

Tennessee Integrated Criminal Justice Web Portal Economical, Effective, Transformational

Executive Summary

The Tennessee Integrated Criminal Justice (ICJ) Web Portal is transforming the way law enforcement entities perform investigations. Implemented by Tennessee's Integrated Criminal Justice (ICJ) Program, it is an important first step toward the dissemination of critical information to criminal justice entities, regardless of whether they are local, state or federal.

Providing a single access point to four state criminal justice databases, the ICJ Web Portal was implemented in July 2006. The objectives of this project were: 1) facilitate the retrieval and presentation of time-sensitive information regardless of the size or location of the criminal justice agency; and 2) provide contributing state agencies with the ability to reallocate staff time previously spent on responding to numerous information requests. Prior to implementation of the Portal, such requests could be satisfied only through traditional, labor-intensive efforts (i.e. phone, fax, email) or through certified and authorized personnel with NCIC access.

Though designed to be used by any criminal justice agency, the greatest benefits of the ICJ Web Portal have been seen at the local and state law enforcement levels. The State of Tennessee has 418 law enforcement agencies; many of these agencies are located in very rural areas with limited budgets and minimal staff. Recognizing not only the needs of the large metropolitan agencies but also those of the smaller rural agencies, the ICJ Web Portal was implemented using secure browser-based technology with an annual fee of \$7.50 per user. The low fee combined with Internet access provides an opportunity to obtain critical information regardless of size, budget constraints, or location.

The ICJ Web Portal, from design to implementation, was a 24-month project; with a total cost of \$200,000. Over 150 agencies with approximately 3,000 users are actively utilizing the ICJ Web Portal. Participants are located throughout the state and consist of Police Departments, Sheriffs Offices, 911 Centers, District Attorneys, Drug Task Forces and various other justice and justice-affiliated agencies. Due to a large number of requests for access from federal law enforcement agencies, the ICJ Steering Committee approved the inclusion of these agencies for access in May 2007. Ten of these agencies will gain access to the Portal upon completion of training.

Tennessee Integrated Criminal Justice Web Portal

Economical, Effective, Transformational

Project Description

Dissemination of criminal justice information is a significant challenge in Tennessee. With 95 counties and a non-unified court system, criminal justice information is scattered across various state and local agencies causing redundancy, inefficiency and inaccuracy. Criminal justice and law enforcement users must access a variety of systems to identify individuals, conduct criminal and pre-trial investigations, perform background checks, determine current location of probationers and parolees, and obtain driver history and vehicle registration information. Prior to this initiative, obtaining information from these systems required phone calls, paper requests, emails and/or faxes, all of which generate operating costs for both the requesting and servicing agency.

Recognizing the need to coordinate efforts within the state's criminal justice system, a group of criminal justice professionals voluntarily formed the Tennessee Integrated Criminal Justice (ICJ) Steering Committee in 2002. Participants included upper management from a number of State agencies including the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, Administrative Office of the Court, District Attorneys General Conference, District Public Defenders Conference, Department of Correction, the State's Chief Information Officer, and others. The committee drafted a comprehensive plan for statewide, integrated criminal justice information sharing, applied for and received grants from the United States Department of Justice, and committed to working with one another toward the common goal of information sharing. The Tennessee Legislature formalized the work of the ICJ Steering Committee through the Integrated Criminal Justice Act of 2006.

In 2004, the ICJ Steering Committee proposed a web portal as a means to disseminate data from multiple agencies through a single secure point of entry. Five state agencies volunteered to provide access to real-time data residing in their respective data systems. The agencies were: Department of Safety, providing driver photographs and license information; Department of Revenue, providing vehicle title and registration information; Department of Correction, providing offender information, including mug shots with photographs of scars, marks and tattoos; Board of Probation and Parole (through the Department of Correction's database), providing information related to probationers and parolees; and the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) with information, and photographs related to registered sex offenders.

The ICJ Web Portal was designed based on the needs and concerns expressed by contributing agencies and the criminal justice community. Working with each of these, the ICJ Project Team held multiple interviews with individuals who were knowledgeable about the business side, operational side and technical side of the agency. Through these meetings, the scope and functionality requirements were developed, documented and approved. It also became clear that a roles-based security system would need to be a part of the user-identity function of the portal. This roles-based security feature permits a contributing agency to determine, to a field-level, what information will be displayed for a given role. As a result, a prosecuting attorney, for example, can be assured that the public defender has

access where appropriate, yet does not have the ability to view information that is for the sole use of the prosecution.

It was imperative that the control of data from the contributing agency remain with that agency. A technology solution was required that: 1) would easily communicate with a wide variety of agency systems, from mainframe based to server based; 2) could accept information in various formats and transform the incoming data to industry standards; and 3) provide an access method that would permit the highest probability of availability to criminal justice agencies across the state.

To meet the above needs, the ICJ Web Portal was implemented in July 2006 in a browser-based environment utilizing the Internet as a communication backbone. The flexibility of accessing criminal justice data via the Internet allows users to get the information they need to react quickly not only from their office, but from virtually anywhere such as home, police vehicles and soon from portable hand-held devices. The interface provides a user-friendly method to directly query original data sources via input provided by the user. Behind the scenes, the Portal maintains individual connections to these production systems, passing and transforming data between the user and the participating agency systems.

Security was a critical factor and was incorporated into the ICJ Web Portal. Secure HTTPS 128-bit encryption is utilized to address data transmission security. Agency concerns regarding use of data are addressed through an extensive tracking system that automatically tracks who is logged on, what information the user retrieves, when this information was retrieved and from where the user retrieved that data. As part of the enrollment process, each user is required to read and sign a Privacy and Usage policy that was developed by the ICJ Project Team and approved by all members of the ICJ Steering Committee.

The ICJ Web Portal also takes advantage of web-server technology and Extensible Markup Language (XML) that has become the national standard of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, The International Justice and Public Safety Information Sharing Network, and many other national initiatives for criminal justice integration projects. This XML functionality positions Tennessee to support national initiatives for standardized rap sheets and drivers license projects as well as many future projects.

Significance to the Improvement of the Operation of Government

The ICJ Web Portal enhances the ability to positively identify criminals, facilitates easy access to information by state, county, federal, local law enforcement and criminal justice agencies, and bolsters cross-agency information sharing. Additionally, it promotes increased web-based transmission and retrieval of information, facilitates integration and information sharing with state and local criminal justice agencies, and improves the safety and security of Tennessee's citizens with a single point of access to critical criminal justice data.

Within weeks of implementation, success stories began to filter in from across the state. Information retrieved from the ICJ Web Portal has assisted agencies in solving a broad range of crimes, both those that have occurred recently and those that have been open for some time. The following testimonials provide a view into some of the benefits realized from this effort.

The ICJ Web Portal was instrumental in solving a double homicide. The investigating officer wrote: "On January 7th, 2007 the Knoxville Police Department began its investigation into the double murder of Channon Christian and Christopher Newsom. From the outset, the number of suspects, witnesses, and people of interest grew at an almost exponential rate. Had it not been for the ability of investigators to quickly compile lineups, departmental BOLOs [Be on the Lookout], and inter-agency (DEA, ATF, FBI) communiqués that contained the vital statistics and photos of the myriad people involved, the identification and apprehension of all the subjects that participated or had direct knowledge of the events would have been almost insurmountable. There has been an overwhelming interest in and requests for additional access to the Criminal justice portal from both inside our agency and from other agencies. Thank you for the time and effort you have invested into bringing this tool to law enforcement."


A Middle Tennessee law enforcement officer sent the following as it relates to his use of the ICJ Web Portal to assist in the identification of on-line child sex predators: "The portal provides vital information, instantly. Instant access to photographs is something that has been a long time in coming. It is, at times, vital to law enforcement operations. This entire system is of HUGE benefit to our agency. Continued use of the portal allows me the opportunity to immediately identify child sex predators I encounter on-line while posing as a child. This instant identification, in comparing the web cam images to a DL [driver's license] image allows me to prioritize the arrests of these dangerous predators. After getting the positive ID, I can then research the correct suspect further and see if they have previous child sex related charges. This positive, instant ID is of great benefit to this operation and the community that we serve and are responsible for protecting."

The portal has demonstrated its usefulness to remote, rural areas of the state. White Pine Police Department (serving a population of 2,500) stated, "When I hear our officer do a traffic stop, I always run the subject on the system because it tells if they have been convicted of any offenses and also if they have a hand gun permit. The 911 system never gives the officer this information. I think it is a safety plus for the officer. Just letting you know how I use the system."

The Belle Meade Police Department recounted the following, "Just wanted to tell you that we obtained valuable information last night using the program. Midnight shift arrested a young man for breaking into cars. While interviewing him, I ran him through the program and found where an entry in TOMIS [Department of Correction's Tennessee Offender Management Information System] had been made several years ago. Utilizing the Portal, the police discovered the defendant's incarceration history. The police informed the defendant that they were aware of his history and the defendant gave the police some very useful and accurate information that solved several car burglaries" and "We have had another positive result from the program. We used [the portal]... in a multi-agency investigation to identify and track down a parolee who was involved in a major car burglary spree [and] stolen credits [cards], etc. Information that proved to be invaluable: DL photograph, the ease in locating his current address from parole information, parole officer contact information and most important, his contact information while in prison. The contact information revealed that a car being used in a felony belonged to his wife and that information was quickly cross referenced with his current address as listed on the TOMIS site. I tell you, this is a nice tool!"

The portal has also been used to assist in the location of crime victims. A West Tennessee law enforcement agency utilized the ICJ Web Portal to assist in an identity theft investigation. He wrote: "One of our investigators got a call from Army Military Police CID at Fort Knox, KY. They had stopped a car coming on base and during the stop, located a good deal of stolen identification and credit cards in the vehicle. They were able to locate some of the victims, but had an old, tin metal social security card with a name and the social security number on it. They had tried to locate the victim using some websites, but had no luck. In talking with our department that social number was mentioned. The name was checked in our local database and also a national law enforcement-only database with no hit on either place. The investigator then thought to check the Criminal Justice Web Portal. He did get a hit on the Social Security number. It was a lady from Brownsville, TN, a neighboring town."

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE PORTAL

Tennessee Offender Management Information System
[Title and Registration Database](#) [Driver License Database](#)
[Sex Offender Registry](#)

150 potential DL matches

2 potential T&R matches


0 potential TOMIS matches

0 potential SOR matches

DL Record

SAMPLE, IMA H
[← prev 25 of 150 next →](#)

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License Type:	Class D Only
Non CDL Status:	Valid
CDL Status:	N/A
DL#:	
Issued:	06/02/2005
Expires:	02/19/2010
Duplicates Issued:	4
Gender:	F
Race:	White
Height:	5' 9"
Weight:	200 LB
Eye Color:	Brown
Hair Color:	Grey
D.O.B.:	02/19/1950
SSN:	

Handguns

Status:
1 Active

Issued:
10/14/2004

Expires:
10/14/2008

Duplicates Issued:
1

Endorsements

For Hire

Restrictions

None

Citizens of the state of Tennessee have also benefited from the implementation of the ICJ Web Portal. As a result of rapid dissemination of criminal justice information and the ability to more rapidly solve crimes, public safety has been enhanced significantly.

Benefits Realized by Service Recipients, Taxpayers, Agencies or the State

As taxpayers, citizens benefit through immediate cost savings at the state and local level, improved service delivery and minimization of future costs. Immediate cost savings are being realized at the local level as agencies find they no longer need expensive third-party systems to retrieve data now available through the ICJ Web Portal. From a state level, both immediate and future cost savings are realized as personnel needed to support the traditional method of fax, email, and phone call dissemination of information can now be reallocated, thereby eliminating the need to hire additional full time employees.

The return on investment for the state is increased public safety through better criminal justice data availability. One of the most significant paybacks has been the ability of the State to provide this tool at a cost that is affordable to even the poorest county in the state. For an annual cost of \$75.00, an entity can have ten people identified as users of the system. With a number of small, rural counties with very limited budgets, this relatively inexpensive tool is a godsend.

Other savings attributed to this effort include the following:

- The ICJ Web Portal costs a fraction (less than 20 percent) of the price previously paid for certain third party information.
- Elimination of transaction fees charged by county 911 centers that were previously contacted for information now available via the Portal
- Reduction in operating costs associated with fax and phone calls
- Increased case closures due to the ability to obtain information quickly
- Reallocation of support staff both at the state and local levels

In a state where the challenges of disseminating information can be daunting, the ICJ Web Portal has proven to be an economical, effective, and transformational means of sharing data through real-time online access for a 24/7 environment. The ability to access and aggregate data from disparate databases has resulted in increased arrests, faster closure of criminal cases and a safer environment for Tennessee. It levels the playing field between large and small cities and wealthy and poor counties.