indexed number assigned to defendants at their first arrest and used for all subsequent arrests. The cost of system implementation was $4 million and the annual budget is $1.1 million.

CICJIS Chief Information Officer Mark Perbix said that without the legislature's mandate, integration would not have happened in Colorado. He said a big stimulus was an audit informing the legislature that the existing criminal justice systems, which were funded with the understanding that they could share information, were not communicating. Apparently, in the development of the individual systems, the goal of communicating was lost.

Pennsylvania

Another example of a virtual system is Pennsylvania's Justice Network (JNET). JNET is being developed as a statewide, integrated system that emphasizes timely criminal history and court information. This system was mandated in 1996 by an executive order of Gov. Thomas J. Ridge, with the dual goals of improving operating efficiencies and enhancing public safety. What is unique about JNET is that it is being implemented as an Internet browser-based system running on a state-operated Intranet. The ramifications of this are significant, since almost all computers sold today have a built-in Internet browser. A computer with an Internet browser should be able to connect to JNET without any special programs or preparation.

This browser-based implementation also is expected to expedite training. Since many people are familiar with Web browser standards, they will adapt to JNET more intuitively than they might to other types of interfaces. Using middleware technology, JNET will link to repositories for criminal history and other court-related information. It will also provide a middleware solution that will integrate disparate agency systems throughout the state, which will be phased in through successive modules.■

Necessary ingredients for integration

1. Coordination and control mechanisms — to support communication, collaboration, and some sort of authoritative decision making among the many players in the enterprise.

2. Trust, participation and buy-in — successful relationships, building trust through power sharing, incentives, and shared interests.

3. Standards — agreement and consistency in data elements, their definitions, data manipulations, operational procedures, and application design.

4. Comprehensive planning and long-range perspective — clear and highly detailed knowledge of the specific procedures that generate or use criminal justice information in order to support and enhance the business process.

5. Adequate financial resources — an ongoing commitment of resources to avoid obsolescence, and meet escalating demands for capability.

From *Reconnaissance Study: Developing a Business Case for the Integration of Criminal Justice Information,* Anthony M. Cresswell and David Connelly, September 1999.

Overcoming obstacles to integration

While most everyone involved in criminal justice can appreciate the benefits of integration, there will be obstacles to such efforts. Some of the more common obstacles that officials around the country have encountered in integration efforts are described below.

Turf issues

Particularly in adversarial environments, cultures tend to emphasize strict separation of "what's mine and what's yours." The concept of sharing can be foreign to administrators and staff members who are participating in integration initiatives for the first time. Also, the desire to limit change is a powerful force in preventing new system implementations. These attitudes must be understood and managed.

Lack of understanding

Some agency heads may assume that they have to share all of their information to participate in an integrated system. This is not the case. No integrated system shares all information. Systems distribute information on a need-to-know basis, and the best systems provide information only when it is needed.

Lack of funds

While there are many grants for integration projects, it is unlikely that a significant project can be completely funded through outside assistance. The costs of statewide integration initiatives are highly variable and range from a high of $84 million in Alaska (according to the Strategic Plan for Alaska's Criminal Justice Information System Integration, version 1.l, March 6, 1999) to $3.3 million in Colorado.

Aside from the size of the systems, the cost of integration projects will be affected by factors such as project scope and goals, as well as the particular hardware and software selected. The extent of consultant involvement also will influence the price.

Cost is a big factor in selecting the approach to integration. Colorado decided upon the virtual system approach because the cost of completely replacing all of the existing agency systems would have been enormous. Officials there chose to capitalize on the existing infrastructure by creating a means of communication between the different systems. Cost was also the reason behind Los Angeles County's decision to implement a virtual system rather than take the big box approach.

Lack of effective organizational structures

Effective organizational and leadership structures are required for successful integration projects. These structures are most often referred to as "governance," and typically include representatives from all agencies involved in the criminal justice process. A typical governance body will include elected and appointed agency heads from all criminal justice agencies and may be called an executive committee or council. Regardless of what name the group takes, it must envision where the project is going and create the strategy to get there. The leader of such a group might be a county manager or an appointed project director.

Another important group is a technical group, which would likely be made up of end users and technologists. This group is responsible for developing procedures and tactics for implementing the executive group's strategy. The leaders of both groups must be able to devote significant time to the task of governing the project, and they must know enough about the subject to avoid missteps. Also, it is important

State integration efforts

Like many states, Illinois is slowly beginning to integrate existing justice information systems. Most of the effors so far have been at the local level, but statewide activity is picking up, and integration will be a major focus of a new committee formed by the Authority to look at criminal justice information systems.

Integration also will be a topic at a June criminal justice planning assembly sponsored by the Authority. One of the keynote speakers for the assembly will be Dave Roberts, deputy executive director of SEARCH, The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics, and a leader in national integration efforts.

The Authority and the Illinois State Police continue to work together to establish a police records management system that will create a standard for records management in Illinois.

for the leaders to act fairly, and possess the political skills to resolve conflicts, negotiate compromise, and promote a general sense of common direction. Without such skills, a project can become a battlefield of conflicting goals and agendas.

Conflicting goals

It is important when initiating an integrated justice project to consider the participants' goals and values, which may not be immediately discernible. For instance, while it may seem safe to assume that the elimination of redundant data entry is a common goal, the elimination of data entry staff in a particular agency could be quite wrenching. If individual staff members are reallocated throughout the organization, they must be retrained and reoriented. Many of these people may have been performing data entry for many years, and they will likely have close ties, both socially and professionally to the data entry department. Change of this type is disruptive and painful for everyone involved, but it may sometimes be necessary for a project to succeed.

The issue of redundant data entry is only one area that could create controversy in an integration project. In an adversarial system, information sharing may provide advantages to prosecutors or public defenders that could not have been had under older systems. Solid assurances must be provided to participants that information will only be made available to authorized users, and information flows must be constructed that will not compromise agency security or the privacy of citizens.

The risk of harm from more extensive statistical data as a result of integration is also a valid concern of agency heads. Certain types of information, when put in the form of statistical reports, has the potential to do harm as well as good. The number of people released without charging could perhaps cause concern to police agencies, and the number of cases that prosecutors decline to file is not a number they will always be willing to share. The number of plea bargains and the ratio of guilty and non-guilty trial results will be areas of concern for judges and prosecutors.

It is important to understand these issues before initiating an integration project, since the active or passive resistance from parties key to the process can scuttle a project before it makes it past the earliest planning stages. Lack of sensitivity and attention to these details can greatly increase the chances of project failure.■

— Steve Prisoc

National task force findings

The findings of the National Task Force on Court Automation and Integration, which include information on the status of state and county integrated systems in 34 states, are summarized below. The findings are including in the report of the task force published as a monograph in 1999 by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice.

Finding 1.
Court systems undertaking automation and integration projects cite a variety of reasons for doing so, including cost savings, increased efficiency, elimination of redundant data entry, improved decision-making, and increased public safety.

Finding 2.
The forces driving justice system integration include increased pressure to improve service with existing resources, legislation requiring information sharing, demand for information not historically compiled by courts, and technological advances.

Finding 3.
Barriers to court integration include limited resources, resistance to change, complex justice processes, fear of reduced service, distrust, hesitancy to rely on outside staff, current system incompatibility, disagreements over data ownership, and the lack of resources such as data standards, peer networks, documentation of successful systems, and off-the-shelf solutions.

Finding 4.
The success of integration projects depends on intense, comprehensive, and ongoing strategic planning that takes into account the acquisition, long-term operation and maintenance, and eventual upgrade of information systems.

Finding 5.
Successful projects focus on day-to-day information sharing between courts and other justice agencies and generate statistical and disposition data for state and federal agencies as by-products of these systems.

Finding 6.
State agencies take the lead in developing the framework for integration, and local agencies are responsible for developing the operational systems.

Finding 7.
Security measures ensure that confidential information is available only to authorized users. The agencies participating in an integrated system must determine what information is confidential and subject to security protections.

Finding 8.
Coordinated funding yields greater returns than splitting resources among disconnected efforts. Successful planning involves application of life-cycle costing methods to account for downstream operations, maintenance, upgrades, and training expenses.

Finding 9.
The identification and development of information-sharing standards will facilitate integration efforts.■

Recommended strategies for integration

The National Task Force on Court Automation and integration made the following recommendations regarding strategies for agencies considering or currently administering court automation and integration projects. The strategies are in four broad categories.

Organization for integration

The recommended strategies in this category are:

- Successful integration requires strategic planning, a commitment to maintaining top-level technical staff, and acquisition approaches that account for system life cycles.
- A first step is to establish appropriate governance bodies to provide vision, strategy, policy direction, and implementation oversight.
- Each project needs an executive sponsor to address priorities and funding issues and to remove barriers.
- States should be responsible for developing strategic plans, system architectures, and standards or guidelines for statewide implementation.

Standards

Development of standards and communication protocols to ensure the collection, transmission, and exchange of data must remain a high priority of state and national court and justice system management organizations.

Funding

The recommended strategies in this category are as follows:

- Justice agencies face significant challenges to funding integrated information systems. Agencies may have significant investments in legacy systems with limited long-term utility. Purse-string holders must adjust funding approaches to accommodate technology's explosive growth.
- National initiatives and incentives are necessary to encourage courts to transfer technology and test innovative solutions. National and state funding to develop standards is also needed. Cost benefits should be highlighted to justify investments in integrated systems.
- As the life cycles of systems continue to compress, the costs of integrated information systems become ongoing rather than periodic, requiring creative funding alternatives.

Practical resources

The recommended strategies in this category are as follows:

- Practical resources, including planning guides and clearinghouses for easily accessible standards, are needed to help courts develop integrated information systems.
- A national information exchange should be established to share information and resources.
- Technical assistance must be available to help courts design, develop, and manage integrated systems.
- Best practices should be documented to highlight successful systems.
- Training should be made available to integrated system users to maximize benefits and ensure user satisfaction.

(From the "Report of the National Task Force on Court Automation and Integration." Monograph, Bureau of Justice Assistance, June 1999.)■

Integration web sites

www.search.org/integration/

The SEARCH Group. The single most comprehensive source of Internet information on justice integration.

www.ctg.albany.edu/projects/projmain.html

The Reconnaissance Study: Developing a Business Case for the integration of Criminal Justice Information, Center for Technology in Government.

www.usdoj.gov/ag/global/

Global Justice Information Network, Department of Justice.

www.nasire.org/hotIssues/justice/index.cfm

NASIRE Justice Report - Toward National Sharing of Governmental Information.

www.state.co.us/gov_dir/cicjis/

Colorado Integrated Criminal Justice Information System.

www.state.pa.us/Technology_Initiatives/jnet/home.htm

Pennsylvania Justice Network (JNET).

www.mclean.gov/sheriff/Sherif12.html

McLean County Integrated Justice Information System (IJIS).

www.co.harris.tx.us./jims/

Harris County Justice Information Management System (JIMS).

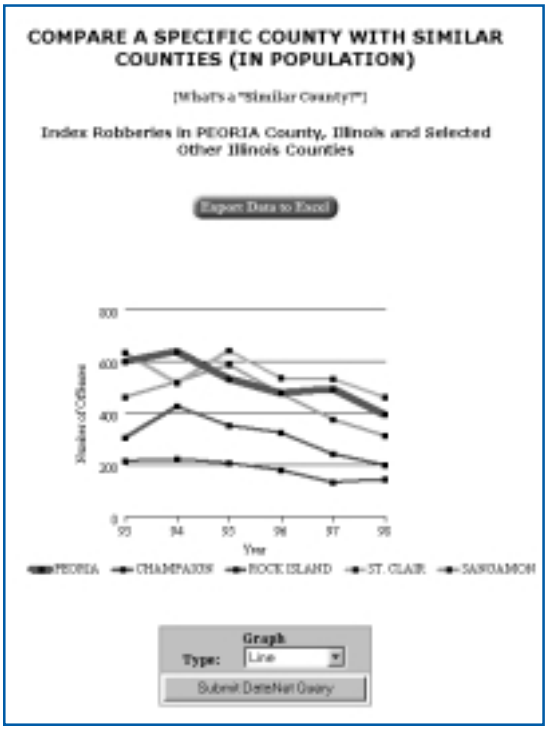
Authority brings criminal justice e-data to Web site

By Dan Higgins

In the summer of 1999 the Authority began making criminal justice data available on its Web site. Called CJ DataNet, this feature is designed as an on-line data warehouse of statewide criminal justice data.

The CJ DataNet advances the mission of the Authority to act as a central repository for criminal justice information in Illinois. The Authority routinely receives law enforcement, corrections, court, and other criminal justice data from agencies charged with collecting this information, such as data on the number of adult arrests, juvenile dispositions, jail populations, prison admissions, felony court filings, and probation caseloads.

This information comes to the Authority in database, spreadsheet, or hard copy format, which is then used to support the agency's research and evaluation activities. However, with the creation of the CJ DataNet, access to this information is now available on line, helping to facilitate the use of this data and information by policy makers, researchers, criminal justice practitioners, and the general public.



The CJ DataNet includes user-friendly automated features that allow visitors to view data in graphs or tables, or they can download the information to their personal computers in spreadsheet form. Querying the databases is done by using the default settings or by user-selected date ranges, crime types, and geographic location. In addition to data, the CJ DataNet includes comprehensive documentation of the data sets, such as the source of the information; an explanation of terms used; and tips for interpreting the results.

These data can be used to research broad issues facing the criminal justice system, or to simply examine crime problems in a city, county, or region of Illinois. For example, for arrest data, users have the option to conduct queries that examine statewide trends; analyze the differences in rural and urban figures; compare their county or municipality to jurisdictions of similar population; compare their county or municipality to surrounding areas; or select different jurisdictions for comparison. In addition to raw counts, crime rates and changes in rates are calculated. Finally, because users can download the data to their own PC in spreadsheet format, they have the ability to conduct their own analyses using the raw numbers.

CJ DataNet has been very successful — on average, visitors to the site have generated 400 crime reports per month. In the future, the Authority intends to add social service, risk factor, and demographic data, along with more criminal justice data, plus a thematic mapping application.

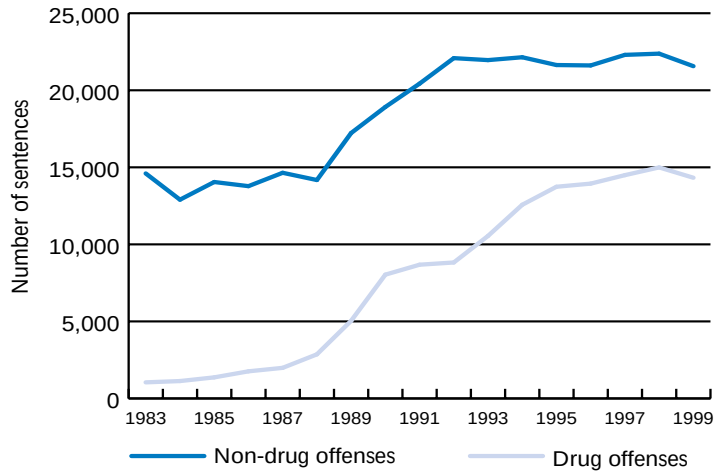
CJ DataNet can be reached through the Authority's Web site: **www.icjia.state.il.us.** ■

— Dan Higgins is a senior research analyst with the Authority's Research and Analysis Unit.

Drug offenders in Illinois prisons

The number of prison sentences for drug offenses increased more than 1,200 percent between 1983 and 1999, when more than 14,300 drug offenders were sentenced to prison. Between 1983 and 1987 the number of prison sentences imposed for drug-law violations was relatively low — averaging only 1,450 per year. Beginning in 1988, however, there was a dramatic increase in arrests for violations of Illinois' Controlled Substances Act, and a corresponding increase in the number of sentences to prison. For a more extensive discussion of trends in drug offense sentencing, see the April 2000 *Trends and Issues Update*, Volume 1, Number 10, available from the Authority's Criminal Justice Information Clearinghouse.

Sentences to the Illinois Department of Corrections



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

Job opportunities at the Authority

For information on employment opporunities at the Authority, please visit our Web site or contact Jan Oncken, Office of Human Resources, 312-793-8550.

Web updates by e-mail

Automatic updates of information recently added to the Authority Web site are now available by e-mail. To sign up to receive this free service, please visit our Web site.

www.icjia.state.il.us

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