

# NASCIO Recognition Awards 2003

## Wisconsin Department of Justice – Fast ID

**Title of Nomination: Wisconsin Department of Justice - Fast ID**

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**CATEGORY: Innovative\_Use\_of\_Technology**

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## Executive Summary

<sup>1</sup>The Wisconsin Automated Finger Print Identification System (AFIS) system was purchased from a company headquartered in France called Sagem-Morpho. The system uses very sophisticated, propriety software and is supported by Sagem-Morpho with three full time staff at the Wisconsin Department of Justice.

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In February, 2003 the Wisconsin Department of Justice rolled out the latest update to its Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS)<sup>1</sup>. This update provided a dramatic improvement in our ability to quickly and positively identify known criminals. Called Fast ID, it is a combination of hardware and software that allows instantaneous identification using only a suspect's two index fingers.

The Fast ID system is currently being piloted in a number of law enforcement booking facilities throughout Wisconsin. A suspect places each of his two index fingers on the Fast ID scanner. A digital image of these prints is then passed directly to the AFIS system within the Department of Justice, and automatically matched against the prints of people who have records stored in the state's Criminal History Database. Either a positive identification, or a "no-hit" is returned to the booking facility within seconds, twenty-four hours a day.

Fast ID will not only speed up the booking process, but will also prevent erroneous paperwork from being filed when criminals give false identification. Perhaps the most significant impact of the Fast ID system is that it can provide instant identification of a person who may be wanted for serious crimes in other parts of the state, country or world, thus preventing the release of dangerous criminals.

### I. Description of the project

The recent upgrade of our AFIS started in December 2002. It was a multi-million dollar effort that involved the replacement or upgrade of many of the systems hardware and software components. One of the new components that was added was Fast ID, which included a server, the system software and a number of the Fast ID devices.

A Fast ID device is a handheld biometric identification terminal that includes a fingerprint scanning system. The unit provides an automated method of comparing fingerprints taken at the time of arrest to a database of stored prints. These devices are connected to the Department of Justice's Automated Fingerprint Identification System and provide positive identifications automatically 24 hours a day.

This device provides the functions necessary to enable a wide variety of applications that require positive fingerprint identification. Currently, they are intended to be used in law enforcement booking facilities to determine if a newly arrested subject has an arrest record on file with the DOJ's Crime Information Bureau. Also, they can be used to confirm identity prior to releasing a prisoner. The following information is returned to the Fast ID device:

State Identification Number (SID)  
Sex  
Race  
Birth date

The Department has placed approximately 30 units in the field and plans to distribute another 24 units within a few months.

The unit measures 7.5" l x 3"w x 2.25"h, weighs approximately 1 pound and costs approximately \$2100.

### II. Significance to the improvement of the operation of government

Some practical applications for Fast ID devices that improve the operation of government include:

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- Providing real-time identification of an arrested person with an unknown or questionable identity, ensuring that dangerous criminals are not released. The complete turnaround time from when an agency sends a full set of electronic fingerprints to the Department for identification can be two weeks. With Fast ID it takes between forty-five seconds and one minute.
- Identifying a suspect prior to keying errant arrest information into your records management system. This will reduce the time spent dealing with false identification and information as well as improve the accuracy of data at the state and local level.
- Authenticating a prisoner's identity prior to release, reducing the risk and cost of releasing the wrong prisoner. This can not be done with the old system.
- Confirming identity for high profile prisoners returning from court. This can not be done with the old system.

Future uses may include:

- Performing background checks that are either required or desired prior to hiring an individual into for a specific job.
- Controlling access to secured facilities or information.
- Automatically checking if a suspect is wanted for different or additional crimes.

### **III. Benefits realized by service recipients, taxpayers, agency or state**

The most common beneficiaries of Fast ID are the law enforcement booking facilities. Fast ID will give them a far more effective booking process. A second set of beneficiaries will be law enforcement and justice personnel throughout the state since they can know positively whom they are dealing with during all phases of justice system.

Taxpayers will benefit by having a more effective state and local government and the general public will benefit from improved public safety.

### **IV. Return on investment, short-term/long-term payback**

There have been no specific cost benefit calculations for the Fast ID project, but there are very real savings, both directly and indirectly. Some examples follow:

- The improvement in public safety can not be quantified, but preventing the release of one dangerous criminal can save many lives.
- Each time a suspect gives a false identification during the booking process, many hours are wasted gathering, and then later correcting that information. The if information is never corrected, dangerous mistakes can be made.
- As a suspect or prisoner is transferred throughout the justice system, knowing positively who they are can add safety and efficiency to the systems as accurate records can be accessed very quickly.
- In the future, public and private employers can make safe hiring decisions with a greater level of confidence the person in question is not a wanted or convicted criminal. This can not only prevent tragic mistakes, but also improve the hiring process for both employers and applicants.

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- As this technology advances and Fast ID becomes wireless, law enforcement officers can take these devices with them in the field, bringing accurate identification of wanted or dangerous criminals into play even before an arrest is made. Besides the obvious public safety benefits, earlier identification can improve processes during arrest, and transportation, prior to booking.

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