

**2008 NASCIO
Recognition Award Nomination**



Category: Information Communications Technology (ICT)

Title of Nomination: CORIS Inmate Phone System

State: Maine

TABLE OF CONTENTS

B.	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
C.	PROBLEMS ADDRESSED BY THE CORIS IPS.....	4
C.1	SUMMARY OF PERCEIVED PROBLEMS WITH THE LEGACY PHONE SOLUTION.	4
C.2	SUMMARY OF CORIS IPS OPERATIONAL FUNCTIONALITY	4
C.3	SOLUTION ADOPTION STRATEGY	5
D.	IMPROVED OPERATIONS WITHIN MAINE CORRECTIONS.....	6
E.	BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT.....	6

B. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In early November 2007, the State of Maine Department of Corrections implemented an innovative Inmate Phone System (IPS), integrated with the Department's existing Offender Management System (OMS) and leveraging Voice over IP (VoIP) technology and voice biometrics. The Department's OMS - CORIS (CORRections Information System) - has been in production since November 2003 and is a web based system designed to manage all aspects of corrections data. The integration of the new IPS with the OMS includes inmate trust account integration as well as call control features such as:

- Approved calling lists
- Call duration
- Call monitoring and recording
- Phone scheduling and activation
- PIN and Voice Verification Processing
- Global phone number blocking
- Inmate information hotlines
- Housing-based security feature

Prior to the implementation of the new IPS, the Department provided inmates with a collect calling service wherein the called party paid for all calls. With the new service, the inmate can take advantage of debit calling (drawing from his inmate trust account) in addition to traditional collect call services. In the previous model the average cost for an instate call was \$4.05, and out-of-state was \$9.90. Now these same calls cost \$3.00 (for both instate and out-of-state) when the debit calling option is selected.

When the handset of an inmate phone goes "off hook" a prompt is played requesting a PIN number. CORIS confirms the validity of the PIN. If valid the voice verification process is initiated, prompting the inmate to speak his full name and date of birth. CORIS uses voice biometrics to verify that the captured voice print is associated with the PIN number, then prompts the inmate to dial the number he wishes to call. If the phone number is on the inmate's pre-approved list, a message will convey the total available account minutes as well as the minutes available for the current call.

When the call ends CORIS calculates the call cost and immediately subtracts the calculated amount from the offender's trust account.

C. PROBLEMS ADDRESSED BY THE CORIS IPS

C.1 SUMMARY OF PERCEIVED PROBLEMS WITH THE LEGACY PHONE SOLUTION

In late 2003, the Department was approached by the Public Advocate and Public Utilities Commission to address rising concerns from the public (i.e. prisoner's families and friends) regarding the telephone services provided to prisoners/residents in Maine Corrections facilities. Here is a summary of the concerns:

- Rates for prisoner calls were too high
- Previous system did not take advantage of telecommunication provider's trend to offer prepaid calling at low fixed rates for all calls in the U.S., at anytime.
- The following major components of the legacy inmate phone system were too tightly bundled:
 - Telecommunications Service (the Carrier)
 - Call Processing and Security
 - DOC Commissions
- Previous contracts with telecommunication service providers were too lengthy; unable to take advantage of increased price competition
- Complaints related to unfairness in the billing structure, including the connect surcharge for local calls
- There was political pressure within the State regarding the fact that offenders and their families may be taken advantage of via the billing structure
- There were operational difficulties with the previous system. For example, whenever an offender moved to another facility, all of his call information needed to be re-entered. This introduced risk of error and presented liability risk since some calls may be legally recorded, whereas others may not. This was due to a lack of integration with the CORIS.
- Under the previous revenue scenario, the State was not able to decouple the cost of the carrier service from the cost of the call management, digital recording system, and administration system.

C.2 SUMMARY OF CORIS IPS OPERATIONAL FUNCTIONALITY

xwave's CORIS IPS solution has the following characteristics:

- Based on Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technology

- Deployed and managed centrally, with data networks to backhaul the Internet Protocol (IP) traffic to the VoIP site
- Includes call recording, call monitoring, and voice verification capabilities
- Integrated with the CORIS OMS for verification of allowable call numbers, permissible monitoring/recording, verification of sufficient funds in trust account and withdrawal of funds to pay for call
- “Decoupled” from the telecommunications component
- Flat-rate pricing for debit calls within the North American Calling Plan
- No connection surcharge for debit calls
- The revenue generated by calls fully funds the operation of the CORIS IPS, while providing funding to the Inmate Benefit Fund
- Does not accept incoming calls; only outbound calls are permitted
- The person receiving the call is prompted to dial an acceptance digit to signify call acceptance
- Until the call is accepted by the receiving party, the voice paths (caller and receiver) are separated, thereby preventing the two parties to communicate
- Verifies the identity of the offender placing the phone call using voice recognition (biometric) technology, and input of a Personal Identification Number (PIN)
- Verifies that the number being called by the offender is an allowed number, verifying against the CORIS database
- Checks CORIS to determine whether or not the call is allowed to be monitored or recorded
- Has the ability to simultaneously record multiple calls
- Checks CORIS to ensure the offender’s Trust Account has sufficient available funds to pay for the phone call, assuming a maximum duration call
- Upon completion of the call, the IPS withdraws the necessary funds from the offender’s CORIS Trust account to pay for the call
- Calls placed to a location that is outside of the continental US are permissible under the CORIS IPS (not possible in the previous collect-call-only system); however, the fee structure differs from that of calls within the continental US, and is subject to negotiation with the applicable telecommunications partner

C.3 SOLUTION ADOPTION STRATEGY

- Proactive communications to inmates and families regarding the new system
- Verbal education and communication to inmates in their housing units prior to deployment
- Pre-enrollment activities prior to deployment

- Education of facility staff and central office staff regarding trust account deposits, call control features and IPS operations
- Conducted live pilots in selected pods prior to deployment

D. IMPROVED OPERATIONS WITHIN MAINE CORRECTIONS

- Reduced operational costs by increasing efficiency (no duplicate data entry)
- Immediate revenues realized; not dependent on the timeliness and accuracy of Vendors
- All call related information, reports, and recordings will be integrated with and accessible from CORIS
- All phone equipment and software will be State-owned and not vulnerable to replacement with every vendor change
- Increased operational security by reducing instances where incorrect authorization might be granted for calls
- Reduced litigation risk by decreasing the possibility for mistakes when inmate moves from one location to another
- Investigations can be more effectively pursued since all offender information is in one centralized system. (e.g. call reports, call recordings, contacts, visitations, victim information, keep separates, police reports, discipline, grievances, sentencing, classification, etc.)
- Older legacy systems require several Administrators to input data. Under the CORIS IPS model, there is a significantly reduced need for this.

E. BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT

From PUC and Public Advocate's Perspective:

- No surcharges for debit calls
- “Unbundles” commission, call control, and carrier expenses/ revenues
- Periodic negotiation of new carrier rates is very possible (no PBX, recording equipment, and software to be removed and reinstalled)
- Costs and revenues for entire Inmate Phone System are known
- Offender's family and friends are not directly charged
- Offenders pay for their own calls
- Rates are lower, resulting in a possible increase in call time (studies have shown that an increase in outside contact has a positive psychological impact on offenders.)

Less Frustration for Inmate Families

- Offender's family and friends are not directly charged for debit calls
- No disruption of service when transitioning between calling plans (e.g. collect to debit)
- No dealing with inter-telecommunication company's lack of reciprocal billing arrangements
- No need to deal with demanding expensive processing fees for prepaid accounts
- Offenders pay for their own calls (debit calls)

Improved Security

- PIN – unique identification for each inmate
- Housing verification – inmate can only call from phones within their own housing unit
- Restrict allowed calls (white list, black list) – system will control who the inmate can or can not call (e.g. a victim)
- Voice Verification - positive identification of each inmate using their “voice print” before a call is allowed
- Call Recording – records inmate calls for investigation purposes (when legally authorized to do so)
- Call Monitoring – real time monitoring of inmate calls for investigation purposes (when legally authorized to do so)
- Avoids prepaid cards – these are considered to be “currency” within the facilities, thereby raising the concern of theft, strong-arming, etc

Additional Flexibility for the State

- Carrier services for the CORIS Phone system will be provided under existing service contract between Verizon and the State – takes advantage of significant call volume, thereby allowing low per minute rates

CORIS Phone System Architecture

